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Preface

More than forty years after the publication of *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (*CHB*) the time has come to revisit the entire field of biblical studies, and provide the contemporary reader with new guidance to the 'state of the art' in the study of the Old and New Testaments and the history of their reception from Antiquity to the present day. The period since the publication of the first and the second volume of the *History* – the latter of which contains, due to a change in the plan of publication, material covering some of the same ground as volume 1, and material relevant to volume 1 – under the editorship of P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, and G. W. H. Lampe, has witnessed a considerable number of discoveries of texts and artefacts relevant to the study of the Old and New Testaments and an often remarkable shift in scholarly methodology and opinion.

Whereas the four chapters devoted to the Old Testament in the first volume of *CHB* concentrate on the formation of the Old Testament, questions of canonicity and non-canonicity, the history of the Hebrew text and early Old Testament exegesis, the present volume mirrors the increasing specialisation of Old Testament studies (in the widest sense, i.e. including both the Hebrew and the Greek Bibles, and other witnesses) and the rich research activity that has unfolded over the last four decades, especially in areas such as Pentateuch theory, Septuagint scholarship and Qumran studies. Therefore, while the editors have reproduced the basic structure of the first volume of the *CHB*, they have thought it necessary considerably to increase the number of chapters in the present volume. In the sections devoted to the earliest period of the Bible's history, approximately covered in Chapters 1 to 8 of *CHB*, there are now sixteen chapters. Two chapters are dedicated to the biblical languages, divided along the lines of the Hebrew Bible, on the one hand, and the Septuagint and the New Testament, on the other. There is no separate chapter on 'biblical scripts', since that seems a problematic category and is best treated in more

specialist publications devoted to the relevant philological areas. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with writing and book production and cover roughly the same territory as the equivalent chapters in the *CHB*. Similarly to the *CHB*, there are two chapters dealing with the history of the Old Testament text and the literary history of the Hebrew Bible. Two chapters – on the canons of the Old Testament and the 'apocryphal' Old Testament – are devoted to the subject matter covered in one chapter in *CHB*.

All the additions reflect areas in which much new work has been carried out. So, for instance, where *CHB* endeavoured to cover the subject of the Septuagint in a fragmentary way by including its discussion in essays devoted to other subjects, the present volume deals with the subject in an individual chapter, reflecting, in particular, the fact that since 1970 the study of the Septuagint for its own sake, and not simply as a text-critical tool for the original Hebrew, has become much more the standard. An individual chapter is also devoted to Qumran, reflecting the fact that a huge amount of new research has been conducted on this subject, and new texts have been published. A separate chapter has likewise been dedicated to the Targumim. On a different note, the Pentateuch, its content, history and editing, play a much larger role in the current volume than in *CHB*, giving voice to the striking changes in the approach to these texts.

The increased attention scholarship has paid to the interpretation of 'scripture' is mirrored in the fact that there are now four chapters on early Jewish exegesis of biblical texts: the afore-mentioned chapters on Qumran and the Targumim and the ones devoted to the transition from 'inner-biblical' to rabbinic exegesis and to Hellenistic Jewish biblical interpretation, respectively. A related innovation is represented by the chapters on the uses of 'scripture' in cultic life and in the political and legal spheres.

A completely new perspective is developed in Chapter 16, which discusses the principles of modern editions of the Hebrew Bible and invites reflection on the decision-making processes in contemporary editorial work, thereby also deepening our understanding of the ancient texts.

The second half of the volume, dedicated to the discussion of the period running from the New Testament to about 600, has also expanded considerably when compared with what was published in volumes 1 and 2 of *CHB*. There are additional chapters on the versions of Coptic and Syriac Bibles, a chapter on the Latin Bible, which adds to the learned and felicitous study by R. Loewe in volume 2 of the *CHB*, by engaging in detailed discussion of the period preceding the Vulgate and Jerome's activity, chapters on the Bible and material culture, here taking further R. L. P. Milburn's chapter on 'The

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People's Bible' in volume 2 of the *CHB*, on 'Gnostic' use of the scriptures, on pagan engagement with the Bible, on the use of the Bible in Christian councils, on the Syriac tradition of biblical interpretation, and on ways of reading the Bible.

A decision was made, perhaps rather unfashionably, to retain the policy of *CHB* of devoting some chapters to individual exegetes of significance (to *CHB*'s chapters the editors have added one on Eusebius of Caesarea; they have also removed another on Theodore of Mopsuestia, deeming it more appropriate to discuss his work in a chapter devoted to more wide-ranging exploration of 'traditions of exegesis', including that called the 'Antiochian'). This was done in part because, as was the view of the editors of the first volume of *CHB*, we sensed that certain exegetes embodied the concerns of a particular age, and not least because some exegetes, in particular Origen and Augustine, massively influenced the history of exegesis as it developed in the East and the West. Again all of these additions reflect areas which have elicited much discussion over the past forty years.

Inevitably, the coverage of subjects is not comprehensive, and some of the editorial decisions may be questioned. For instance, some may query the decision to include a long piece on the second century when it may be thought that a figure like Irenaeus merited a chapter of his own, and so on. In this instance the justification for such a decision was in part practical (to have more chapters on individual exegetes was not possible in a volume already boasting some thirty-seven chapters) and in part academic (Irenaeus, it was thought, is better understood against the background of his second-century setting because in a number of ways he reflects very obviously the exegetical traditions he inherits, this possibly in contrast to a figure like Origen).

The contributions to the volume, made by acknowledged experts in the field, have in the main been written with a view to giving a clear account of the current state of scholarship, and in such a way as to be accessible to the non-specialist with an interest in the general subject of the history of the Bible in its ancient setting, as well as to the undergraduate or research student who requires an introduction to a subject or subjects with which he or she is not familiar. Each contributor was given the freedom, within the parameters mentioned above, to write as he or she saw fit. All contributors have, by and large, made some effort to relate what they have written to what was written in the relevant section of *CHB*, volumes 1 or 2, in so far as one existed. Bibliographic references in footnotes are abbreviated if they are listed in the Select Bibliography of Secondary Sources (pp. 876–912). Otherwise all bibliographic references in footnotes are given in full.

The editors of the present volume are very grateful to the many academic colleagues and to the representatives of Cambridge University Press who accompanied the planning and execution of this volume in a number of different capacities, among them Dr K. Brett, Professor G. I. Davies and Professor W. Horbury.

Mention of the *CHB*, both at the beginning and at the end of this preface, is entirely appropriate as the editors and contributors are clear what a debt of gratitude they owe to the work of their learned and distinguished predecessors in the field. This volume of the *New Cambridge History of the Bible* builds on and takes further the research and insights of that generation of scholars with a sense of humility and also of adventure.

<div align="right">J. S. and J. C. P.</div>

Abbreviations

Journal and series titles, modern editions and libraries

ABD	N. Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
ACFEB	Association catholique française pour l'étude de la Bible
ACO	E. Schwartz (ed.), *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1914–)
AGLB	Vetus Latina. Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel. Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel (Freiburg: Herder, 1957–)
AHC	*Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Forschung
AOT	H. F. D. Sparks (ed.), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984)
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
Ber.	Robert M. Berchman, *Porphyry against the Christians*, Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 1 (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2005)
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BH	Biblia Hebraica
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BIOSCS	*Bulletin of the International Organization of Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BL	British Library, London
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBL	Collectanea Biblica Latina
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina

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CHB	*Cambridge History of the Bible*
CLA	E. A. Lowe, *Codices latini antiquiores. A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century*, 11 vols. and suppl. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934–71; 2nd edn of vol. 11, 1972)
CPG	M. Geerard (ed.), *Clavis patrum graecorum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–87)
CQS	Classical Quarterly Supplements
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries
EncJud	*Encyclopaedia Judaica*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
Har.	A. von Harnack, 'Porphyrius, "Gegen die Christen", 15 Bücher. Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate', *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 1 (1916).
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ILCV	E. Diehl, *Inscriptiones latinae christianae veteres*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Weidemann, 1924–31)
IOS	*Israel Oriental Society*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism. Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series
JSOTS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible and Old Testament Studies
LJPSTT	Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott (eds.), *A Greek–English Lexicon. Ninth Edition with Revised Supplement* (Oxford University Press, 1996)
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
Mas.	Emanuela Masaracchia, *Giuliano Imperatore. Contra Galilaeos. Introduzione, testo critico e traduzione a cura di E.M.,* Testi e commenti 9 (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1990)

MÉFRA	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome*
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
MSU	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
MWG	Max Weber Gesamtausgabe
NHL	Nag Hammadi Library
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OTP	J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983, 1985)
OTS	Old Testament Studies
PG	J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia graeco-latina*, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–66)
PGM	*Papyri Graecae Magicae*
PL	J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia latina*, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)
RAC	T. Klauser (ed.), *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–)
RB	*Revue Bénédictine*
Rin.	G. Rinaldi, *Biblia Gentium. Primo contributo per un indice delle citazioni, dei riferimenti e delle allusione alla Bibbia negli autori pagani, greci e latini, di età imperiale* (Rome: Libreria Sacre Scritture, 1989) and G. Rinaldi, *La Bibbia dei pagani*, 2 vols., La Bibbia nella Storia 19–20 (Bologna: Ed. Dehoniane, 1997–8)
RQ	*Römische Quartalschrift*
RSR	*Recherches de Science Religieuse*
SBA	Studies in Biblical Archaeology
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SCH	*Studies in Church History*
SD	Studies and Documents
SDSSRL	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	*Sacra Pagina*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
ThGl	*Theologie und Glaube*
ThH	Théologie Historique
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TR	*Theologische Rundschau*
TRE	G. Krause and G. Müller (eds.), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977–2007)
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*

VL	*Vetus Latina. Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron* (Freiburg: Herder, 1949–)
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTS	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WD	*Wort und Dienst*
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum*

Primary sources

Aphrahat, *Dem.*	*Demonstrations*
Aristotle, *De an.*	*De anima*
Ass. Mos.	*Assumption of Moses*
Asterius of Amaseia, *Hom.*	*Homiliae*
Athanasius, *Decr.*	*De decretis Nicaenae synodis*
Athanasius, *Ep.*	*Epistula festivalis*
Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.*	*Epistulae ad Serapionem*
Athanasius, *Synod.*	*De synodis*
Athanasius, *Vita Ant.*	*Vita Antonii*
Augustine, *Adim.*	*Contra Adimantum*
Augustine, *Agon.*	*De agone Christiano*
Augustine, *Cat. rud.*	*De catechizandis rudibus*
Augustine, *Civ. Dei*	*De civitate Dei*
Augustine, *Conf.*	*Confessions*
Augustine, *Cons. ev.*	*De consensu evangelistarum*
Augustine, *Cresc.*	*Contra Cresconium*
Augustine, *De anim.*	*De anima et ejus origine*
Augustine, *Div. qu.*	*De diversis quaestionibus*
Augustine, *Doct. Chr.*	*De doctrina Christiana*
Augustine, *En. Ps.*	*Enarrationes in Psalmos*
Augustine, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Augustine, *Ep. Cat.*	*Epistula ad Catholicos*
Augustine, *Faust.*	*Contra Faustum*
Augustine, *Fid. et sym.*	*De fide et symbolo*
Augustine, *Gn. litt.*	*De Genesi ad litteram*
Augustine, *Gn. litt. imp.*	*De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*
Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*	*In Johannis evangelium tractatus*
Augustine, *Lib. arb.*	*De libero arbitrio*
Augustine, *Mend.*	*Contra mendacium*
Augustine, *Mor.*	*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*
Augustine, *Retract.*	*Retractationes*
Augustine, *S.*	*Sermo*

List of abbreviations

Augustine, *Trin.*	*De Trinitate*
Augustine, *Util. cred.*	*De utilitate credendi*
Basil of Caesarea, *Hex.*	*Hexaemeron*
Basil of Caesarea, *Hom.*	*Homilia*
Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. Ps.*	*Homiliae super Psalmos*
Basil of Caesarea, *Sermon on Ps. 1*	*Sermon on Psalm 1*
Basil of Caesarea, *Spir.*	*De spiritu sancto*
Bede, *Luc. exp.*	*Expositio in Lucam*
Cassiodorus, *Inst.*	*Institutiones*
CD	Damascus Document
Cicero, *Att.*	*Epistulae ad Atticum*
Cicero, *Brut.*	*Brutus*
Cicero, *De or.*	*De oratore*
Cicero, *Orat.*	*Orator*
Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpts*	*Excerpts from Theodotus*
Clement of Alexandria, *Paid.*	*Paidagogos*
Clement of Alexandria, *Proph. Ecl.*	*Prophetic Eclogues*
Clement of Alexandria, *Prot.*	*Protreptikos*
Clement of Alexandria, *QDS*	*Quis dives salvetur?*
Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*	*Stromata*
Cyprian, *Ep.*	*Epistle to Iubianus*
Cyril of Alexandria, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Cyril of Alexandria, *2 Ep. Nest.*	*Second Epistle to Nestorius*
Cyril of Alexandria, *Or. dom.*	*Oratio ad dominas*
Didym the Blind, *Comm. Job*	*Commentarii in Job*
Didym the Blind, *Comm. Ps.*	*Commentarii in Psalmos*
Didym the Blind, *Zech.*	*Commentarii in Zechariah*
Dio Chrysostom, *Or.*	*Orationes*
Diodore of Tarsus, *Comm. Pss. 1–51*	*Commentary on Psalms 1–51*
Diognetus	*Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*
Ephrem, *Comm. Diatess.*	*Commentary on the Diatessaron*
Ephrem, *Comm. Exod.*	*Commentary on Exodus*
Ephrem, *Comm. Gen.*	*Commentary on Genesis*
Ephrem, *H. Nat.*	*Hymns on the Nativity*
Ephrem, *H. Par.*	*Hymns on Paradise*
Epiphanius, *De mensuris*	*De mensuris et ponderibus*
Eusebius, *Comm. Isa.*	*Commentary on Isaiah*
Eusebius, *Comm. Pss.*	*Commentarii in Psalmos*
Eusebius, *D. E.*	*Demonstratio evangelica*
Eusebius, *E. P.*	*Eclogae propheticae*
Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.*	*Ecclesiastica theologia*
Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*	*Historia ecclesiastica*
Eusebius, *P. E.*	*Praeparatio evangelica*
Eusebius, *Quest. Mar.*	*Questions to Marinus*
Eusebius, *Quest. Steph.*	*Questions to Stephanus*
Eusebius, *Vita Const.*	*Vita Constantini*

FT	Fragmentary Targums
FTP	Fragmentary Targum in Paris MS 110
FTV	Fragmentary Targum in Vatican MS 440
Gregory the Great, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Herm., *Vis.*	*Visions*
Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan.*	*Commentarius in Danielem*
Homer, *Il.*	*The Iliad*
Homer, *Od.*	*The Odyssey*
Ignatius, *Ep. Eph.*	*Epistle to the Ephesians*
Ignatius, *Ep. Pol.*	*Epistle to Polycarp*
Irenaeus, *Dem.*	*Demonstratio*
Irenaeus, *Haer.*	*Adversus Haereses*
Isidore of Seville, *Etym.*	*Etymologiae*
Jerome, *Adv. Ruf.*	*Apologia adversus libros Rufini*
Jerome, *Comm. Dan.*	*Commentary on Daniel*
Jerome, *Comm. Eccl.*	*Commentary on Ecclesiastes*
Jerome, *Comm. Ezech.*	*Commentary on Ezekiel*
Jerome, *Comm. Gal.*	*Commentary on Galatians*
Jerome, *Comm. Isa.*	*Commentary on Isaiah*
Jerome, *Comm. Matt.*	*Commentary on Matthew*
Jerome, *Comm. Os.*	*Commentary on Hosea*
Jerome, *Comm. Pss.*	*Commentarioli in Psalmos*
Jerome, *Comm. Tit.*	*Commentary on Titus*
Jerome, *Comm. Zech.*	*Commentary on Zechariah*
Jerome, *Dial. Pel.*	*Dialogus adversus Pelagianos*
Jerome, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Jerome, *Nom. hebr.*	*Liber de nominibus hebraicis*
Jerome, *Praef. evang.*	*Praefatio in evangelio*
Jerome, *Praef. Hom. Orig. in Cant.*	*Praefatio in Homilias Origenis in Canticum*
Jerome, *Praef. Job.*	*Praefatio in librum Iob*
Jerome, *Praef. Jos.*	*Praefatio in Josue*
Jerome, *Prol. gal.*	*Prologus galeatus*
Jerome, *Quest. Hebr. Gen.*	*Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*
Jerome, *Vir. ill.*	*De viris illustribus*
John Chrysostom, *Hom.*	*Homilia*
John Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.*	*Homilies on Genesis*
John Chrysostom, *Hom. Isa.*	*Homilies on Isaiah and Jeremiah*
John Chrysostom, *Hom. John*	*Homilies on John*
John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.*	*Homilies on Matthew*
John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.*	*Homilies on Romans*
Josephus, *B. J.*	*Bellum Judaicum*
Julian, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Julian, *Gal.*	*Contra Galilaeos*
Julian, *Saturn.*	*Saturnalia*
Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.*	*1 Apology*
Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.*	*2 Apology*

Justin Martyr, *Dial.*	*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*
LAB	*Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*
Lactantius, *Inst.*	*Institutiones*
Lactantius, *Mort.*	*De mortibus persecutorum*
Leo I, *Ep. Flav.*	*Epistle to Flavianus*
Leontius of Constantinople, *Hom.*	*Homily*
Macarius, *Apocr.*	*Apocriticus*
Martial, *Epigr.*	*Epigrams*
Minucius Felix, *Oct.*	*Octavius*
Nestorius, *Ep. Cyr.*	*Epistle to Cyril*
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codex
Nilus of Ancyra, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Origen, *Comm. 2 Rom.*	*Commentary on Romans, Book 2*
Origen, *Comm. Joh.*	*Commentary on John*
Origen, *Comm. Matt.*	*Commentary on Matthew*
Origen, *Comm. Song*	*Commentary on the Song of Songs*
Origen, *Hom. Exod.*	*Homilies on Exodus*
Origen, *Hom. Gen.*	*Homilies on Genesis*
Origen, *Hom. Jer.*	*Homilies on Jeremiah*
Origen, *Hom. Lev.*	*Homilies on Leviticus*
Origen, *Hom. Luke*	*Homilies on Luke*
Origen, *Hom. Num.*	*Homilies on Numbers*
Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*	*Historia Lausiaca*
Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Philo, *Abr.*	*De Abrahamo*
Philo, *Agr.*	*De agricultura*
Philo, *Conf.*	*De confusione linguarum*
Philo, *Cong.*	*De congressu eruditionis gratia*
Philo, *Dec.*	*De Decalogo*
Philo, *Hyp.*	*Hypothetica*
Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium*	*Legatio ad Gaium*
Philo, *Leg. all.*	*Legum allegoriae*
Philo, *Migr.*	*De migratione Abrahami*
Philo, *Mut.*	*De mutatione nominum*
Philo, *Op. m.*	*De opificio mundi*
Philo, *Praem.*	*De praemiis et poenis*
Philo, *Prob.*	*Quod omnis probus liber sit*
Philo, *Qu. Exod.*	*Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum*
Philo, *Qu. Gen.*	*Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesim*
Philo, *Somn.*	*De somniis*
Philo, *Spec. leg.*	*De specialibus legibus*
Philo, *V. contempl.*	*De vita contemplativa*
Philo, *V. Mos.*	*De vita Mosis*
Philo, *Virt.*	*De virtutibus*
PJ	Pseudo-Jonathan
Plato, *Crit.*	*Crito*

List of abbreviations

Plato, *Leg.*	*Leges*
Plato, *Phae.*	*Phaedrus*
Plato, *Rep.*	*Republic*
Plato, *Symp.*	*Symposium*
Pliny, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Plutarch, *Cons. ad Apoll.*	*Consolatio ad Apollonium*
Polycarp, *Phil.*	*Epistle to the Philippians*
Porphyry, *Antr. nymph.*	*De antro nympharum*
Porphyry, *Christ.*	*Contra Christianos*
Porphyry, *Marc.*	*Ad Marcellam*
Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Test.*	*Testimonia*
Ptolemy, *Flor.*	*Letter to Flora*
Quintilian, *Inst.*	*Institutio oratoria*
Rhet. Her.	*Rhetorica ad Herennium*
Rufinus, *Praef. in Orig. De princ.*	*Praefatio in Origenis De principiis*
Schol. in Hom. Il.	*Scholia in Homeri Iliadem*
Schol. in Pind. Isthm.	*Scholia in Pindari Isthmionicas*
Schol. in Pind. Olymp.	*Scholia in Pindari Olympionicas*
Seneca, *Ep.*	*Epistulae*
Sent.	*Sententiae episcoporum*
Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.*	*Adversus mathematicos*
Socrates, *Hist. eccl.*	*Historia ecclesiastica*
Suetonius, *Nero*	*Life of Nero*
Synesius of Cyrene, *Hom.*	*Homiliae*
T. Asher	*Testament of Asher*
T. Issachar	*Testament of Issachar*
T. Joseph	*Testament of Joseph*
T. Judah	*Testament of Judah*
T. Levi	*Testament of Levi*
T. Reuben	*Testament of Reuben*
T. Simeon	*Testament of Simeon*
Tertullian, *Ad nat.*	*Ad nationes*
Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem*	*Adversus Marcionem*
Tertullian, *De ieiunio*	*De ieiunio adversus psychicos*
Tertullian, *De test. an.*	*De testimonio animae*
Tertullian, *Praescriptio*	*De praescriptio haereticorum*
Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Iul.*	*Contra Iulianum*
Theodoret, *Comm. Ezek.*	*Commentary on Ezekiel*
Theodoret, *Comm. Isa.*	*Commentary on Isaiah*
Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum*	*Apologia ad Autolycum*
TJ	Targum Jonathan
TN	Targum Neophyti
TO	Targum Onqelos
Virgil, *Aen.*	*Aeneid*

Abbreviations of books of the Bible

Old Testament (including apocryphal books)

Amos	Amos
Bar.	Baruch
Cant.	Canticle of Canticles (Song of Songs / Song of Solomon)
1 Chron.	1 Chronicles (1 Paralipomenon)
2 Chron.	2 Chronicles (2 Paralipomenon)
Dan.	Daniel
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth)
Ecclus.	Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)
1 Esd.	1 Esdras (or 3 Esdras)*
2 Esd.	2 Esdras (or 4 Esdras)*
Esth.	Esther
Exod.	Exodus
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Ezra	Ezra (or 1 Esdras)*
Gen.	Genesis
Hab.	Habakkuk
Hag.	Haggai
Hos.	Hosea
Isa.	Isaiah
Jdg.	Judges
Jdth.	Judith
Jer.	Jeremiah
Job	Job
Joel	Joel
Jon.	Jonah
Josh.	Joshua
1 Kings	1 Kings (or 3 Kingdoms)[†]
2 Kings	2 Kings (or 4 Kingdoms)[†]
Lam.	Lamentations
Lev.	Leviticus
1 Macc.	1 Maccabees

2 Macc.	2 Maccabees
Mal.	Malachi
Mic.	Micah
Nah.	Nahum
Neh.	Nehemiah (or 2 Esdras)*
Num.	Numbers
Obad.	Obadiah
Prov.	Proverbs
Ps.	Psalms
Ruth	Ruth
1 Sam.	1 Samuel (or 1 Kingdoms)†
2 Sam.	2 Samuel (or 2 Kingdoms)†
Sir.	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Song	Song of Songs (Song of Solomon, Canticle of Canticles)
Sus.	Susanna
Tob.	Tobit (Tobias)
Wisd.	Wisdom (Wisdom of Solomon)
Zech.	Zechariah
Zeph.	Zephaniah

New Testament

Acts	Acts
Apoc.	Apocalypse (Revelation)
Col.	Colossians
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
Eph.	Ephesians
Gal.	Galatians
Heb.	Hebrews
Jas.	James
John	John
1 John	1 John
2 John	2 John
3 John	3 John
Jude	Jude
Luke	Luke
Mark	Mark
Matt.	Matthew
1 Pet.	1 Peter
2 Pet.	2 Peter
Phil.	Philippians
Philem.	Philemon
Rev.	Revelation (Apocalypse)
Rom.	Romans

1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians
1 Tim.	1 Timothy
2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Tit.	Titus

∗ In early Latin traditions, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 Esdras and 2 Esdras were known, respectively, as 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, 3 Esdras ('the Greek Esdras') and 4 Esdras; the last two were declared apocryphal by the Council of Trent.

† In the Vulgate, the Greek tradition of grouping together the two books of Samuel and the two books of Kingdoms as four books of the Reigns (or Kingdoms) – hence 1–4 Kings – was frequently followed. Thus the books known as 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings in the King James Version may be designated 1–2 Kings and 3–4 Kings respectively in editions of the Vulgate.

Table of Psalm numbering

Generally in the present volume, the biblical psalms are quoted according to the numbering used in the Hebrew Bible. In some cases, however, the numbering of the Septuagint and Vulgate is used. The correspondences and differences between the two systems can be found in the following table:

Septuagint/Vulgate	Hebrew
1–8	1–8
9	9–10
10–112	11–113
113	114–15
114	116:1–9
115	116:10–19
116–145	117–146
146	147:1–11
147	147:12–29
148–50	148–50
151	–

PART I

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LANGUAGES, WRITING SYSTEMS AND BOOK PRODUCTION

The languages of the Old Testament

GEOFFREY KHAN

The languages of the Old Testament are Hebrew and Aramaic. The majority of the text is in Hebrew, with Aramaic being restricted to several chapters in Daniel and Ezra,[1] a single verse in Jeremiah (10:11) and one phrase in Gen. 31:47.

Hebrew was originally a language spoken by inhabitants of Canaan. If there is a historical basis to the biblical accounts of Israelite settlement, the language must have been adopted by the Israelite tribes after their migration to the land. It is, in fact, described once in the Old Testament as 'the language of Canaan' (שְׂפַת כְּנַעַן, Isa. 19:18), though elsewhere it is referred to as 'Judaean' (יְהוּדִית).[2] The name 'Hebrew' is derived from the ancient name of the Israelites *Ibrim* (עִבְרִים). The term is first attested as a designation of the language in the Hellenistic period in the Greek adverbial form Ἑβραϊστί 'in Hebrew' and in rabbinic Hebrew sources in the form עִבְרִית 'Hebrew'. The 'Aramaic' language is referred to in the Old Testament by the term אֲרָמִית.[3]

The earliest surviving records of Hebrew and Aramaic are inscriptions datable to the tenth century BC. Hebrew was a living language which was spoken until the end of the second century AD. Thereafter it continued to be used as a literary language until modern times. In the twentieth century a vernacular spoken form of Hebrew, based on a form of the literary language, was revived as the official language of the State of Israel. Aramaic was widely spoken in the Near East throughout the first millennium BC and the first half of the first millennium AD. Thereafter its spoken forms became geographically more restricted, but it still survives as a vernacular today in various areas.

Hebrew and Aramaic belong to the north-west branch of the Semitic family of languages. Other north-west Semitic languages include Phoenician, Moabite (known almost exclusively from the Mesha stele), Ugaritic and

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1 Dan. 2:4–7:28, Ezra 4:8–6:18, 7:12–26.
2 E.g. 2 Kings 18:26, 28, 2 Chron. 32:18, Isa. 36:11, 13, Neh. 13:24.
3 2 Kings 18:26, Isa. 36:11, Ezra 4:7, Dan. 2:4.

Amorite (known mainly from proper names). To the Semitic family belong also languages such as Akkadian and Eblaite, which are normally classified as east Semitic, and a south Semitic branch that includes Arabic as well as various languages in south Arabia and Ethiopia, including Gǝʿǝz (Ethiopic), though Arabic is sometimes classified in a separate central Semitic branch.[4] One of the closest relatives of Hebrew is Phoenician, which was spoken in coastal areas of the Levant. It is attested in inscriptions in the first half of the first millennium BC, and later in Phoenician colonies in the Mediterranean.[5] Hebrew and Aramaic are usually classified together in a subgroup of north-west Semitic called Canaanite, which was distinct from Aramaic. It was the Phoenician alphabet that was used to write Hebrew and Aramaic in the early first millennium and the scripts that were used for these languages at later periods were all descendants of this alphabet.[6]

The Hebrew texts of the Old Testament were composed at various periods before, during and after the Babylonian exile (597/587–538 BC), a few archaic passages being dated by some scholars to as early as the second half of the second millennium BC. The Aramaic passages of Daniel and Ezra were composed in the post-exilic period. The earliest biblical manuscripts are found among the Qumran scrolls, which date from the second century BC to the first century AD. The printed editions that are in use today are based on a form of text found in medieval manuscripts that derives from a school of scholars in Tiberias known as the masoretes. The terms 'biblical Hebrew' and 'biblical Aramaic' are generally used to refer to the form of the languages that appears in the printed editions and it is this form that is presented to students in grammatical textbooks. The first task in describing these languages, therefore, must be to establish the extent to which this masoretic form of the languages corresponds to the form they had at earlier periods when the various books of the Old Testament were composed.

The Tiberian masoretic manuscripts that have come down to us are datable to the ninth century AD onwards. The Tiberian masoretes were active over a

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4 For the classification of Semitic languages see A. Faber, 'Genetic Subgrouping of the Semitic Languages', in R. Hetzron (ed.), *The Semitic Languages* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 3–15.

5 For the Phoenician language see J. Friedrich and W. Röllig, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*, 3rd edn, rev. M. G. Amadasi Guzzo with the assistance of Werner R. Mayer (Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1999) and C. Krahmalkov, *A Phoenician-Punic Grammar* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). For a survey of the main extant Phoenician inscriptions see M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, 'La langue', in V. Krings (ed.), *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 19–29.

6 J. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet. An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982); P. T. Daniels and W. Bright, *The World's Writing Systems* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

period of several centuries in the second half of the first millennium AD. Their activities ceased at the beginning of the second millennium. The components of the manuscripts deriving from the Tiberian masoretic tradition that are of greatest importance for our discussion of the biblical languages are the consonantal text and the vocalisation signs. It is important to note that in addition to these written components the masoretic tradition also contained an orally transmitted component in the form of a reading tradition, which, during the masoretic period, was passed on from one generation to the next. It is this Tiberian reading tradition that is represented in graphic form by the vocalisation signs. At the end of the masoretic period the written components of the Tiberian masoretic tradition, including the consonantal text and vocalisation signs, had become fixed and were transmitted in this fixed form by later scribes. By contrast, the oral component (i.e. the Tiberian reading tradition) was soon forgotten and appears not to have been transmitted much beyond the twelfth century AD.

The biblical scrolls from Qumran show us that during the Second Temple period a multiplicity of consonantal texts were transmitted in manuscripts. The majority of the scrolls, however, exhibit a text that is very close to the masoretic consonantal text, and have been termed 'proto-masoretic' manuscripts.[7] These differ from the medieval manuscripts only in a few orthographic details and in isolated words. It appears to have been a fixed text that had been espoused by the Jewish authorities. The tradition of the masoretic consonantal text, therefore, can be traced back to the earliest surviving Bible manuscripts in the Second Temple period. The extant proto-masoretic manuscripts show that the text had been fixed not only in content but also in orthography by the third century BC. This orthography is broadly uniform across all biblical books. It cannot, however, have been the original orthography of all the books that was used when they were first committed to writing, since inscriptions show us that in earlier centuries in the pre-exilic period the orthography was more defective, with vowel letters used more rarely. Hebrew orthography gradually employed more vowel letters as time progressed. At some stage an attempt was made to impose a standard orthography on the entire text. By comparison with independently attested epigraphic material, scholars have dated the broad profile of the orthographic practices fixed in the proto-masoretic text approximately to the period 500–300 BC.[8]

7 Cf. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 24–79.
8 Cf. Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*; D. N. Freedman, A. D. Forbes and F. I. Andersen, *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), p. 15.

The components of the biblical text that are datable to the pre-exilic period are of diverse origin, with regard to both time and place of composition. This diversity is reflected in linguistic differences, especially between the archaic sections of a poetic nature and the prose sections. In the Second Temple period, when the orthography of the written form of the earlier texts was updated and standardised, the language of the texts was in principle not updated, at least not in any systematic and radical way, otherwise the aforementioned diversity would have been eliminated. There are, however, some cases where linguistic adaptation appears to have taken place, mainly in archaic poetic passages that were no longer understood in the Second Temple period. In general it can be said that the editorial activity relating to the linguistic structure of the written text had the purpose of expressing the current interpretation of the received form of the language rather than undertaking a linguistic reform. The orthographic adaptation itself was not a systematic *replacement* of the earlier orthography so much as an *expansion* of the latter by the addition of vowel letters to reflect the current way in which the text was interpreted and read. Although there appear to have been some scribal errors in transmission, the core of the earlier orthography was retained. This editorial activity in the early Second Temple period was associated also with the shift from the Palaeo-Hebrew script to the square script, which was adopted from Aramaic.

Some of the later biblical books were composed in the period when the fixing of the orthography took place. Their orthography, therefore, should, in principle, be regarded as reflecting the usage that was current during the time of their composition. In fact, the orthography of the later books exhibits a slightly greater tendency to use vowel letters than does that of the pre-exilic books; for instance the name of King David is spelt defectively in the pre-exilic books (דָּוִד) but with the vowel letter *yodh* in some of the later books (דָּוִיד). The scribes of the later books apparently aimed at adopting the by now standardised type of orthography but were influenced to some extent by a slightly more advanced type of orthography that developed in the Second Temple period.

The orthography of the Qumran biblical scrolls demonstrates that there was not only diversity in the types of biblical text but also diversity in the way the text was read. These diverse types of reading reflect differences in phonology and morphology. A similar linguistic diversity is exhibited in the non-biblical texts from Qumran. At this period Hebrew was still a vernacular language and it is likely that the background of much of the aforementioned diversity in the manuscripts reflects dialectal differences in the vernacular. The standardised orthography found in the proto-masoretic manuscripts, which formed the

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basis for the orthography of the masoretic text, reflect the reading of the Hebrew with a particular pronunciation and set of morphological forms. The Qumran manuscripts show us that this type of phonology and morphology was only one of several varieties that existed in the Second Temple period. One form is not necessarily more ancient than another. A further level of linguistic diversity can be identified if we take into consideration the reading tradition reflected by the Tiberian vocalisation. We must now, therefore, examine the linguistic background of the Tiberian vocalisation to determine how to assess this phenomenon.

The Tiberian vocalisation consists of a set of signs that were written below, above and sometimes within the letters of the consonantal text. The vocalisation system includes signs to represent vowels and also signs to represent syllable division (*shewa*), consonant gemination, the distinction between the two types of pronunciation of the so-called *bgadkfat* consonants (*dagesh*) and the consonantal pronunciation of a letter (*mappiq*). The vocalisation notation, in fact, marks more than phonology. It reflects syntactic divisions, in that it marks differences between the pronunciation of words that occur at syntactic pauses and those that occur within syntactic units. The *dagesh* sign is sometimes used, moreover, to distinguish meaning. A few isolated cases of this are found in the Tiberian tradition; the *dagesh* is used, for instance, in the *lamedh* of the word לֹא when collocated with the homophonous word לוֹ (e.g. Prov. 26:17 (לֹא־לְוֹ).[9]

The vocalisation signs are a written notation that was developed by the masoretes to record a reading tradition. In the time of the Tiberian masoretes, and also for a certain period after their activities ceased, both the Tiberian sign system and the Tiberian reading tradition were regarded as authoritative.[10]

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9 Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, pp. 49, 294. One may perhaps identify this marking of *dagesh* to express a semantic distinction in its occurrence in the prefixes of imperfect consecutive verb forms to distinguish them from imperfect forms with conjunctive *waw*. Its usage is more frequent in manuscripts with Babylonian vocalisation; cf. Yeivin, *The Hebrew Language Tradition as Reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization* [Hebrew], pp. 355–63. This is not necessarily an artificial linguistic phenomenon. One may compare the use of emphasis (velarisation) to distinguish homophonous words of different meaning in Neo-Aramaic dialects, e.g. in the Christian Barwar dialect: *bera* 'well, cistern' and *beṛa* 'light'.

10 Some of the masoretes were closely associated with the Jewish authorities, e.g. Pinḥas Rosh ha-Yeshiva ('head of the academy'), who lived in the ninth century. The 'academy' (*yeshiva*) was the central body of Jewish communal authority in Palestine; cf. M. Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 495–501.

Various other vocalisation systems existed in the Middle Ages. These include the Babylonian and Palestinian systems, which, although reflecting different pronunciation traditions, exhibit various degrees of assimilation to the Tiberian system in the extant manuscripts. The Tiberian vocalisation system soon became the standard one and replaced all other systems in the transmission of the Bible. The transmission of the Tiberian reading tradition, on the other hand, soon came to an end. As a result, the Tiberian vocalisation signs came to be read according to the various local traditions of Hebrew pronunciation. It is only recently, by studying previously neglected medieval sources, that the original Tiberian reading tradition has been reconstructed. This differs from the descriptions that are found in modern textbooks of biblical Hebrew, all of which present a form of pronunciation that was not that of the Tiberian masoretes.[11]

In a large number of places the reading tradition (*qere*) that is reflected by the vocalisation does not correspond to the consonantal text (*ketib*). Some elements of the consonantal text are regularly read in a way that does not correspond to what is written. This applies to the reading of some elements of morphology, such as the pronominal suffixes. The second person masculine singular pronominal suffix, for example, is written ךָ- but read – khā̆, without a final vowel. The verbal inflectional suffix of the second person masculine singular is written ת- without a final vowel letter but is read – tā̆ with a final vowel. The third person masculine singular pronominal suffix on plural nouns is written יו- with a medial *yodh*, presumably reflecting a pronunciation such as *-ew*, but is read – ā̆w without the medial *yodh*.

The most satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon is that the reading was a separate layer of tradition that was closely related to, but nevertheless independent from, the tradition of the consonantal text.[12] Contrary to a view that is still widely held today, the reading tradition was not a medieval creation

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11 Some examples of features of the Tiberian reading tradition that differ from the descriptions in the existing grammatical textbooks are the following: (i) the vocalic *shewa* was pronounced in most contexts as a short /a/; (ii) the vowel *qameṣ* had a back rounded quality /å/ both when long and when short, e.g. חָכְמָה [ḥåḵmā̆] 'wisdom'; (iii) the vowels *pataḥ* and *segol* were long when stressed or in unstressed open syllables; (iv) the consonant *resh* was pronounced in two ways, one alveolar and one uvular. For a description of Tiberian pronunciation see Khan, 'The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition', and G. Khan, 'Tiberian Hebrew Phonology', in A. S. Kaye (ed.), *Phonologies of Asia and Africa*, vol. I (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1977), pp. 85–102.
12 I take the view here of scholars who have stressed the oral dimension of the text reflected by the vocalisation; cf. especially J. Barr, 'A New Look at the Kethib-Qere', *Oudtestamentische Studien* 21 (1981), 19–37; J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 194–222; Morag, 'On the Historical Validity of the Vocalization of the Hebrew Bible', 307–15.

of the masoretes but was an ancient tradition that the masoretes recorded by their notation system. There is no evidence that the masoretes reformed the reading tradition and felt free to introduce linguistic innovations of their own.[13] The morphological features of the Tiberian reading tradition that differ from what is represented by the consonantal text are reflected already by Qumran manuscripts in the Second Temple period, for instance the second person masculine singular suffixes כה-, תה-, and the third person masculine singular suffix on plural nouns ו- without *yodh* in manuscripts exhibiting full orthography.[14]

As we have seen, in the Middle Ages various ways of pronouncing biblical Hebrew are reflected in different systems of vocalisation. The Tiberian, Babylonian and Palestinian systems of vocalisation not only use different sets of signs but also reflect clearly distinct forms of pronunciation. In addition to these three traditions of pronunciation, there is the Samaritan tradition, which was not recorded in written notation but has been passed down orally. Although the Tiberian, Babylonian and Palestinian systems differ from one another, it is clear that they are closely related in comparison to the Samaritan pronunciation of Hebrew, which is significantly different from all three. We can identify two broad streams of pronunciation tradition, the Samaritan and the non-Samaritan. The close relationship of the Babylonian reading tradition with the Tiberian and Palestinian could be explained as a result of its being transferred from Palestine to Babylonia by Jewish scholars after the Bar Kokhba revolt. A number of the differences within the non-Samaritan group appear to have arisen by convergence with the vernacular languages. This applies especially to the Palestinian pronunciation, which exhibits many features that are characteristic of Aramaic, the vernacular of the Jews for most of the first millennium AD.[15] The Tiberian system appears to have been very conservative and was largely unaffected by vernacular influence. In the Middle Ages the Tiberian reading tradition was the preserve of a small number of scholars who had received special training. The Palestinian pronunciation, which was close to the Aramaic vernacular, was far more widespread. The Sephardi pronunciation traditions of Hebrew, which are still followed today

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13 The view that the masoretes were language reformers was held by P. Kahle, see his book, *The Cairo Geniza*. His arguments were convincingly rebutted by E. Y. Kutscher, 'Contemporary Studies in North-Western Semitic', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 10 (1965), 21–51 and J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, pp. 214–17.

14 Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll*, pp. 442–3.

15 The vowel system of some forms of Palestinian Hebrew pronunciation, for instance, seems to be very close to that of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. Texts with Palestinian vocalisation also exhibit a number of features of Aramaic morphology.

in many of the eastern Jewish communities, are derived historically from Palestinian pronunciation. The Babylonian pronunciation, which was also more widespread in the medieval Jewish communities than the Tiberian pronunciation, has survived down to the present day in the reading traditions of the Yemenite Jews.

It is not possible to demonstrate the historical depth of Tiberian phonology as a whole. There is evidence, however, for the deep historical roots of certain features. One example that demonstrates the conservative nature of the phonology is the pronunciation of the *pe* in the word אַפַּדְנוֹ 'his palace' (Dan. 11:45). According to medieval sources this was pronounced as an emphatic unaspirated stop, whereas the letter *pe* with *dagesh* in all other places in the reading tradition was pronounced as an aspirated stop. The hard pronunciation of the *pe* is also mentioned by Jerome, who states that it is the only 'Latin' *p* in the entire Bible (*p* in Latin was regularly pronounced as an unaspirated stop). The word is in origin a loan from Old Persian. The unaspirated pronunciation of the *pe*, which is uncharacteristic of Hebrew, evidently preserves a feature that existed in the pronunciation of the source language.[16] The fact that this feature, which conflicted with normal Hebrew pronunciation, should have been preserved from the original period of composition right down to the period of the masoretes, centuries after contact of the transmitters of the tradition with the source language had ceased, demonstrates the remarkable conservatism of the Tiberian reading tradition. This feature of pronunciation was lost to knowledge after the Tiberian reading tradition fell into oblivion in the later Middle Ages, and it does not appear in modern textbooks of biblical Hebrew.

The lack of correspondence of some forms of pronunciation attested in the Second Temple period with the Tiberian reading tradition should not lead us to conclude that the Tiberian tradition is necessarily of a chronologically later origin. It is likely that a form of pronunciation that is very close to the Tiberian tradition existed in Second Temple times alongside other traditions of pronunciation. The Septuagint, datable to the Second Temple period, contains transcriptions of Hebrew words, mainly proper names, which appear to reflect a pronunciation that is more archaic than that of the Tiberian tradition. These transcriptions, for example, often have an /a/ vowel in an unstressed closed syllable (e.g. Μαριαμ) where in Tiberian Hebrew it has developed into an /i/ (מִרְיָם). This, however, need not be interpreted as demonstrating the

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16 Cf. R. Steiner, 'Emphatic פ in the Massoretic Pronunciation of אַפַּדְנוֹ (Dan 11:45)' [Hebrew], in H. Ben-Shammai (ed.), *Hebrew and Arabic Studies in Honour of Joshua Blau* (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1993), pp. 551–61.

chronological antecedence of the Septuagint reading tradition, although it may reflect a *typologically* earlier stage of development. In the medieval manuscripts with Babylonian vocalisation the /a/ vowel is often retained in such syllables where Tiberian vocalisation has /i/,[17] demonstrating that these two variant types of pronunciation existed in the Middle Ages and the same could be assumed to be the case at an earlier period.[18]

Some features in the transcriptions of the Septuagint and other early sources that differ from Tiberian phonology can, in fact, be explained as the result of convergence with the Aramaic vernacular, which was resisted by the standard Tiberian tradition. These include the shifts of short *i > e* and short *u > o* in closed unstressed syllables, for instance Μελχα (מִלְכָּה) and Ομμοθ (אֻמּוֹת, Num. 25:15).[19] Likewise, in a few cases where the Qumran biblical scrolls reflect a different pronunciation from the Tiberian one, the Tiberian must be regarded as the more conservative. Some Qumran scrolls, for instance, exhibit a weakening of the guttural consonants, whereas these are stable in the Tiberian tradition. It is clear that the Qumran scribes were influenced by vernacular pronunciation whereas the Tiberian tradition has preserved the original distinction between the guttural letters.[20]

We have seen that there is development within the use of vowel letters within the Tiberian consonantal text, in that they tend to be used more abundantly in the later books. This suggests that some of the later biblical books were composed or at least added to the canon after the process of updating and standardising the proto-masoretic orthography had taken place. There is some sporadic reflection of this historical layering of the text also in the Tiberian vocalisation. In two cases in Chronicles, for example, the *niph'al* of the verb ילד is vocalised in an unusual way, with *shureq* rather than *ḥolem* and *dagesh* in the middle radical: נוּלְּדוּ (1 Chron. 3:5, 20:8). This morphological feature (*nuph'al*) is not found in the vocalisation of the earlier books but

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17 Cf. Yeivin, *The Hebrew Language Tradition as Reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization*, pp. 995–6.
18 It is relevant to take into account that in the development of modern spoken dialects of Semitic languages, some dialects are more conservative of earlier linguistic features than others; cf. G. Khan, 'Some Parallels in Linguistic Development between Biblical Hebrew and Neo-Aramaic', in G. Khan (ed.), *Semitic Studies in Honour of Edward Ullendorff* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 87–93.
19 Cf. E. Y. Kutscher, 'Articulation of the Vowels *u, i* in Transcriptions of Biblical Hebrew, in Galilean Aramaic and in Mishnaic Hebrew' [Hebrew], in E. Z. Melamad (ed.), *Benjamin de Vries Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem: Tel Aviv University Research Authority and Stichting Fronika Sanders Fonds, 1968), pp. 218–51.
20 Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll*, pp. 505–11. Failure to recognise this led P. Kahle to claim that the Tiberian masoretes reformed the Hebrew language and restored the gutturals in the Middle Ages under the influence of Arabic, see his book *The Cairo Geniza*.

is found in post-biblical rabbinic Hebrew.[21] The vocalisation of these forms apparently reflects a dialectal form of morphology that was current in the time of the Chronicler, which entered the reading tradition of this late work but not that of pre-exilic works. This suggests that the reading tradition of Chronicles was a separate layer that was added onto an already existing reading tradition of earlier works.[22] Even within the vocalisation of the earlier books there are inconsistencies (e.g. Deut. 5:24 גׇּדְלוֹ and Ps. 150:2 גֻּדְלוֹ),[23] which also can be explained as reflecting different dialectal layers.

The general picture that emerges from this is that, although the Tiberian masoretic text conforms to a broadly standardised form of orthography and reading tradition, these were not imposed upon the text in a single act of linguistic reform. Rather, the fixing of the orthography and reading tradition of the various components of the biblical text took place in stages in the course of the Second Temple period, which has given rise to a certain degree of internal diversity in these two linguistic dimensions of the text.

The foregoing discussion was necessary to establish exactly what we have in front of us when we read the Hebrew and Aramaic languages in the printed editions of the Bible, and we are now in a position to look more closely at their structure and broader historical background.

The vocalisation is clearly essential for a study of the phonology and morphology of the languages. It has been shown that the vocalisation reflects a reading tradition that was current at a period that was close chronologically to the time of composition of the later books of the biblical canon. Although Hebrew was still a vernacular language throughout the Second Temple period, at least in the south of Palestine, the authors of the later Hebrew biblical books did not write in a purely vernacular language. It is clear that they aimed at writing in a literary language that imitated to a large extent the language of the pre-exilic literature. The same applies to the Hebrew language of the book of Ben Sira (second century BC) and that of most of the Qumran non-biblical manuscripts. There are, nevertheless, differences between the pre-exilic language and that of the later books of the Bible in numerous details. Many of these differences in the later books are likely to

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21 Morag, 'On the Historical Validity of the Vocalization of the Hebrew Bible', 309–10.
22 It is relevant to note here that one may trace back the text of *qere* forms into the period of literary growth of the biblical books. This is shown by the fact that the *ketiv* of the text of Chronicles often corresponds to the *qere* of its earlier biblical source. Cf. J. Barr, '*Migraš* in the Old Testament', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 29 (1984), 15–31.
23 Inconsistencies such as these were listed by T. Nöldeke, 'Inkonsequenzen in der hebräischen Punktation', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 26 (1912), 1–15.

have arisen by interference in the literary language from vernacular Hebrew or possibly, in some cases, from vernacular Aramaic.

It is generally held that the form of post-biblical Hebrew known as rabbinic Hebrew is a close reflection of the form vernacular Hebrew would have had in the Second Temple period. This applies particularly to the corpus of originally orally composed texts that are attributable to the Tannaim, circles of teachers of Jewish law who were active during the period when Hebrew was still a living language (i.e. before the end of the second century AD).[24] A number of the features in which the Hebrew of the late biblical books differs from that of the pre-exilic books indeed have parallels in rabbinic Hebrew. For example, the relative particle *š-* (with various vocalisations), which occurs in some places in late texts instead of the usual particle *ʔăšɛr*, is the normal relative particle in rabbinic Hebrew. As remarked above, some unusual instances of vocalisation in the late biblical books, such as the *nupʿal* form נוּלְּדוּ, are recognised features of rabbinic Hebrew in the reliable manuscripts.

If we work on the premise that Tannaitic rabbinic Hebrew gives us some insight into Second Temple Hebrew vernacular, what can be said concerning the general relationship between the biblical reading tradition and the vernacular? Although this question cannot be answered with any certainty, it is instructive to compare the situation that one finds in the Samaritan reading tradition. Leaving aside the extensive differences in pronunciation between the Tiberian and Samaritan reading traditions, the Samaritan tradition exhibits a tendency to adapt the vowels of some morphological patterns that are uncharacteristic of rabbinic Hebrew. The so-called internal passive verbal stems (*puʿal* and *hophʿal*), which largely fell from use in rabbinic Hebrew, are adapted to external type passives; תֻּבְשָׁל. (Lev. 6:21) for example is read *tibbaššål*, which can be interpreted as a *nithpaʿel* form.[25] Some instances of the imperfective consecutive, which is not used in rabbinic Hebrew, were adapted where this was possible by changing the reading of the vowels, a form such as וישב that was read as וַיֵּשֶׁב in the Tiberian vocalisation, for instance, was read as a perfect verb in Samaritan *wyåšåb* = וְיָשַׁב.[26] The Tiberian vocalisation

24 The Tannaitic corpus includes the Mishnah and various early midrashic works. A form of language that exhibits many features of rabbinic Hebrew is found in some Qumran texts, such as the Copper scroll and 4QMMT, and also in the extant Hebrew correspondence of Bar Kokhba. For the vernacular nature of rabbinic Hebrew, see M. Bar Asher, 'The Study of Mishnaic Hebrew Grammar: Achievements, Problems and Goals' [Hebrew], *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1988), pp. 3–37, at p. 6 and the references cited there; see also Rendsburg, *Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew*, p. 7.

25 Ben-Ḥayyim and Tal, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew*, p. 338.

26 Ben-Ḥayyim and Tal, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew*, p. 339.

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reflects a reading tradition that is clearly more conservative of morphological forms that are uncharacteristic of rabbinic Hebrew.

The pronunciation of the pre-exilic books at the time of their composition is likely to have differed from what is recorded in the vocalisation, which reflects only the way they were read in the post-exilic period. Most of the discernible differences between pre-exilic and post-exilic Hebrew, therefore, are in the syntax and the lexicon.[27] We can see some differences in morphological structure in the case of features that are reflected by the consonants, but the vocalism of pre-exilic Hebrew morphology cannot be recovered with any certainty directly from the masoretic text.[28]

We nevertheless have some hints about pre-exilic pronunciation from the orthography of the consonantal text, which was preserved in the post-exilic period, albeit supplemented by additional vowel letters. One notable feature is the letter שׁ, which is read in the Tiberian reading tradition in two ways, distinguished in the vocalisation by points, namely either as /š/ (*shin*) or as /s/ (*śin*), the latter being equivalent to the sound of the letter ס. It is clear that the reading tradition of שׁ differed from the pronunciation the letter had in the pre-exilic period, otherwise the letter ס would regularly appear in the orthography where the reading tradition pronounces the sound /s/. It is noteworthy, however, that roots and words that were regularly spelt with שׁ in pre-exilic books are occasionally spelt with ס in later books, for instance וְסֹכְרִים 'and they hire' (Ezra 4:5 = שֹׂכְרִים). Such cases are sporadic and most likely unintentional deviations from the standard orthography that reflect the interference of contemporary pronunciation. This orthographic phenomenon can be interpreted in two ways. The pre-exilic שׁ may have been pronounced as a single sound, presumably /š/, in all contexts. Possible evidence for this is the fact that in the Samaritan reading tradition the letter is always pronounced /š/, including where the Tiberian tradition has *śin*. This feature of the Samaritan reading tradition may have its roots in a type of pronunciation that existed alongside the Tiberian type in the Second Temple period. Alternatively the letter שׁ in the pre-exilic orthography may have been intended to represent two sounds, which, according to this interpretation, are normally thought to

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27 A large proportion of the differences between pre-exilic and post-exilic Hebrew listed by R. Polzin (*Late Bibical Hebrew. Toward a Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*, Missoula, MI: Scholars Press, 1976) are of this nature.

28 Some grammatical studies of Hebrew have attempted to reconstruct pre-exilic vocalism. These include, for example, Z. Harris, 'Linguistic Structure of Hebrew', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 61 (1941), 143–67, and K. Beyer, *Althebräische Grammatik. Laut- und Formenlehre* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969). Such reconstructions, however, are hypothetical forms based on comparative grammar rather than on direct evidence.

have been /š/ and a lateral sibilant resembling the lateral /ś/ of modern south Arabian languages. In the Second Temple period the lateral sibilant would have shifted to /s/. It should be taken into account, furthermore, that both of these alternative types of pronunciation of שׁ may have existed in the pre-exilic period. The necessity to use a single letter to represent two sounds arose from the fact that the alphabet used to write Hebrew was in origin the one that was developed to represent Phoenician, in which the two sibilant sounds in question were not distinguished.

We also have some hints at differences in pre-exilic pronunciation from the vowel letters. Although many of the vowel letters of the pre-exilic portions of the masoretic text are likely to have been added in the Second Temple period, some of them appear to preserve an early, pre-exilic pronunciation. This applies particularly to the orthography of the archaic passages, which sometimes reflect morphological forms differing from the norm. For example, the second person feminine singular suffix has a final *yodh* כִי- and the third person masculine singular suffix on singular nouns is written ה-, though in the vocalisation tradition it is read as -*ō* like the normal form of the suffix.[29]

The transcription of Hebrew proper names in cuneiform sources during the pre-exilic period often reflects a pronunciation that is different from the Tiberian reading tradition. The name of King Hezekiah, for example, is represented as Ḫa-za-qi-a-ú,[30] which has a more archaic vocalic and syllabic structure than Tiberian חִזְקִיָּהוּ. The syllabic structure is closer to the form of the name in the Septuagint, which is Εζεκιας, from where we derive our form 'Hezekiah'.

Within the corpus of pre-exilic material there are various linguistic layers, the major distinction being between the prose texts and certain archaic poetic passages such as the Song of Moses (Exod. 15), the Song of Deborah (Jdg. 5), the Blessings of Jacob (Gen. 49), the Blessings of Moses (Deut. 33), the Oracles of Balaam (Num. 23–4) and the Poem of Moses (Deut. 32). The Hebrew of the prose texts was a standardised literary language, which may be designated as standard biblical Hebrew. As remarked, this literary language formed the basis of the literary Hebrew used in the post-exilic books, which is generally referred to as late biblical Hebrew.[31] The original differences in

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29 This orthography of the third person masculine singular with *he* is found also in inscriptions from the pre-exilic period; cf. S. L. Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), p. 60. Likewise, this is most easily explained as reflecting a dialectal form differing from that of the Tiberian pronunciation; cf. Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, pp. 105–6.

30 K. L. Tallqvist, *Assyrian Personal Names*, Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae; 43: 1 (Helsinki: Ex Officina Typographica Societatis Litterariae Fennicae, 1914), p. 88a.

31 For these broad historical divisions of biblical Hebrew see Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, p. 12; Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, p. 52.

vocalism between standard biblical Hebrew and the archaic poetic Hebrew are largely disguised by the post-exilic reading tradition. Again, therefore, the main discernible distinctions are in syntax and lexicon, with some hints at morphological distinctions preserved in the orthography.

As is usually the case with the formation of standard literary languages, pre-exilic standard biblical Hebrew is likely to have been based on the vernacular language of the region where the centre of political authority was situated. This was the vernacular of Jerusalem, which was the religious and political centre of ancient Israel during the period of the united monarchy and between the fall of Samaria and the exile. It is likely, however, that this literary language, while based on the vernacular, did not correspond exactly to any spoken variety of Hebrew, but rather a diglossia always existed between the high literary language and the spoken vernaculars, as was the case in the post-exilic period.[32]

The differences between standard biblical Hebrew and the archaic poetic language may reflect not only chronological differences but also regional differences in the vernacular upon which they were based. It is of particular interest that some features of archaic biblical Hebrew that differ from standard biblical Hebrew resurface again in late biblical Hebrew and rabbinic Hebrew. This applies, for example, to the relative and subordinating particle š- (with various vocalisations), which occurs in some archaic passages (e.g. עַד שַׁקַּמְתִּי 'until you arose', Jdg. 5:7), and also, as we have seen, in late biblical Hebrew and rabbinic Hebrew. The explanation seems to be that the particle š- had existed for many centuries in some dialects of Hebrew before its appearance in the late biblical Hebrew texts.

There was clearly considerable dialectal diversity in spoken Hebrew during the pre-exilic period. We have a hint at this in the description of the so-called *shibboleth* incident, in which it is said that the Ephraimites were distinguished in their speech by their pronunciation of the word *shibboleth* as *sibboleth* (Jdg. 12:6). Hebrew epigraphic evidence from this period exhibits a certain degree of linguistic diversity, though this is concealed to some extent by the unvocalised writing system and the attempt, in most texts, to conform to a literary standard. One visible feature is the contraction of diphthongs. This appears to have taken place more systematically in northern texts, such as the Samaria ostraca, than elsewhere. Although major dialect divisions of pre-exilic Hebrew have been proposed, especially between the Judaean dialect and

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32 This notion of diglossia in the pre-exilic period has been urged particularly by G. Rendsburg, *Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew*, who surveys the previous literature in his introduction.

the northern dialect, the spoken vernaculars could well have existed in the form of a dialect continuum. A characteristic feature of such spoken dialect continua is that they do not exihibit such clear boundaries as exist between official literary languages. Features of Hebrew dialects that do not occur in the standard language may be shared by neighbouring languages. This applies to shared innovations, which are the most important features for linguistic classification, such as the generalised contraction of diphthongs. This feature, which is found in northern Hebrew dialects, continued further northwards in the Semitic area, as shown by its occurrence in Phoenician and also, in the second millennium BC, in Ugaritic.[33] The division between Aramaic and Hebrew, furthermore, on the level of some spoken vernaculars is unlikely to have been clear-cut. It is most likely for this reason that the language of some epigraphic texts exhibiting local dialect features has proven difficult to classify.[34] The most archaic strata of pre-exilic Hebrew, indeed, attest to some Aramaic-type developments earlier than in any 'pure Aramaic' text, for example יְתַנּוּ 'they repeat' (Jdg. 5:11), which exhibits the Aramaic shift of ∗ṯ > t rather than the characteristic Hebrew shift ∗ṯ > š (שנה).[35]

It is of interest to note that some features found in the inscriptions that differ from biblical Hebrew reappear in rabbinic Hebrew. An example of this is the third person feminine singular perfect form הית in the Siloam inscription (end of the eighth century BC). In standard biblical Hebrew the normal form of the third person feminine singular perfect of ל"ה verbs has a final vowel (הָיְתָה). The form without the vowel (הָיָה), however, is the normal form in rabbinic Hebrew.[36] As with the case of the particle š-, this can be explained

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33 For the dialectal continuum in Syria-Palestine in the first millennium AD see Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine*, p. 205.

34 This applies, for example, to the language of the Deir ʿAllā text (datable to 840–760 BC), which exhibits both Canaanite and Aramaic features; cf. J. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), and the discussions in J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij (eds.), *The Balaam Text from Deir Alla Re-Evaluated. Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (Leiden: Brill, 1991). It has even been suggested by I. Young (*Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, pp. 60–1) that many Aramaic features that existed in spoken Hebrew were purged from the standard biblical Hebrew at the time of the monarchy to distinguish clearly the national language from the Aramaic official language of enemy states. For a survey of the attested evidence of dialectal diversity see also R. Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine*.

35 The inconsistency of the so-called 'Canaanite vowel shift' can also be seen in this light. In the Tiberian tradition of Hebrew, in most cases original ∗ā shifts to ō, but in some morphological forms the shift fails to take place, as is the case in Aramaic, e.g. קָם 'he arose', צַיָּד 'hunter'. In some other dialects of Hebrew the distribution of this Aramaic-type feature of phonology has a wider distribution, as can be seen in the Samaritan tradition in forms such as ānå̊ki (= אָנֹכִי), in which the shift has not taken place (cf. Ben-Ḥayyim and Tal, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew*, pp. 83–6).

36 See M. Bar-Asher, *L'hébreu mishnique. Études linguistiques* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), pp. 237–9.

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as being a dialectal feature of considerable historical depth whose existence was concealed by the standard biblical literary language. It is also relevant to note that this feature of the morphology of final weak verbs is shared with Aramaic, which illustrates the continuum of features across Hebrew and Aramaic dialects.[37]

In pre-exilic passages written in the standard literary language there are deviations from the norm that could be explained as reflections of local vernacular speech, some of which have parallels in rabbinic Hebrew.[38] It has sometimes been argued that passages with such deviations originate in the northern kingdom.[39] Just as variations in vocalisation such as גָּדְלֹו (Ps. 150:2) for the normal pattern גָּדְלֹו or נוּלְדוּ (1 Chron. 3:5, 20:8) in place of the normal *niphʿal* pattern appear to be vernacular interferences in the standard reading tradition in the Second Temple period, so can these deviations in the pre-exilic standard language be explained as vernacular interferences in the Jerusalemite literary language. These are not, in principle, intentional shifts of register in quotations of direct speech; in many cases, the writers were doubtless unconscious of their appearance. It may be that many of these vernacular features originated in northern dialects, but, if so, the parallels in rabbinic Hebrew indicate that at some point, presumably following the destruction of the northern kingdom, they must have penetrated the speech of Judaea.[40] The archaic biblical passages, however, that date from the pre-monarchical age before the Jerusalem literary language was established, could well reflect local literary varieties of Hebrew.

In general the dominance of the standard literary language from the period of the united monarchy onwards down to the closure of the biblical canon in the post-exilic period hampers attempts to date books on the basis of linguistic criteria alone. If, as has been remarked above, the literary language has always coexisted with diverse vernacular dialects, interference of these

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37 On the issue of Aramaic elements in Hebrew see Hurvitz, 'The Chronological Significance of "Aramaicisms"'; A. Hurvitz, 'Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period. The Problem of "Aramaisms" in the Linguistic Research of the Hebrew Bible' [Hebrew], in M. Bar Asher (ed.), *Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shelomo Morag* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1996), pp. 79–94; Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, p. 61.

38 See Rendsburg, *Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew*, for numerous examples.

39 See in particular the work of G. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), and G. Rendsburg, *Israelian Hebrew in the Book of Kings* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2002).

40 Indeed in the inscriptions features that are considered characteristically northern are also found in texts in other areas. Contraction of diphthongs, for example, is also found in the Gezer calendar. Even in the north the distribution of diphthong contraction is not clear-cut; cf. Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, p. 199.

vernacular features could, in principle, occur at any time. It appears, however, that this interference took place to a greater extent in the post-exilic period.

A particular problem with the archaic pre-exilic passages is that some of the features of their original grammatical structure that differed from standard biblical Hebrew ceased to be understood in the course of transmission, and by the post-exilic period their form had often become transformed and disguised not only in the reading tradition but also sometimes in the orthography by a false division of words. Some insight into the background of these can be gained from comparing the language of earlier north-west Semitic sources, especially those from the second millennium BC, such as Ugaritic and Akkadian texts containing west Semitic elements (e.g. the corpus of Akkadian texts from Amarna and Mari). This applies, for example, to an enclitic particle with the form -ma or -mi, which is occasionally inserted between the two components of a genitive construction in the second-millennium sources. Several cases of this evidently occurred in the Hebrew biblical text, but were reinterpreted as plural or dual endings, for instance מָתְנַיִם קָמָיו 'the loins of his adversaries' (Deut. 33:11).[41] The sources from the second millennium also clarify the historical background of some grammatical elements that appear in the masoretic text. From Ugaritic, for example, we learn that the *he locale* in constructions such as הַשָּׁמַיְמָה 'to heaven' (Gen. 15:5) must have been derived historically from an adverbial enclitic particle with a consonantal -h and is not, as used to be thought, a vestige of an accusative case vowel.[42]

In the Second Temple period, Aramaic was spoken over a wide area of the Near East. The various written records that have come down to us from this period are all, however, written in some form of literary Aramaic language, which largely concealed the vernacular language of the writer. Already under the Assyrians and Babylonians from about 700 BC Aramaic had become an official language of administration. This situation continued under the Achaemenid empire, the Aramaic of this period being known as official Aramaic or imperial Aramaic. Official Aramaic was a largely standardised form of the language, though there is not complete linguistic uniformity in the surviving examples of it. In particular, different genres of texts exhibit linguistic variation, some of which may reflect local vernacular speech. The main hallmarks of the official Aramaic of the Achaemenid period include nasalisation in place of consonant gemination (*CC* > *nC*), the use of the preposition *l-* as the direct object marker and the use of the preposition *ʾl* after verbs of

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41 Cf. Moran, 'The Hebrew Language in Its Northwest Semitic Background', p. 60.
42 Cf. Ugaritic *šmmh* 'to heaven', in which the final *h* cannot be interpreted as a vowel letter.

movement.[43] A standard literary form of the language continued to exist until *c*. AD 200, though in the so-called middle Aramaic period (200 BC–AD 200) several regional varieties begin to be identifiable.[44] Thereafter, from the third century AD the regional differences increase and are classified as separate dialects. A clearer distinction arose between texts written in the East (Mesopotamia) and those written in the West (Syria, Palestine). Linguistic differences also corresponded to divisions between confessional communities. The Jews of Palestine in the Byzantine period, for example, used in their writings a different form of Aramaic from the one used by Christians, and there were similar differences between Jewish and Christian Aramaic in Mesopotamia.

The composition of the books of Daniel and Ezra is to be dated to the official Aramaic period.[45] Given our assessment of the historical depth of the Tiberian vocalisation, we can assume that the Tiberian masoretic text of the Aramaic passages in the books of Daniel and Ezra is a close reflection of the form the language would have had around the time of their composition. There are numerous linguistic differences between the *ketiḇ* and the *qere* of biblical Aramaic in the masoretic text, which should be regarded as reflecting dialectal divergences. The *qere*, however, should not be considered to represent a substantially later dialect than that reflected by the *ketiḇ*. In many cases the linguistic forms of the *qere* do not correspond to what is found in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, which was the dialect spoken by the masoretes in the Byzantine and early Islamic periods. Rather they can be traced back to at least the middle Aramaic period and sometimes into the official Aramaic period.[46]

The existence of various reading traditions of biblical Aramaic in the Second Temple period is demonstrated by fragments of biblical Aramaic texts found among the Qumran manuscripts that exhibit some linguistic differences from the masoretic text. From the Middle Ages we have biblical manuscripts containing the Aramaic passages with Babylonian vocalisation, which exhibits some features that are more typologically advanced than the Tiberian tradition and some features that are more conservative.[47]

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43 For a detailed study of official Aramaic in this period see Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period*. On reflections of the vernacular see p. 745.
44 For this classification of Aramaic, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Missoula, MI: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 57–84.
45 Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean*, p. 61.
46 Cf. W. S. Morrow and E. G. Clarke, 'The Ketib/Qere in the Aramaic Portions of Ezra and Daniel', *VT* 36 (1986), p. 406–22; Fassberg, 'The Origin of the Ketib/Qere'.
47 Cf. Morag, 'Biblical Aramaic in Geonic Babylonia', pp. 117–31. An example of a conservative feature is the preservation in some manuscripts of the original /u/ vowel in the first syllable of the passive form גֲלִי 'it was revealed' (Dan. 2:19).

Before the Second Temple period, Aramaic was used by Jewish officials as a language of diplomacy, as shown by the biblical account (2 Kings 18:26, Isa. 36:11) in which the officials in Jerusalem requested the representatives of Sennacherib (700 BC) to communicate in Aramaic. This was not understood by the common people of the city, who spoke 'Judaean' (יְהוּדִית, i.e. Hebrew). Aramaic began to be adopted by Jews as a spoken language in the Second Temple period. Its replacement of Hebrew as a vernacular, however, was gradual, since Hebrew continued to be spoken in southern Palestine until the end of the second century AD.

As we have seen, the various layers of tradition of the Aramaic portions of Daniel and Ezra reflect dialectal diversity in some grammatical details, but the language is generally considered to be a literary language related to other types of written Aramaic that were produced in the official Aramaic and middle Aramaic periods. A linguistic analysis shows that biblical Aramaic exhibits the aforementioned grammatical hallmarks of Achaemenid official Aramaic, but there are several differences in phonology and morphology from this literary language, which point to a post-Achaemenid date of the final form of the text. The book of Ezra contains copies of official Achaemenid documents, the language of which has been updated by a redactor to this post-Achaemenid form of official Aramaic, with a few vestiges remaining.[48] Biblical Aramaic exhibits several features that have been identified as eastern in origin, for instance the object marker *l-*, the prefix of the third person imperfect verb *hwy* 'to be' with the form *l-* rather than *y-* and the placement of the direct object before the infinitive. It is not possible on the basis of such linguistic criteria to establish with any certainty the place of composition of the Aramaic passages, since the language was a supra-regional literary koine.[49] We can compare this situation to the way in which Babylonian talmudic Aramaic, based on the dialect of the Jews of Mesopotamia, came to be used in the Middle Ages as a standard literary form of Aramaic by Jewish communities beyond the confines of this region in Palestine and elsewhere.

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48 E.g. the form of the third person masculine plural suffix with final *-m*; see Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period*, p. 754.
49 Cf. Kutscher, 'Aramaic', pp. 399–403.

Varieties of Greek in the Septuagint and the New Testament

JAN JOOSTEN

During the Hellenistic period, when Greek had become a world language, the Jews produced a version in it of their sacred scriptures. The writings of the New Testament, addressing a diverse readership that included many non-Jews, were from the start composed in Greek. So far, so natural. Nevertheless, the language of the Greek Bible has puzzled curious readers from Antiquity. To many scholars, even today, it appears as a unique language. The extent to which it is so, as well as the measure of continuity among the different corpora, has occupied many generations of linguists and philologists.[1]

Biblical Greek?

Ever since the Renaissance, when western scholars regained access to the Greek Bible – the first printed edition of the Septuagint, in the Complutensian polyglot, was approved by Pope Leo X on 22 March 1520, but distributed only from 1521 or 1522 onwards, while Erasmus's edition of the Greek New Testament dates from 1516 – the language of scripture has been observed to differ on many points from that of the classical texts. Indeed, many words and expressions attested in the Greek Bible are simply absent from the classical corpus, while other words are used with a new meaning. Because some of the most striking features are common to the Septuagint and the New Testament, the idea that 'biblical Greek' was a language standing apart naturally suggested itself. Until the end of the nineteenth century, this language was at times conceived of as a kind of Jewish dialect. 'The difficulty of Biblical Greek really begins when we remember that it was Greek as spoken not merely in a foreign country and under new circumstances, but also by an alien race',

1 On the Greek language in the Old and New Testament, see Vergote, 'Grec biblique', cols. 1353–60; Mussies, 'Greek', 195–203; Horrocks, *Greek*, pp. 56–9 (Septuagint), pp. 92–5 (New Testament). For a recent survey of the history of research, see Léonas, *Recherches*, pp. 2–25.

wrote Edwin Hatch.[2] Biblical Greek, in this understanding, reflects a mixed language where many words and expressions, although Greek in form, in reality express 'Hebrew' meanings.

The researches of Adolf Deissmann on the vernacular background of the Greek Bible essentially discredited this type of approach.[3] Deissmann was able to show that the linguistic basis – the morphology, basic vocabulary and syntax – of Septuagint and New Testament Greek is the common, non-literary language of the Hellenistic period as it was practised throughout the Greek-speaking world at the time the writings were created. A few distinctive traits can indeed be found in the biblical corpus, but they are of a cultural, rather than linguistic, nature. The special vocabulary of the Greek Bible consists almost exclusively of religious or theological terms. This does not attest the existence of a 'Jewish dialect' any more than the specialised vocabulary of the Stoics justifies speaking of 'Stoic Greek'. Otherwise, what unites the language of the Septuagint and that of the New Testament is not distinctively Jewish or biblical; it is the fact that they happen to be written in an idiom usually reserved for non-literary documents.

After Deissmann, his main views have rightly been made the starting point of most linguistic research on the Greek Bible. If they are contested or disregarded, as they are from time to time, this is at least partly due to a feeling of reverence for the biblical literature.

Philologia sacra?

The religious and cultural eminence of the Greek Bible has, time and again, led to the expectation that its linguistic quality should be highly prestigious – and to different shades of disappointment when this turned out not to be the case. Indeed, when measured by literary standards, even literary standards of its own time, biblical Greek appears to fall short.

In Antiquity, most apologists simply admitted the 'vileness and simplicity' of the biblical texts and tried to justify it in different ways.[4] From the onset of modernity, however, the discrepancy between expectations and reality has

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2 Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek*, p. 10.

3 See, e.g., the following by Deissmann: *Bibelstudien*; *Neue Bibelstudien*; *Licht vom Osten*; *The Philology of the Greek Bible*. The *Bibelstudien* and *Neue Bibelstudien* will be quoted here according to the English translation: Deissmann, *Bible Studies*.

4 See the testimonies collected by Léonas, *Recherches*, pp. 112–20. It is interesting to note that, while Christians tend to stress that an unadorned style has the advantage of being accessible to all (see, e.g., Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7.59), Jews tend to blame the process of translation (see, e.g., Wisdom of Sirach, Prologue 21–2).

been a complicating factor in the history of investigation into the language of the Greek Bible. Scholars felt that the language of inspired writers could not possibly be bad. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a school of 'purists' tried to show that every one of the peculiarities of biblical, and in particular New Testament, Greek could be paralleled from the best classical writers.[5] The notion of 'Jewish Greek', too, has often served as an excuse for the unusual features of biblical language.[6]

In the present chapter, the non-literary quality of biblical Greek is viewed as a phenomenon that does not need an excuse. The biblical writers used the Greek language they knew. For many of them this means they tapped into a rather colloquial register of the language. Additional features, such as the adoption of Semitic modes of expression, do not alter the basic cast of the language, however conspicuous they may be.

Linguistic diversity in the Greek Bible

The insistence on the vernacular component, in the line of Deissmann, is not meant to suggest that the language of the Greek Bible is homogeneous. Alongside the writings reflecting a relatively low stylistic register of the language one finds a few books with a rather nice literary style, such as the Wisdom of Solomon or the second part of the Acts of the Apostles.

In fact, due to various factors, the collection of writings making up the Greek Bible exhibits an extraordinary amount of linguistic diversity. Some of the texts were translated from a Semitic language while others were composed in Greek. Some books were written in Egypt, others in Palestine or elsewhere. The time span of the literature extends over close to four centuries. The socio-cultural background of the writers, too, is varied. This diversity in itself provides a strong argument against seeing the Greek of the Bible as a unity. Nevertheless, one can make out some common traits and general tendencies among the different books.

The Septuagint

The name Septuagint (οἱ ἑβδομήκοντα, literally, 'the Seventy [translators]') originally designated the translation of the Pentateuch only, but later came to be used for the entire collection of Greek books making up the Christian Old

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5 For a bibliographical review and examples, see Léonas, *Recherches*, pp. 6–10.
6 See, e.g., Vergote, 'Grec biblique', cols. 1359–60.

Testament.[7] In this extended sense, the Septuagint contains writings created over a period of almost four centuries, both translations from Hebrew and Aramaic and original Greek texts.[8] The most important part of this corpus is without contest the Pentateuch, which was translated first and decisively influenced the later books.[9]

The Pentateuch

Since the earliest manuscripts of the Greek Torah date to the beginning of the second century BC, and the earliest quotations from it are slightly older still, there is a widespread consensus dating its creation to the first half of the third century BC.[10] This date agrees with the tradition, surfacing in the Letter of Aristeas and other writings, which attributes the translation of the Jewish law to the reign of King Ptolemy, probably Ptolemy II (285–247 BC). Although next to nothing is known about the origins of the Greek Pentateuch, the available evidence favours the view that it was produced by Alexandrian Jews for use in their teaching and liturgy.[11] The language of the Pentateuch is basically the kind of Greek used among Hellenised Jews in Alexandria at the beginning of the Hellenistic age. Unusual phraseology and syntax are mostly due to literal translation from the Hebrew.

Hellenistic Greek

The language of the Pentateuch is the Greek language as spoken and written throughout the Mediterranean world in the early Hellenistic period. Rather strikingly, the stylistic register of the version does not correspond to what one expects from a literary writing. The Greek used in the Septuagint Pentateuch has little in common with the literary language of the great classical authors such as Plato or Thucydides, and is only slightly closer to the language of

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7 The name derives from the tradition according to which seventy or seventy-two translators produced the Greek version of the Pentateuch. The tradition underlies the Letter of Aristeas and surfaces also in many other sources; see Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint*.

8 For the extent of the Septuagint canon, see Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 197–288; Karrer and Kraus, 'Umfang und Aufbau der Septuaginta', pp. 8–63.

9 For the language of the Septuagint in general, see Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 289–314; Thackeray, *Grammar*, pp. 1–55; Harl, 'La langue de la Septante', pp. 223–66.

10 See Harl, Dorival and Munnich, *Bible grecque*, pp. 39–110.

11 For other theories on the original setting of the Septuagint Pentateuch, see Dorival, 'La traduction de la Torah', pp. 31–41. In recent years, van der Kooij and Pietersma have argued that the Septuagint was originally meant to function as an aid in the study of the Hebrew Bible, as a kind of interlinear 'crib'; see van der Kooij, 'Origin and Purpose of Bible Translations', 204–14, at p. 214; Pietersma, 'A New Paradigm', pp. 337–64. See the criticisms of this hypothesis in Dines, *The Septuagint*, pp. 52–4.

Hellenistic writers like Polybius.[12] The greatest similarity is to the vernacular koine found in non-literary documents, inscriptions, ostraca and papyri.

Use of the vernacular

Although the vernacular, non-literary character of Septuagint Greek had been recognised by earlier scholars, definite proof was first provided by Deissmann.[13] With a wealth of evidence he demonstrated the particular illumination biblical Greek receives from close study of the papyri.[14] Among his examples, many came from the Pentateuch. Words and usages that had been thought to be exclusively biblical turned up in documentary texts roughly contemporaneous with the translation. Since Deissmann, this line of investigation has been followed up particularly by Thackeray for the grammar and by Lee for the vocabulary.[15] The accidence, word formation, basic vocabulary and syntax of the Greek Pentateuch find their closest parallels in the language of Egyptian documentary papyri of the Ptolemaic age. Examples:

- The defective verb ἥκω 'to have arrived' is formally a present but expresses the meaning of a perfect. In the Pentateuch it is conjugated as follows: ἥκω ἥκεις ἥκει ἥκαμεν ἥκατε (once ἥκετε) ἥκασιν. This suppletive paradigm is alien to literary texts (where ἥκομεν ἥκετε ἥκουσιν are used), but attested in exactly the same form in the papyri.[16]
- Verbs in -μι assimilated to verbs in -ω during the history of the Greek language. The process is well under way in the early Hellenistic period, as shown in the Ptolemaic papyri: while middle forms still follow the old -μι paradigm, active forms tend to conform to the -ω paradigm. In the Greek Pentateuch, the same evolution is attested by such forms as active ἀνιστῶν (present participle of ἀνιστάω; in classical Greek: ἀνιστάς) versus middle διανιστάμενος (as in classical Greek).[17]
- For 'ass, donkey' the translators most often use the classical Greek word ὄνος. Alongside this term, however, they also use ὑποζύγιον. The latter word is well known in the meaning 'beast of burden', but unattested in the meaning 'ass' in literary texts, from whatever period. In documentary papyri from the Ptolemaic period, the word ὑποζύγιον 'ass' occurs frequently.[18]

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12 For a comparison of the Septuagint and Polybius on one point of syntax, see Allen, *Use of the Infinitive*.
13 For precursors of Deissmann, see Vergote, 'Grec biblique', col. 1325.
14 See the studies of Deissmann quoted above in n. 3.
15 See Thackeray, *Grammar*; Lee, *Lexical Study*.   16 See Thackeray, *Grammar*, p. 269.
17 See Thackeray, *Grammar*, pp. 247–8.   18 See Lee, *Lexical Study*, pp. 140–4.

- The genitive absolute is properly restricted to expressions whose subject has no role in the main sentence. Even in classical Greek, some exceptions to this rule are tolerated.[19] In Hellenistic Greek, the construction is used relatively often where its subject plays a grammatical role in the main sentence. In the Greek Pentateuch, this wider usage of the genitive absolute is surprisingly frequent, as it is in the Ptolemaic documentary papyri. Especially revealing are the examples where the subject of the genitive absolute is also the subject of the main clause: Num. 4:19 καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν Ναδαβ καὶ Αβιουδ ἔναντι κυρίου προσφερόντων αὐτῶν πῦρ ἀλλότριον ἔναντι κυρίου, 'And Nadab and Abiud died before the Lord when they were bringing strange fire before the Lord'; see also Gen. 44:4; Exod. 2:10, 4:21, 16:1, 34:29; Num. 3:4.[20]

Features of this kind, instances of which could easily be multiplied, are highly remarkable in a literary text.[21] Some of them must have been almost intolerably colloquial for cultivated readers.[22] They owe nothing to the Hebrew source text, however. Indeed, they are not due to the translational process at all. Rather, they appear to reflect the social background of the translators.[23] The 'Seventy', it seems, had not studied Greek letters, but wrote the language more or less the way they spoke it. They are never at a loss for a word and are able to vary their language depending on the context. The idiomatic quality of their Greek – although masked to a certain extent by the tendency towards literal translation – suggests native proficiency.[24] But the kind of Greek they know so well is not that of the school, of philosophers and historians, or of the royal court. It is the Greek of the barracks and the marketplace.

19 See the examples quoted in Conybeare and Stock, *Grammar*, §58, p. 58.
20 Note also the following examples where the subject of the genitive absolute occurs in other grammatical functions in the main sentence: Gen. 18:1, 24:30, 30:38, 44:14; Exod. 5:20, 14:18, 16:13; Num. 6:7; Deut. 4:45.
21 The examples could easily be multiplied, particularly in the areas of morphology and vocabulary. Of course, stylistic register is a matter of degree; the distinction between spoken and written language is a gradual one.
22 Pagan critics of the Greek Bible must have been rather strident in their remarks on its stylistic quality, but their writings generally have not survived. Only the defence of Jewish and Christian apologists has been preserved, see above, n. 4. Note that Jewish Hellenistic writers themselves tend to correct the phrasing of the Septuagint when they quote it, see examples in Swete, *Introduction*, p. 370.
23 It was unusual in Antiquity to employ colloquial language in literary works except in comedy, where the characters' discourse imitated real speech. The closeness of the vocabulary of the Septuagint to that of Aristophanes and other comics was noted by Kennedy, *Sources*, p. 42 and *passim*.
24 See Lee, *Lexical Study*, pp. 24–9, 34–40.

Where the translators of the Pentateuch use an idiomatic expression known also from classical authors, or where they employ a word otherwise attested mainly or exclusively in poetic writings, the prudent approach will be to suppose that these features were known to them from the spoken language.[25] With regard to grammatical constructions, too, one should consider the possibility that they reflect normal koine Greek of the period before explaining them as archaisms or 'Homerisms'.[26]

Egyptian elements

As a world language, Hellenistic Greek did not have clearly differentiated local varieties, let alone dialects. Much of the koine basis of the Septuagint will have been representative of the kind of Greek that was spoken throughout the eastern Mediterranean, even if the specific documentation comes from Egypt. One should keep in mind that almost all documentary papyri happen to have been preserved in Egypt. Nevertheless, a number of Greek words used in the Septuagint do appear to be specifically Egyptian. Deissmann already signalled many possible examples, some of which remain convincing, notably ἐνταφιαστής 'embalmer' and ἐργοδιώκτης 'taskmaster'.[27] More recently, Lee has added other instances, as has Passoni dell'Acqua.[28]

Particularly interesting in this regard are Greek words borrowed from the Egyptian language: θῖβις 'basket', ἄχει, 'reeds', οἰφί 'ephah' (a dry measure).[29]

The Egyptian element in the Greek of the Pentateuch is hardly compatible with the notion expressed in the Letter of Aristeas according to which the

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25 See Lee, *Lexical Study*, p. 35, on Lev. 13:23 κατὰ χώραν μένω 'remain in place', an expression attested in Herodotus and other classical writers: 'The translators can have used such an expression only because it was familiar to them in the language that they were accustomed to speak.' Similarly, Kennedy, *Sources*, p. 34, writes on words like θύελλα (Deut. 4:11) that are, outside the Septuagint, attested only in poetry: 'It seems by no means unlikely that many of the words, though confined to a particular type of literature within the compass of our knowledge, really formed part of the regular vocabulary in particular regions.'

26 Evans has argued that the use of the optative in similes, attested about ten times in the Pentateuch, is due to imitation of Homer, see Evans, 'The Comparative Optative', 487–504. The hypothesis is unlikely, however; see Joosten, 'Elaborate Similes', 227–36, at pp. 232–3. Other putative Homerisms in the grammar of the Septuagint have been identified by Usener, 'Die Septuaginta im Horizont des Hellenismus', pp. 78–118, at p. 92. All his examples can be paralleled from Hellenistic Greek, as one can easily find out from Thackeray's *Grammar*.

27 See Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, pp. 120 and 122.

28 See, e.g., Lee, *Lexical Study*, p. 116; Passoni dell'Acqua, 'Ricerche', 173–94; Passoni dell'Acqua 'Terminologia', pp. 335–50; Passoni dell'Acqua, 'Von der Kanzlei der Lagiden zur Synagoge', pp. 216–27; see also Dorival, 'La traduction de la Torah', p. 34.

29 All three of them are attested in Greek documentary papyri from Egypt; see Fournet, 'Les emprunts du grec à l'égyptien', 55–80, at pp. 73, 68 and 71. For θῖβις, see also Lee, *Lexical Study*, p. 115. The Greek words were not borrowed from Hebrew, as is shown by their form.

translators were Palestinian Jews. It indicates rather that the translators were of Egyptian origin.

The Jewish sociolect

Not all the special features of the language of the Greek Pentateuch can be paralleled from the papyri. Partly this will be due to the hazards of attestation. One should remember that the papyri deal with only a small part of the subject matter prominent in the Pentateuch. Many words not attested in Greek writings older than the Pentateuch must nevertheless have been common in the language of the period.

A small number of words and usages of the Greek Pentateuch do not reflect the Alexandrian koine, however, but the language spoken among Jews. Religious concepts and *realia* important for Jewish life are designated by words that are proper to Greek-speaking Jews. The words γειώρας 'proselyte',[30] πάσχα 'Pesach', σάββατα 'Sabbath', μάννα 'manna' and σίκερα 'strong drink' certainly belong to this category. These terms are not originally Greek, of course, but neither are they Hebrew. They are not ad hoc transcriptions of words in the Hebrew source text for which the translator could not find an equivalent. As is shown by the final alpha, reflecting the emphatic state, these words were borrowed from Aramaic. They almost certainly existed in the Jewish Greek idiom of the translators.[31] Indeed, these elements suggest that, before the adoption of Greek, Aramaic may have been the language spoken by the community to which the translators belong.[32] As shown by the Elephantine documents and other epigraphic remains, Aramaic-speaking Jews had been present in Egypt for a long time before the country was conquered by the Greeks.

Some Greek words employed in the Septuagint may reflect the idiom of this Jewish group as well. This is a possibility, at least, for the terms προσήλυτος 'proselyte', ἀκροβυστία 'foreskin', ἄζυμα 'unleavened bread', εἴδωλον 'idol' and εὐλογέω 'to bless'. Perhaps cases such as διαθήκη 'covenant' and νόμος 'Jewish law' – words that are systematically used in the Greek version to render specific Hebrew terms (*in casu*, ברית and תורה) – should also be included here.

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30 For the attestation and variant forms of this word, see Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint*, pp. 33–4.

31 Note that σάββατα is attested in the Zenon papyri (third century BC); see Tcherikover, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, p. 136 (no. 10).

32 There are many other indications of Aramaic influence on the Septuagint translators; see Joosten, 'The Septuagint as a Source of Information', pp. 93–105.

Admittedly, some of these words may have been coined by the translators themselves.

Even on a maximal assessment, such features reflecting the speech of Hellenistic Jews will never suffice to reinstate the hypothesis of a special language or dialect. The basic grammar and vocabulary of the Septuagint Pentateuch are those of Hellenistic Greek. The special features merely characterise a peculiar sociolect.

Influence from the Hebrew

The translators of the Pentateuch inaugurated a method of translation that was rather literal. Each Hebrew word of the source text tends to be represented by one Greek word, the word order is generally the same and a measure of lexical stereotyping is observed.[33] The motivation for this literal approach is debated. Some scholars think the main reason for word-for-word translation is theological: the translators wanted to diverge from the source text as little as possible – in scripture, 'even the word order is a mystery' as Jerome says.[34] Somewhat similarly, the idea has been defended that the unusual idiom of the Greek Bible was created as a form of 'hieratic style' adequate to the sacred content of the writings.[35] Others invoke more down-to-earth explanations. The literalism of the Pentateuch may be due mainly to the inexperience of the translators.[36] The latter hypothesis is probably closer to the mark. For the seventy translators, literal translation was the easiest way to produce a version of the Hebrew text.

Whatever its *raison d'être*, the literal translation technique has led to a lot of carry-over from the source language to the target language. The most striking cases occur where a Hebrew word is not translated but simply transcribed into Greek. In the Pentateuch, the examples of this procedure are not many: χερουβιμ 'cherubim', μαν 'manna', and the measures ιν and γομορ. The reason these words were transcribed seems to be that the translators found no precise equivalent in Greek. They knew what were *cherubim*, *manna*, *hin* and

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33 For an analysis of literalism in the Septuagint, see Barr, *Typology*, pp. 279–325; Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, pp. 17–29. Many aspects of Septuagint translation technique have been treated extensively by scholars belonging to the Finnish school, notably I. Soisalon-Soininen, R. Sollamo, A. Aejmelaeus, S. Sippilä and A. Voitila.

34 See Jerome, *Ep.* 57.5.2. On the background of Jerome's dictum, see Brock, 'The Phenomenon of the Septuagint', 11–36, at p. 21.

35 See Léonas, *Recherches*, pp. 85–6.

36 See, e.g., Barr, *Typology*, p. 26; van der Louw, 'Approaches in Translation Studies', pp. 17–28, at pp. 20–1.

gomor.[37] The phenomenon encountered in Kingdoms and some other books, which consists in transcribing difficult words the meaning of which appears to have escaped the translators, is not attested in the Pentateuch.

Much more frequently the translation technique results in a text whose words are Greek while the phraseology, syntax or style are to varying degrees unexpected.[38] Examples:

- At times a Greek equivalent that fits certain usages of the Hebrew word will be used in passages where it is not appropriate. The word ἔλεος 'pity' is a reasonable rendering of the Hebrew word חסד 'goodwill' where the one who receives the 'goodwill' is in a pitiful situation, as in Gen. 39:21 'The Lord . . . poured down *compassion* upon Joseph [who had been unjustly imprisoned].' Where the Hebrew word refers to a basic attitude characterising partners in a covenant, however, ἔλεος is somewhat odd. Nevertheless, it is used in such contexts as well (see Deut. 7:9, 12).[39]
- Where an idiomatic expression is rendered literally, the result is often disconcerting. In Hebrew, 'to fill someone's hands' means 'to ordain someone to a cultic office'. In Exod. 28:41 (43), this is rendered literally into Greek: καὶ ἐμπλήσεις αὐτῶν τὰς χεῖρας 'you will fill their hands'. What a reader who had no Hebrew was to make of this expression is unclear. In other passages, the same Hebrew expression is decoded more helpfully (see, e.g., Lev. 21:10).
- In Hebrew narrative, new episodes are often introduced by an ostensibly otiose ויהי 'and it happened'. In the Septuagint this is usually rendered literally as καὶ ἐγένετο. The turn of phrase is not hard to understand, but it is unattested in non-biblical Greek texts.

Some scholars have taken these various instances of 'Hebraism' as evidence that there existed a Jewish Greek that was spoken and used in religious circles.[40] The inference is neither necessary nor likely. The Hebraisms of the Septuagint are sufficiently accounted for by the principle of literal translation. Admittedly, Hellenistic Jews may in religious discourse have used phrases from the Septuagint in conscious allusion to scripture. Such cases of borrowing are found also in written texts.[41] But they do not affect the basic cast of the

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37 Perhaps the word κόρος 'kor [a dry measure]' should also be included here. The Graecised form of the word may indicate, however, that it had been borrowed, perhaps from Aramaic, into the Egyptian koine. The word is attested in a papyrus dated 259/8 BC (LSJ).
38 See Voitila, 'La Septante', pp. 17–35; Lust, 'La syntaxe grecque', pp. 37–55.
39 See Joosten, *Hesed* "bienveillance" et *éleos* "pitié"', pp. 25–42.
40 See notably, Gehman, 'Hebraic Character', pp. 163–73.
41 See Walser, *The Greek of the Ancient Synagogue*.

language any more than occasional allusions to the King James Version alter the English of a modern day preacher.

Conclusion

With little literary schooling and, probably, negligible previous experience, the translators of the Torah approached their gigantic task with optimism and ingenuity. Although faithfulness to the Hebrew source was their first imperative, they by no means neglected the exigencies of the target language. The Greek, if not elegant, is almost always correct. In many passages one observes that the choice of words is varied so as to avoid repetition.[42] In other passages, there are attempts to create stylistic effects such as alliteration.[43] With the resources at their disposal, and within the limits imposed by their translation technique, the translators were at pains to produce a text that would be pleasing to the reader.

Notwithstanding the translators' attention to questions of style, the Greek language of the Septuagint Pentateuch remains a very remarkable phenomenon. While in regard to its cultural importance, the Greek Pentateuch is a writing second to none, it is presented in non-literary language. This fact can hardly be explained otherwise than by supposing that the translators were unable to write polished literary Greek. They did not belong to the cultural elite. They were far removed from the royal court and had little idea of what went on in the world of learning. They represent a middle class where literacy was well developed, but literary training remained out of reach.

The other books

The discussion of the other books of the Septuagint will be much briefer, not only because there is less to say but also because the language of the other books has not been the focus of scholarly research to the same extent as the language of the Pentateuch has been. What can be said in general is that the influence of the Greek Pentateuch on the other books is very great. Notably, the basic religious and theological terminology of the later books links up with that of the Law.[44]

Books translated from Hebrew and Aramaic

The later translators, it appears, were steeped in the language of the Pentateuch and saw their own efforts as a continuation of that first great attempt

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42 See, e.g., Leiter, 'Assimilation and Dissimilation Techniques', pp. 79–95.
43 See Lee, 'Translations of the Old Testament', pp. 775–84.
44 See Tov, 'Impact', pp. 183–94.

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to provide a Greek version of the Jewish Bible. Schematically, it is possible to recognise two large groups among the other books: on the one hand, a collection of writings characterised by an increasingly strict translation technique, on the other hand, a few books evincing a much freer attitude towards the source text.

Books translated literally

Psalms, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve, as well as most of the historical books, were translated word for word. One observes a gliding scale of literalness, from the relative freedom of Joshua, through the more decided literalness of the prophetical books and Psalms, to the 'unintelligent' calquing of the *kaige* sections of Kingdoms (2 Kgd. 11–3 Kgd. 2:11; 3 Kgd. 22–4 Kgd. 25).[45] Ecclesiastes is translated in a way that reminds one of Aquila.

To all appearances, the literal approach in most of these books has moved on from being an 'easy technique' to reflecting a theoretical stance.[46] Out of reverence for the sacred text, the translators decided to adhere as closely as possible to their source, including its formal characteristics. Techniques were developed to render aspects of the source text that one would normally consider to be untranslatable. A good example is the translation of the first person singular personal pronoun. In Hebrew, two forms exist, אני and אנכי, both meaning 'I'. In the Pentateuch, both forms are usually translated with ἐγώ or with forms of the verb 'to be' as required by the context. In some of the later books, however, אני is rendered with ἐγώ, while אנכי is rendered systematically with ἐγώ εἰμι 'I am'. The latter rendering is used even where the pronoun combines, as it often does, with a finite verb. As a result, one finds sentences of the type: ἐγώ εἰμι ἔχρισά σε εἰς βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ισραηλ καὶ ἐγώ εἰμι ἐρρυσάμην σε ἐκ χειρὸς Σαουλ '*I am* I have anointed you king over Israel and *I am* I have rescued you out of the hand of Saul' (2 Kgd. 12:7). The translator willingly sacrificed both syntactic elegance and semantic precision in order to give an indication as to which of the two first person singular pronouns was used in the Hebrew source text.

Another remarkable phenomenon encountered in some of the books rendered very literally is that of transcriptions of Hebrew words contained in the source text.[47] Thus Ezek. 40:48b is rendered καὶ διεμέτρησεν τὸ αιλ τοῦ αιλαμ 'he measured the *ail* of the *ailam*'. The transliterated words here correspond to Hebrew architectural terms meaning 'pillar' (אל) and 'vestibule'

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45 See the table in Thackeray, *Grammar*, p. 13.   46 Barr, *Typology*, p. 26.
47 See Thackeray, *Grammar*, pp. 31–4; Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint*, pp. 155–96.

(אלם) respectively. Again, such transliterations do nothing for the Greek style of the version, nor do they contribute anything to a correct understanding of the passage. But they present the advantage of providing the reader with exact information on the form of the Hebrew source text.

Literal translation obscures the linguistic quality of these books to a certain extent. Even where the translators do not resort to extreme measures, the successive calquing of Hebrew words leads in many places to insipid Greek. The morphology and the basic vocabulary show that the language of the translators is Hellenistic Greek of the same general type as that of the Pentateuch. Tell-tale indications suggest that their level of literary training may actually be a bit higher. In Ezek. 27:5 the expression ἱστοὺς ἐλατίνους 'masts of fir' seems to be a literary allusion to Homer (*Od.* 2.424).[48] In Hos. 4:16, the rendering ὡς δάμαλις παροιστρῶσα 'like a heifer stung by a gadfly' may attest familiarity with the myth of Io.[49] Cases like these are rare. They could only come about where the translator abandoned the literal rendering of the Hebrew.

Books translated freely

Among the translated books of the Septuagint, Isaiah, Job, Proverbs, Daniel, Esther and 1 Esdras stand out for the freedom taken by the translators. Of course, these translations are not all to be put in one bag: in Isaiah, the rendering remains faithful verse by verse if not word for word; in the book of Job, many verses were left aside by the Old Greek translator; in Proverbs, on the contrary, a number of passages were added that seem to have been composed originally in Greek, and the same is true, though in a different way, for Daniel and Esther. What characterises all these books, however, is that their translators did not slavishly follow the formal aspects of the Hebrew source text. The word order is routinely adapted to the requirements of the Greek language. No consistent effort at representing each element of the Hebrew text by one and only one element is in evidence. There is room for Greek idioms and turns of phrase. All these features make it much easier to study the quality of the translators' Greek than is the case for the books translated literally.

Among the free translations, the Greek of the books of Job and Proverbs definitely stands on a higher level than that of the Pentateuch. Thus Job

48 This example was presented by Knut Usener at the IOSCS conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The paper will be published in a volume on the style of the Septuagint to be edited by E. Bons and Th. Kraus, and published by Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.
49 See Bons, 'Une vache folle dans la Bible?', pp. 30–7.

13:20 has the only dual form, δυεῖν 'two', in the entire corpus of translated books.[50] The form seems to have been chosen for poetic effect, for the normal Hellenistic form, δύο, occurs in 42:7, in the prose part of the book. The same book also uses the poetic verb ὀλέκω 'to destroy', alongside the more prosaic ὄλλυμι.[51] The name of Job's daughter, Keren-happuch, is rendered Ἀμαλθείας κέρας 'Horn of Amaltheia' (Job 42:14), after the horn of plenty created by Zeus from the she-goat who had nursed him when he was small. Many other linguistic phenomena show that the translator of Job had received a good Greek education.[52] The same can be said for the translator of Proverbs. In several passages, one can find attempts at creating metre, a typically Greek poetic device.[53] In Prov. 30:19, the rare verb ποντοπορέω 'sailing the sea' is probably a reminiscence of Homer (*Od.* 11.11).[54] Note also the use of the potential optative in Prov. 20:24.[55]

Books composed in Greek

The Septuagint canon transmits a number of books that probably never had a Hebrew source text but were directly written in Greek. Sure examples are 2 Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon. For other writings either the canonicity of the book within the Greek canon is in some doubt (e.g. 3 and 4 Maccabees) or the original language of the book is subject to discussion (e.g. the Letter of Jeremiah). Some books translated from Hebrew were supplemented with parts written in Greek: Proverbs, Esther, Daniel and perhaps Baruch.

Globally speaking, the non-translated books reflect a good literary style.[56] The Greek is post-classical. Only the book of 4 Maccabees, on the borderline of the Septuagint canon, shows signs of Atticism, the movement towards classical models, marking particularly the first and second century AD.

The level of style in 2 Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon is comparable to that of some translated books, such as Job and Proverbs. The higher literary

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50 Thackeray, *Grammar*, pp. 92 and 187. The form is found also in 4 Macc. 1:28, 15:2. As Thackeray points out, this is not the classical form of the dual, which would be δυοῖν, but the form used in late Attic inscriptions and in Hellenistic writers like Polybius and Strabo.
51 Thackeray, *Grammar*, p. 279.   52 See, e.g., Cox, 'Tying It All Together', 41–54.
53 See Thackeray, 'The Poetry of the Greek Book of Proverbs', 46–66; d'Hamonville, *Proverbes*, pp. 92–9.
54 For other possible references to Greek literature in Greek Proverbs, see d'Hamonville, *Proverbes*, p. 103.
55 For other instances of the potential optative, see: Gen. 23:15, 44:8; Ezek. 15:2; Job 25:4, 41:5; Sir. 25:3; non translated: Esth. B 3 (13:3). See the study of the optative by Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, pp. 175–97.
56 With regard to the Wisdom of Solomon, see Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, pp. 3–25.

level is probably an indication of the fact that the Jewish community reading and producing the Greek Bible was moving up in society.

A very special place is taken by the book of Judith. Until recently, this book was widely believed to have been translated from Hebrew. Indeed, its style is heavily Hebraised. One finds such typically Hebraistic turns of phrase as καὶ ἐγένετο 'and it happened' (reflecting Hebrew ויהי), καὶ ἰδού 'and behold' (והנה) and many more. As in the translated books, some of the typical features of Greek writing are either completely absent or very rare: there are no cases of οὖν, τε or ἄρα, and only one of μέν. The style is mainly paratactic, the storyline consisting principally of καὶ with aorist indicative.

More recently, however, the scholarly consensus has started to shift towards the idea that Judith was written in Greek from the start.[57] Alongside the Hebraisms, one also finds idiomatic Greek features, such as the use of the future infinitive, an element that has no equivalent in Hebrew.[58] The strongest argument in favour of a Greek origin is the fact that, where the book quotes the Bible, it follows the Septuagint. This happens even with passages, like Num. 23:19, where the Greek version diverges completely from the Hebrew text.

If Judith was composed in Greek, its Hebraising style would not be due to literal translation, but to imitation of the Septuagint. A Greek author, intending to create a 'biblical' story, adopted the biblical style he knew from the Greek version. This hypothesis would explain the book's occasional 'lapses' into good Greek: since the writer was composing the text freely, he tended to fall back on his own Greek idiom. Judith would be an early example of a phenomenon that has left its mark also on some New Testament writings (notably Luke–Acts, see below).

The New Testament

The New Testament is much shorter than the Septuagint and came into being over a much briefer period of time. It has also been researched far more intensively.[59] It is probably fair to say that it is better understood or, at

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57 See, e.g., Engel, '"Der Herr ist ein Gott, der die Kriege zerschlägt"', pp. 155–68; Rakel, *Judit*, pp. 33–40; Schmitz, *Gedeutete Geschichte*, pp. 2–3.
58 Note also the cases where a relative clause precedes the nominal head, as in Jdth. 5:3, 8:15. This elegant Greek construction is hardly attested in the translated books of the Septuagint (but see Dan. 1:8; Lam. 3:57).
59 See the extensive review by Voelz, 'The Language of the New Testament', pp. 893–977; see also Porter, 'The Greek Language of the New Testament', pp. 99–130.

the least, that its problems have been better charted. Enough open questions remain, however, for linguists and philologists to debate.

Without putting too fine a point on it, New Testament Greek is Hellenistic Greek tainted by Semitic influences.[60] A crucial problem, particularly in the Gospels, is the categorisation of the Semitisms: do they reflect interference from a Semitic substratum, or are they due to influence from the Septuagint? Decisions are not always easy to make, and some Semitisms may owe something to both factors. Nevertheless, the options should be clearly distinguished on the theoretical level. In what follows, the three main 'ingredients' of New Testament Greek will first be presented. Thereafter, the writings will be grouped according to their salient characteristics.

The main ingredients of New Testament Greek

Grossly speaking, there are three components in New Testament Greek, the one dominant and the other two subsidiary. The dominant factor is Hellenistic Greek, the subsidiary ones are influence from the Septuagint and interference by a Semitic substratum.

Hellenistic Greek

For the most part, the Greek of the New Testament writings is of the same general quality as that of the Septuagint: it is Hellenistic Greek reflecting a rather low stylistic register, of the kind no cultivated writer would ever have used for literary purposes.[61] The closest analogue is found in the language of contemporary non-literary papyri, as Deissmann was able to show.[62] To be sure, one encounters different levels of style in the pages of the New Testament (as well as in the papyri).[63] In all its diversity, however, New Testament Greek receives crucial illumination from the non-literary Greek documents.[64]

The reason for the use of this type of language appears to be the same as for the Septuagint. New Testament writers wrote Greek as well as they were able. Nothing in their Greek education had prepared Mark, say, or Paul, to make a major contribution to world literature. For some authors, the authority of the Septuagint may also have played a role. The use of vernacular Greek was felt to be warranted in 'biblical' literature.

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60 See Silva, 'Bilingualism', pp. 205–26; Horsley, *New Documents*, pp. 5–40.
61 See, however, n. 22, above.   62 See the publications of Deissmann, above in n. 3.
63 Rydbeck has pointed out that one should not reckon with 'literary' and 'popular' Greek only. There are intermediate stages, e.g. the language of scientific treatises. See Rydbeck, *Fachprosa*.
64 A useful collection of material is Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*. Updates can be found in the series *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (volumes I–IX) published by Macquarie University in Australia.

Differences between the Septuagint and the New Testament are due in part to the passing of time. Koine Greek had evolved between the third century BC and the first century AD. Words and forms that are frequent in the Septuagint had fallen from use by the time the New Testament was committed to writing, and other elements had taken their place.[65]

The Septuagint

Among New Testament writings there is no central subcorpus as there is for the Septuagint. Instead, the New Testament itself continues the literary tradition of the Septuagint. The New Testament writers belong to a milieu where the Bible was read in Greek. Practically all New Testament books give evidence of this. Old Testament quotations usually follow the Septuagint, and allusions to the Old Testament too are most often based on the Greek text form.

The language of religion used by Greek-speaking Jews and Christians is coloured by the Septuagint. A large part of the religious vocabulary of the New Testament reflects this circumstance: examples are words like ἀγάπη 'love', διαθήκη 'covenant', χριστός 'Christ', ἀκροβυστία 'foreskin', διάβολος 'devil', δόξα 'glory' and κτίζω 'to create'.[66]

Besides, several New Testament authors appear to imitate the syntax of the Septuagint, probably in order to lend their text a 'biblical ring'. This explains phrases like καὶ ἐγένετο . . . καὶ ἰδού 'and it happened . . . and behold' and idioms like λαμβάνω πρόσωπον 'to lift up the face'.

The Semitic substratum

The New Testament writings were probably all composed originally in Greek. Although translation from Aramaic or Hebrew has been suspected for some books, notably the Gospels, Acts 1–15 and Revelation,[67] no convincing evidence has been submitted to this effect. Indeed, historical-critical study has made the idea ever more difficult to maintain. Specifically, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke can hardly have been written in a Semitic language if they were based on a Greek text of Mark and a Greek text of Q, as appears to be the case.

Nevertheless, the New Testament texts are rooted in a world where Semitic languages dominated social and religious life. The original teaching of Jesus

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65 See the examples studied in Lee, *Lexical Study*, pp. 131–44; see also Lee, Ἐξαποστέλλω', pp. 99–113.
66 For a recent collection of words like these, see Joosten and Tomson, *Voces biblicae*.
67 See Torrey, *Our Translated Gospels*, and other studies by Torrey.

and the first accounts of his deeds were formulated in Hebrew or Aramaic.[68] The Semitic substratum has affected the Greek of the New Testament in different ways:

- Some of the sources of the Gospels, and perhaps Acts as well, probably go back to Semitic traditions, whether oral or written. When these Semitic materials were translated into Greek, this was sometimes done in a literal way, leading to unidiomatic Greek. Semitic source material is expected particularly, though not exclusively, in words of Jesus and similar material.
- The fact that some of the New Testament writers were bilingual could account for some peculiarities of the Greek – a good example may be the book of Revelation.[69]
- In addition, the Greek language used among Jews in Palestine may have had some peculiar features due to influence from Hebrew and Aramaic.

The question of the Semitic substratum is the most controversial one when it comes to defining the problems of New Testament Greek. It is also the hardest to investigate. The retranslation of New Testament terms and expressions into Hebrew and Aramaic can never be entirely free of speculation. The principle, however, upon which such retranslation is attempted is sound.

Overview of New Testament writings

The linguistic diversity among the books of the New Testament is equal to that among the books of the Septuagint. The following comments are meant to highlight a number of striking characteristics of New Testament writings.

Mark

The Gospel of Mark is characterised by a colloquial style that shows no regard for the canons of literary composition. An interesting indication of this is the frequent use of lexical Latinisms: δηνάριον (*denarius*), κεντυρίων (*centurio*),[70] κῆνσον (*census*), κοδράντης (*quadrans*), λεγιών (*legio*), ξέστης (*sextarius*), σπεκουλάτωρ (*speculator*), φραγελλόω (*flagellare*). Note also the phraseological Latinisms: τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιέω (*satisfacere*) 'to satisfy', ῥαπίσμασιν λαμβάνω (*verberibus accipere*) 'to give a beating'. Since borrowings

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68 Since the end of the nineteenth century, scholars have usually held that the Semitic background of the Gospels is Aramaic. More recent research indicates, however, that Hebrew should be taken into account as well. See Joosten, 'Aramaic or Hebrew behind the Gospels?', 88–101.
69 See Mussies, *Morphology*.
70 See Mark 15:39. Both Matthew and Luke correct the Latinism, see Matt. 27:54 ἑκατόνταρχος, Luke 23:47 ἑκατοντάρχης.

from Latin were widespread in the vulgar Greek of the first century AD, they should not be used to argue that the Gospel was written in Rome. What they do show is that the evangelist, although a gifted story-teller, has no feeling for *belles lettres*. In literary texts, the use of foreign words was considered a blemish.[71]

Other items of vocabulary also indicate the colloquial quality of Mark's Greek: κράβαττον 'bed' in Mark 2:4 (note that Matthew and Luke use the more literary term κλίνη, Matt. 9:2 and Luke 8:18); τὸ κοράσιον 'the girl' in Mark 5:41 (also in Matt. 9:24, 25, but Luke 8:54 corrects to ἡ παῖς).

The grammar, too, is sometimes rather rough and ready: Mark 16:6 ἴδε ὁ τόπος 'look, the place' (corrected to the expected accusative, ἴδετε τὸν τόπον 'see the place', in Matt. 28:6); Mark 11:2 πῶλον δεδεμένον ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεὶς οὔπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν 'a colt that has never been ridden by no one' (corrected in Luke 19:30, ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν 'that has never been ridden by anyone').[72] These grammatical features find parallels in the papyri. They do not indicate imperfect mastery of language. Although the evangelist may have been bilingual, his Greek is entirely fluent. The grammar of Mark is not faulty as much as it is substandard.[73]

Other features are due to the interference of a Semitic language. Mark quotes a number of Aramaic phrases, such as εφφαθα and ταλιθα κουμ.[74] These expressions probably were handed down to him by a tradition of words and deeds of Jesus. Some Greek words and expressions reflect literal translation of Semitic sources. Thus the Lake of Tiberias is systematically referred to as θάλασσα 'sea', and Mark 2:19 speaks of wedding guests as οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος 'sons of the bridal chamber'. Neither usage finds parallels in Greek texts, but both are readily understood as translations from Hebrew or Aramaic.

Grammatical Semitisms also occur. In Mark 4:8 it is said that the seed that fell on the good soil brought forth grain ἐν τριάκοντα καὶ ἒν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἒν ἑκατόν, literally 'one thirty and one sixty and one a hundred'.[75] This probably

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71 See Norden, *Kunstprosa*, vol. II, p. 60.
72 Note, however, that the vulgarism remains uncorrected in Luke 23:53 (without parallel). For other examples of harsh or incorrect language in Mark, see Hawkins, *Horae synopticae*, pp. 131–8.
73 In words of Jesus one sometimes finds features of a higher level of style, e.g. the unique occurrence of the optative in Mark in 11:14. It may be, however, that these features were added later by a corrector, see Lee, 'Some Features', pp. 1–26.
74 Cf. Rüger, 'Die lexikalischen Aramaismen im Markusevangelium', pp. 73–84.
75 Variant readings in manuscripts show that the Greek phrase was hard to understand for copyists.

reflects an Aramaic idiom meaning: 'thirty-fold, sixty-fold and hundredfold'.[76] Other Semitisms of this kind can be found, although each one needs to be discussed on its own merits.[77]

The Gospel of John is close to that of Mark in its linguistic register. What distinguishes John from the other gospels is not so much the measure or quality of its Semitisms, but the inimitable style of the fourth Gospel.

Matthew

Matthew corrects the more egregious vulgarisms of Mark and generally aspires to write correct Greek.[78] Since the actual teaching of Jesus takes a more prominent place in Matthew than it does in Mark, the number of suspected Semitisms due to translation increases proportionally.[79] An interesting example, because it appears to indicate that the original formulation was Hebrew and not Aramaic, is the allusion to the 'evil eye' in Matt. 6:23, ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρὸς ᾖ 'if your eye is bad'. In Hebrew idiom, the 'badness of the eye' refers to stinginess, while the 'good eye' is a synonym of generosity.[80] The contrast between generosity and stinginess is indeed the theme dealt with in this part of the Sermon on the Mount.[81]

A possible example of a Palestinian Greek idiom is the use of the verb ἐπιφώσκω 'to shine forth' with reference to sunset.[82] Matt. 28:1 reads: 'On the evening [ὀψέ] of the Sabbath [τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων], at the hour *shining* towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.' The verse is often incorrectly interpreted as referring to the first hour of dawn. The adverb ὀψέ shows, however, that Matthew thinks of the evening. The women visit the grave as soon as they are permitted to. The verb ἐπιφώσκω is used in reference to the evening also in Luke 23:54. Its background is probably a curious expression, attested in Hebrew as well as Aramaic, which speaks of the evening as 'shining' (Heb. אור, Ar. נגה) towards the next day.

Luke

The Greek writing of Luke is one of the most intriguing phenomena encountered in the New Testament. Luke treats his sources, which can be identified

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76 For this and other examples, see Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, pp. 26–7.
77 See also Moulton and Howard, *Grammar*, pp. 411–85; Beyer, *Semitische Syntax*; Black, *Aramaic Approach*.
78 See the examples above in the section on Mark.   79 See the work cited in n. 76.
80 See Deut. 15:9; Prov. 22:9, 23:6–7; Sir. 14:10, 32:12; Mishnah Avot 5:13.
81 Cadbury, 'The Single Eye', 69–74.   82 See Burkitt, 'ΕΠΙΦΩΣΚΩ', 538–46.

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from a comparison with Mark and Matthew, with respect, thus incorporating many colloquialisms and Semitisms. He nevertheless corrects some of the coarser linguistic features used in his sources.[83] Latinisms are avoided, as is the quotation of Aramaic words and phrases. Moreover, in the prologue to his Gospel and in the second part of Acts, Luke shows that he is perfectly capable of writing polished koine Greek.

   He willingly abandons this higher Greek style, however, through the borrowing of elements from the Septuagint. Words, expressions and syntactical constructions are used in imitation of the Old Greek version:

- The Greek word ἔλεος designates an emotion evoked by the suffering of others. As was already stated above, the Septuagint translators chose this word to render most cases of Hebrew חסד 'goodwill, kindness'. One effect of this decision was the frequent use of ἔλεος in covenantal contexts. Luke reproduces this peculiar usage in Luke 1:72, 'Thus he has done *mercy* with our fathers and has remembered his holy covenant'.[84]
- Luke 20:21 uses the expression λαμβάνω πρόσωπον 'to lift up the face' instead of βλέπω εἰς πρόσωπον 'to look at the face' as found in the parallels, Mark 12:14 and Matt. 22:16. It appears Luke introduced this expression in reference to the Septuagint, where it occurs often as a literal rendering of the Hebrew נשא פנים 'to favour, to show partiality'.
- In the introduction of new narrative units, Luke often uses the peculiar καὶ ἐγένετο that is so well known from the Septuagint. Interestingly, this non-Greek element is often, and progressively, adapted to Greek sensitivities, notably by using δέ instead of καί and by making the next clause dependent by putting the verb in the infinitive.[85]

Such Septuagintisms are very frequent in the Gospel and prominent even in the first part of Acts (Acts 1–15). They appear to have been adopted by Luke in order to show that his account links up with the biblical story begun in the Septuagint.[86]

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83 See the many instances of this phenomenon collected by Norden, *Kunstprosa*, vol. II, pp. 486–92; Pernot, *Études*, pp. 1–22.
84 See Gerber, 'Emplois', pp. 81–95.   85 See Plummer, *Gospel*, p. 45.
86 Compare what has been said above on the book of Judith. It has often been pointed out that this stylistic procedure is in keeping with Greek models. See, e.g., Moulton, 'New Testament Greek', pp. 60–97, at p. 75: 'The reading of the classics soon shows us how the several literary forms attached themselves to dialects associated with their earliest exemplars. Epic poetry, even down to Nonnus, must endeavour to follow the nondescript dialect into which Ionic rhapsodists had transformed the Achaian of Homer. Choral odes in tragedy and comedy must preserve the

The Epistles

The language of Paul is that of a tentmaker, not that of a writer or philosopher. He uses many words avoided in contemporary literature.[87] His rhetoric, too, is more spontaneous than learned.[88] There is no reason to doubt, however, that Paul is writing in his mother tongue. His Greek is fluent and idiomatic. If the Pauline Epistles are at times difficult to understand this is not because he writes in a Greek idiom that is insufficiently known, nor because his mastery of Greek is hesitant.

The influence of the Septuagint can be felt in many passages. Thus Paul uses not only the expression πρόσωπον λαμβάνω, but also the neologism προσωπολημψία 'partiality' derived from it (but unattested in the Septuagint). Since the noun is found also in Jas. 1:2, it is probable that Paul found it ready-made in Jewish religious discourse. Note also the similar derivation προσωπολήμπτης in Acts 10:34.

In the epistles generally, there is little reason to suspect the use of Semitic source material. Nor are there other signs of a Semitic substratum. The letters of Peter, James and John give no evidence of having been written by a bilingual author whose native language was not Greek.

Among the other epistles, two deserve a special mention. Hebrews is written in a fine Hellenistic Greek of high quality. The author pays attention to such niceties as the avoidance of hiatus.[89] The only Hebraisms in this text are the ones quoted from the Septuagint.

2 Peter is the only writing of the New Testament that gives witness to Atticism – the tendency that became strong in the first and second centuries to write Greek after classical Attic models. It is not, however, a particularly felicitous attempt, and the author trips up rather often in producing his elaborate sentences (his Greek has even been qualified as 'baboo Greek', which is an exaggeration).

Revelation

The last book of the New Testament is written in very strange Greek. The basic vocabulary and the grammar reflect the vernacular koine, but the frequent

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broad long *alpha* which witnesses to the origin of drama in some region outside the area of the Ionic-Attic *eta*. We can therefore understand the instinct that would lead the educated Greek Evangelist to suit his style under certain conditions to the book which held the same relation to his Gospel as the *Iliad* held to subsequent experiments in epic verse.'

87 See Nägeli, *Der Wortschatz*.   88 Norden, *Kunstprosa*, vol. ii, p. 493.
89 See Blass, Debrunner and Rehkopf, *Grammatik*, pp. 416–517, §486.2.

occurrence of grammatical mistakes shows that the author is not writing in his mother tongue.[90] Revelation is a mosaic of biblical allusions and close study seems to indicate that the author has used both the Septuagint and the Hebrew text. The work appears to be the product of a bilingual (or trilingual) milieu.

Conclusion: Varieties of Greek in the Greek Bible

As was already intimated at the outset of this chapter, a close look at the Greek Bible (in the form of its Christian canon) does not confirm the idea that 'biblical Greek' was ever a distinct language or dialect. A great deal of linguistic variety characterises the biblical corpus, and each writing has to be studied for itself. Nevertheless, there are some commonalities and continuities in the language of the Greek Bible.

First, the bulk of both the Septuagint and the New Testament is written in a kind of Greek that was not normally used in literary composition, but stands closer to the vernacular. Because they are practically the only sizeable works produced during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods that reflect this rather low stylistic register, the Septuagint and the New Testament present a striking similarity to modern scholars of Greek literature. When their language is compared to that of the papyri and the inscriptions, however, the similarity dissolves. The use of non-literary Greek by the translators of the Pentateuch on the one hand, and by the New Testament writers on the other, is due to a historical accident. It so happened that the groups standing behind these two collections of writings did not belong to the Hellenised elite of their time, but to a more modest social stratum. A close look also reveals that the koine basis of Septuagint and New Testament Greek is not exactly the same, due, particularly, to the continuing development of the language between the third century BC and the first century AD.

A second element of continuity is more substantial: the earlier parts of the Greek Bible exerted strong influence on the later parts. This can be seen within the Septuagint itself, where the translators of the other books borrow terms and techniques from the Pentateuch. And the influence continues in the writings of the New Testament. The New Testament authors refer constantly to the Greek Old Testament. Some features of their language appear to reflect a sort of 'language of Canaan' that was probably in use in the synagogue: a religious terminology adopting and freely developing elements from the

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90 See Mussies, *Morphology*.

Septuagint. A few writers consciously imitate the Hebraising style of the Old Greek. From the strictly linguistic point of view, the Septuagintal component in New Testament Greek remains peripheral: it does not really touch the core system of the language. To the casual reader, however, it may appear rather dominant. The exegete, too, must constantly be aware of possible connections to the Septuagint.

Writing and book production in the ancient Near East

WILLIAM M. SCHNIEDEWIND

Writing and book production have become increasingly important topics in the study of western civilization in general and the ancient Near East in particular. The two major writing cultures in the ancient Near East (including Egypt) were cuneiform (literally, 'wedge-shaped') and hieroglyphic (literally, 'sacred writing'), and their origins date back to the fourth millennium BCE. These writing systems shaped the development of scribal culture and book production in the ancient Near East. Later, during the late second and early first millennia BCE, a third writing culture using alphabetic script developed in the Levant. The origins of the alphabet itself can be traced to ancient Egypt at the beginning of the second millennium, and the scribal schools from Mesopotamia also exerted considerable influence on writing and education in the Levant. These two great writing cultures, cuneiform in Mesopotamia and hieroglyphic in Egypt, would shape writing and book production in the ancient Near East, including ancient Israel and the books of the Bible, until the arrival of the Greek language and Hellenism in the last third of the first millennium BCE.

The beginnings of the current interest in (orality and) literacy (as well as, more specifically, the emergence of writing systems and their cultural and social significance) can be traced back to research conducted by Jack Goody. Goody wrote numerous articles and books on that subject matter, beginning with the 'Consequences of Literacy' in 1961, and his research is conveniently summed up in *The Power of the Written Tradition* (2000). Goody's work was complemented by research by Marshall McLuhan, who argued in a book entitled *The Gutenberg Galaxy. The Making of the Typographic Man* (1962) that the technological innovation of the printing press profoundly shaped modern humankind, from its large-scale political and cultural organisation to the workings of its unconscious mind. Such studies have spawned scholarly work in many fields in the humanities and social sciences. For example, the linguist Walter Ong wrote an influential book entitled *Orality and Literacy. The*

Technologizing of the Word (1982) that outlined the impact of developments in writing upon the human consciousness. The importance of writing, literacy and literature in Greek Antiquity was taken up by Eric Havelock. Havelock argued in his book *Preface to Plato* (1963) that there was a literate revolution in ancient Greece that was inspired, at least in part, by the Greeks' invention of their alphabet. Havelock's research, which is summarised in *The Muse Learns to Write. Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (1986), spawned vigorous debate in the field of classics. Critics have argued that Havelock overstated both the importance of the Greek innovations in the alphabet and the extent and impact of literacy on Greek culture. The increasing attention that writing and book production in Antiquity have garnered only serve as testimony to the importance that the written word has had in the transformation of human society, including the ancient Near East.

Cuneiform was used for writing a variety of languages in the Near East beginning with Sumerian and then Akkadian. Cuneiform writing began as a pictographic type of writing and developed increasingly into a logographic and then syllabic system of writing. Cuneiform is the most comprehensively attested ancient Near Eastern writing culture because it used primarily clay for writing, which has withstood the vicissitudes of history better than papyrus or parchment frequently employed in hieroglyphic and alphabetic writing. The vast majority of cuneiform documents employ clay tablets (but also prisms, barrels, cones or vessels), and wax writing boards could be used for writing school exercises and other temporary documents. Monumental inscriptions used for public display were carved into stone. Cuneiform was used in writing other languages in the Near East, such as Hurrian and Hittite, and it has been found in excavations in Iran, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt and throughout the Levant. The influence of cuneiform culture is reflected by the development of alphabetic cuneiform used for writing the Ugaritic language and later the Old Iranian language.

Book production is a somewhat anachronistic concept when applied to the ancient Near East. The concept of the book originates in the Hellenistic period and corresponded with an increase in writing and literacy in the eastern Mediterranean world. There is, for example, no word per se for 'book' in Akkadian, and the word commonly used to translate 'book' in Hebrew, *sefer*, actually means 'scroll, document', rather than 'book', in classical Hebrew. Indeed, the concept of the book as we know it was dependent on the invention of the codex with pages that could productively use both sides of a parchment or papyrus page, and could be bound together. The codex could encompass a series of texts much more extensive than any single scroll could contain. In

bringing together a collection of scrolls, the codex also defined a set and order of books. It promoted and made possible a more defined canon. The codex itself seems to have been invented around the first century CE and began to be prominent only in the fourth century and later. It is only in the abstract sense of the book as 'a work of literature, science or reference' and not in the sense of its physical form that the term 'book' should be applied to the ancient Near East, and this is the way in which it is used in the present study.

Writing itself was a guarded knowledge of political and religious elites in the ancient Near East. Indeed, writing was not only restricted, but it was also given to humankind by the gods. For example, the name of Egyptian writing – *hieroglyphic*, which literally means 'sacred writing' – recalls the general Near Eastern belief that writing had its origins in the divine realm. Both Egypt and Mesopotamia had myths ascribing a divine origin to writing. The Egyptian god of writing was Thoth.[1] One of Thoth's titles is 'Lord of the hieroglyphs'. Not coincidentally, Thoth was not only the god of writing and scribes, but also the god of magic. He is described as 'excellent in magic'. It was the god Thoth who revealed the secrets of the scribal arts to man. The prominent role of writing in Egyptian magic can be seen in a variety of texts. For example, one spell in the coffin texts instructs one as follows:

> Write the name in myrrh ink on two male eggs. Regarding one, you are to cleanse yourself thoroughly; then lick off the name, break it, and throw it away. Hold the other in your partially open right hand and show it to the sun at dawn . . . then speak the formula 7 times, crack the egg open, and swallow its contents.[2]

A critical part of this spell is the magical power of writing itself. Other examples can be found in the Old Egyptian pyramid texts from the third millennium BCE that reflect the belief that writing could actually spring to life. These spells and magic rituals use mutilated writing, that is, incompletely written hieroglyphic signs. Using this defective writing prevented the writing from becoming animated and thereby posing a danger to both the dead and the living.[3] A vestige of the notion of the magical power of hieroglyphic writing is reflected in the modern Egyptian folk custom of using powder scraped from the writing on ancient temple walls in concocting healing potions.

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1 On Egyptian writing as magic and the god Thoth see R. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute, 1993), pp. 35–56.
2 From Ritner, *Mechanics*, p. 100.
3 See E. Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, trans. from German by D. Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 4–5.

In ancient Mesopotamia, writing proper was the domain of the goddess Nisaba (sometimes spelled Nidaba), the personal deity of scribes and the scribal academy. By the first millennium, this role had been transferred to the god Nabû, whose emblems were the scribe's stylus and tablet. He was almost unknown before 1000 BCE. Beginning late in the second millennium BCE, Nabû is described as the eldest son of the god Marduk, who was the patron deity of the city of Babylon and the high god of the Babylonians. Nabû was held in great esteem by the Babylonians, the Assyrians and later the Persians. Marduk was the great king and Nabû was his ready scribe, servant of the great king, the record-keeper of the heavenly council and the custodian of the Tablets of Destiny, known from the great Mesopotamian creation epic, *Enuma Elish*. According to the story, Marduk defeated the wicked Tiamat and her consort Kingu and became king of the gods. By virtue of this victory, he controlled the Tablets of Destiny upon which were written the functions of the moral, social and political orders. These tablets were given over to Nabû, the secretary-general of the divine council.

The rising status of Nabû in the Assyrian and Babylonian court undoubtedly mirrored the rising importance of scribes in the royal court. The special character of writing is also reflected in the Mesopotamian practice of depositing 'building inscriptions' in the foundations of important public buildings like temples and palaces. Such inscriptions were impressed onto bricks or put into special boxes that were built into walls or under floors. Assyriologists have long puzzled over the purpose of such inscriptions since they could not be read once they were buried.[4] Obviously, this is another example of the special character of writing in ancient culture. There was something numinous about writing that depositing foundation inscriptions capitalised upon and also fostered. Writing symbolised the divine and royal sanction and protection of the building that was dedicated.

There seem to have been no myths in ancient Israel or elsewhere in the Levant that ascribe a divine origin to alphabetic writing. Nevertheless, there are hints that such views may have existed about the alphabet. For example, according to Jewish tradition, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, as well as the art of writing, were produced by God at the very creation of the world (Mishnah Avot 5:6). Interestingly, the ten elements that were brought into being on the eve of the Sabbath included not only letters and writing, but also the tablets of the Ten Commandments. This certainly recalls the Mesopotamian tradition where the Tablets of Destiny come from heaven in the creation

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4 See Porter, 'Language, Audience and Impact', 51–72.

story. To be sure, this similarity may be coincidental, but it highlights the continuing sacral role of writing and the notion of sacred texts in the Near East into Late Antiquity. The Mesopotamian god of writing, Nabû, was undoubtedly known to the writers of the Bible (he is called Nebo in Hebrew). Nabû had become quite prominent in the neo-Babylonian period and continued to be revered in the Persian period, and this god would have been well-known to Jews living in Babylonia after the exile. Nabû is actually mentioned in Isa. 46:1, but it is the geographical place Nebo, a locale in the region of Moab, that appears more frequently in biblical literature. Biblical Nebo is best known as the place where Moses ascended to heaven at the end of his life (Deut. 32:49). It is perhaps not a coincidence that Moses is described as ascending from the top of Mt Nebo, a mountain apparently dedicated to a god of scribes. No matter how tantalising this association of Moses, Mt Nebo and the god Nabû might appear, there is no elaboration upon this highly provocative connection in either biblical literature or later tradition. To add further mystery to Moses and Mt Nebo, other biblical texts call this mountain Pisgah (Deut. 3:27, 34:1). Perhaps this reflected later sensibilities by trying to avoid just this kind of association between Moses and the Mesopotamian god of the scribes.

The Egyptian execration texts are a provocative example of the numinous power of writing.[5] Execration texts were curses directed at people or cities. The power of the curse is ritualised by the writing down of the curse or of the name of the cursed person, often on a figurine depicting the person or a list of names written on pottery. The magical effect was not in the writing itself, but in the ritual breaking of the pottery that contained the written text or names. This Egyptian ritual use of writing has an interesting parallel in the law of the jealous husband in the Bible. In the ritual described in Num. 5:16–30, a priest brings the accused woman before YHWH and then concocts a potion in which the key ingredient is writing: 'Then the priest shall put these curses in writing, and wash them off into the water of bitterness. He shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings the curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter her and cause bitter pain . . . and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water' (all biblical citations in this chapter are from the NRSV). The critical moment in this ritual of the jealous husband is when the priest *writes* the curse down, probably on an ostracon, and then washes the writing off into the water of bitterness. The writing, washed into the water, gives it a magical property, and it can now discern whether the jealous husband is right in his accusation.

5 Ritner, *Mechanics*, pp. 136–53.

The ritual testifies to the power and magic of *written* words. The similarities between this ritual and Egyptian rituals suggest the ancient Israelites had notions of writing that they shared with their neighbours. Writing down a person's name could capture that person's human essence. This was part of the idea behind the Egyptian execration texts. Writing could have a ritual power even when humans wrote names down in a list. Just as in some cultures making an image of a person could capture their essence (and then be magically manipulated), so in the ancient Near East (including Israel) writing down a name could be a ritual act used to manipulate a person's fate.

Taking a census – that is, creating a book of names – dabbled in the divine, and in this respect book production begins in the heavens. There are several references in biblical literature to a heavenly book in which are written the names of all humanity. Erasing names from the book extinguishes life. When God threatens to wipe out Israel after the Israelites sin with the golden calf, Moses pleads for his people, 'But now, if you will only forgive their sin – but if not, blot me out of the scroll that you have written' (Exod. 32:32). The 'book of life', as this book is called in later literature, apparently finds its power in the writing down or erasing of names. This concept of a heavenly book persists into a much later period. According to the Hellenistic book of Daniel, a heavenly figure called the 'Ancient of Days' will judge the world by looking through a scroll: 'The court sat in judgement, and the scrolls were opened' (Dan. 7:10; also Dan. 12:1). This book is undoubtedly related to the 'book of life' that becomes so prominent in the book of Revelation. In the last judgement, 'anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire'. But 'those who are written in the Lamb's book of life' are allowed entrance into paradise (Rev. 20:15, 21:17). Further evidence for the danger of writing down names onto a scroll is evident in Exod. 30:11–16, where God describes the delicate procedure for taking a census: 'YHWH spoke to Moses: When you take a census of the Israelites to register them, at registration all of them shall give a ransom for their lives to YHWH, so that no plague may come upon them for being registered.' The writing of names must be countered by an offering to ward off a plague. The atonement offering serves as a reminder of the ransom that is given for their very lives. This also recalls the census of Israel in the book of Numbers where God commands Moses, 'Take a census of all the congregation of Israel, . . . every male twenty and older' (Num. 1:2). There are several strange aspects to this census. The most obvious is the vast numbers of people that are recorded. According to Num. 1:46, there were 603,550 males twenty or older. In total, this would imply that there were well over two

million people wandering in the wilderness. Obviously, there is something wrong with these numbers. It may be corruption in the editorial process, but it could also have something to do with ancient taboos about the whole process of enrolling names in a list. The descendants of the tribe of Levi (that is, those of the same tribe as Moses) were excluded from the census here because the Levites are appointed to 'camp around the tabernacle of the covenant, *that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the Israelites*' (Num. 1:53). The role of the Levites was to serve at the tabernacle, making offerings to ward off wrath against those being registered in the census. Once we understand the gravity of enrolling names into a book, we can begin to understand the story of King David's census told in 2 Sam. 24. It begins, 'the anger of YHWH was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, take a census of the people of Israel and Judah."' As a result of David's census, a plague will strike Israel, and the plague strikes not only David who took the census, but more importantly those whose names were written into the book.

Although writing was restricted to scribal classes, this scribal culture spread throughout the ancient Near East alongside the development of increasingly complex societies and economies. Writing seems to have first developed in Mesopotamia during the fourth millennium BCE in connection with accounting practices of the city-states, probably to meet the administrative and economic needs of Mesopotamian cities. Scribes incised ciphers and pictograms in tablets of soft clay in order to keep a record of transactions. These developed into more efficient methods of writing that indicated not only the objects or animals exchanged in a transaction but also words of the language in which the transaction took place. Eventually, these words also became symbols for syllables in the languages and thus the power and flexibility of written language grew. For example, the Sumerian cuneiform sign for 'heaven' (AN) was originally shaped like a star and over time became increasingly stylised. When the system was taken over in Akkadian, the sign would be used to represent the god of heaven, Anu, as well as for the general determinative applied to names of gods. Over time the sign became more stylised, until it was only barely recognisable as a pictograph. In order to make the system more flexible, these signs also began to serve as syllables. In the case of this 'star', it could serve as the syllable *il* or *el*. This allowed the cuneiform writing system to communicate abstract words and much more complex ideas.

Nowhere did writing flourish in the ancient Near East without the auspices of the state. Writing became pivotal to administration, a complex economy

and high culture, even though it was essentially restricted to an emergent scribal class. Writing was a central element of public monuments, even though the public was essentially non-literate, and projected royal power in public forums. In Antiquity, writing was not a mundane activity; it was both complex and expensive and required institutional support. While the invention of the alphabet would be one of the critical developments that would eventually lead to the spread of writing outside state-supported institutions, alphabetic writing had been invented already at the beginning of the second millennium BCE and did not quickly lead to any surge in literacy rates in the ancient world. The flourishing of writing, even alphabetic writing, would require state support and favourable political and economic conditions in Antiquity.[6] Writing facilitated a complex, urban economy; the economy could utilise writing to identify merchandise, record types and quantities of goods, and accumulate knowledge.

The very nature of writing in Egypt and Mesopotamia made it quite restrictive. These writing systems were so cumbersome and complex that only the professional scribes who trained in special schools controlled by the palace or the temple could learn to read and write. At any given time, cuneiform scribes employed over 600 signs, many of which could represent words, grammatical (e.g. plural) or semantic (e.g. man, city) concepts, and syllables. Egyptian hieroglyphic writing also used several hundred signs, most used to transcribe either full words (ideograms) or groups of only two or three consonants (Egyptian writing generally did not indicate the vowels). Egyptian also used signs, called determinatives, to classify the words and to distinguish between homographs. In addition to these, Egyptian employed about twenty 'alphabetic' signs to represent single consonants; these signs were used initially to transcribe foreign names. These writing systems, complex as they were, largely confined literacy to professional scribes. Moreover, in both Egypt and Mesopotamia, literacy held little benefits for those outside administration, and there was no social stigma in illiteracy. The expense involved in ancient literacy was considerable and could be borne only by elites sponsored by the ruling groups. The scribes were not an independent group, but rather served at the discretion of the ruling groups who brought them into existence, provided for their sustenance and controlled their public access. Although vast amounts of cuneiform and hieroglyphic texts have been recovered from Mesopotamia and Egypt, most texts are bureaucratic, economic, administrative or

6 J. Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 53–6.

religious.[7] The earliest texts are mostly documents of record-keeping, with few literary texts.

The production of books, or, more correctly, a literary corpus, was associated with the training of scribes. Although the extent of literary texts seems to have developed in earlier periods, it was only in the Old Babylonian period (between 2000 and 1600 BCE) that many of these texts were copied down in scribal schools. The major collections of literary works in Mesopotamia actually date to the Assyrian libraries of the first millennium. The famous library of Assurbanipal (*c.* 650 BCE), for example, collects a variety of Mesopotamian literary traditions, including texts dealing with rituals, myth, mathematics, astronomy and other matters.[8] For the most part, however, writing served an administrative and bureaucratic role. Writing preserved the records of the court and the temple, its primary role was not to preserve the cultural heritage of Antiquity.

The quintessential example of a 'book' in the ancient Near East is the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.[9] The 'book' tells the tale of Gilgamesh who supposedly ruled the city of Uruk in the third millennium BCE (*c.* 2600 BCE), although there are scant sources that confirm Gilgamesh as a historical figure. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* in its best-attested version is a long narrative with several episodes that developed and was transmitted in Mesopotamian scribal schools for two millennia. Early separate tales, including 'Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living', 'Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld', 'The Death of Gilgamesh', and 'Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven', circulated in Sumerian as early as the Ur III period (*c.* 2100–2000 BCE). At some point in the second millennium BCE these independent tales were woven into a continuous narrative. By the end of the second millennium, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* was a standard of Akkadian school tradition around the ancient Near East; copies of the epic have been found at places like Ugarit and Megiddo, and versions of the epic were known in the scribal schools of the Hittite and Hurrian kingdoms. The two major versions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* derive from the Old Babylonian period (1750–1600 BCE) and the neo-Assyrian period (750–612 BCE), with the latest neo-Assyrian version even including a version of the flood story known as *Atrahasis*.

As Jeffrey Tigay points out, the greatest freedom of composition took place during the Old Babylonian period when the independent tales were collected

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7 See the summary by J. Baines, 'Literacy', *ABD* 4 (1992), 333–7.
8 See Parpola, 'The Royal Archives', pp. 223–36.
9 See Tigay, *Evolution*; and J. Tigay, 'The Evolution of the Pentateuchal Narratives in Light of the Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic', in J. Tigay (ed.), *Empirical Models for Biblical Study* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. 21–52.

into one continuous epic. Once the *Epic of Gilgamesh* had become a staple of Near Eastern scribal schools by the late second millennium, very little or no variation was permitted in the text. The stability of the text, however, was a reflection of its use as a school text. Students were not permitted to modify the tradition, and careful attention to the accurate transmission was part of the scribal training. It is important to emphasise, however, that the *Epic of Gilgamesh* had – paradoxically – a quite limited distribution. To be sure, the epic was known in scribal schools throughout the Near East, but it was a text both of and for the scribal schools. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* was not a book produced for the masses. Royal and temple scribes mostly wrote letters and kept administrative records that might have a wider circulation among a variety of social classes, whereas 'books' like the *Epic of Gilgamesh* were essentially the product of scribal schools and the educational system.

It is also important to point out that the *Epic of Gilgamesh* has no 'author'. The modern production of books is closely tied with authors, but authorship is a concept that developed in the Greek world and flourished after the Hellenistic period. As W. G. Lambert pointed out, cuneiform literature is essentially anonymous.[10] Not surprisingly, neither Egyptian literature nor biblical literature mentions authors. Ancient Near Eastern literature is not so much the expression of an individual as it is the collective tradition of the group. The concept of communal authorship is also reflected in the transmission of texts of oral tradition like the Talmud among certain Jewish communities.[11] The production of books in the ancient Near East is not an activity of authors, but rather the activity of scribal schools.

The association of biblical books with authors reflects the influence of Graeco-Roman literature in later periods. Although the Pentateuch came to be known as the 'books of Moses', these books do not ascribe themselves to the pen of Moses. The book of Deuteronomy, for example, explicitly begins as a speech of Moses (see 1:1–5), which the Israelite people were charged with writing down (27:1–8). In the latest editorial phases of the Hebrew Bible (likely in the late Persian or Hellenistic period), Moses himself becomes a scribe, as we see in Deut. 31:9, a text that connects the book of Deuteronomy to Joshua (compare Deut. 31:7–9 with Josh. 1:6–8).

The prophetic 'writings' begin by ascribing the content of the book to an individual prophet, but not as a writer. Thus, for example, 'the vision of Isaiah, which he saw . . . ' (Isa. 1:1). Likewise, the concept of 'the words of Jeremiah'

10 Lambert, 'Ancestors, Authors, and Canonicity', 1–14.
11 See Y. Elman and I. Gershoni, *Transmitting Jewish Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 16–18.

explicitly referred to that which was spoken, not written. The Hellenistic period, however, introduced the importance of authors into biblical literature. In fact, the scribes of scripture – figures like Baruch, the scribe of Jeremiah – would take a place of prominence in the post-biblical period. The Hellenistic period saw the copying and transmission of the scrolls of scripture as 'books', and traditions began to emerge about the authors of biblical books.

The development of writing in ancient Israel had ties with the old Near Eastern scribal culture. It has been suggested that the scribal institutions of Canaanite society ended with the Israelite conquest, and notions about a catastrophic end to scribal institutions have persisted in the scholarly literature. Yet the acceptance of the Canaanite alphabet suggests the continuity of the scribal culture in Canaan. A linear alphabet appears as early as 2000 BCE as we learn from the Wadi el-Hol inscriptions. The shape of the letters in this west Semitic alphabet suggests an evolutionary development through to the end of the second millennium. The twenty-two letter Phoenician alphabet became the basis for the Hebrew alphabet, although the emergence of a distinct Hebrew script does not happen until at least the ninth century BCE. Ugaritic uses a cuneiform version of this Semitic alphabet. It is telling, however, that abecedary tablets use a similar order of letters both in Ugarit and in the early Canaanite abecedaries at places like Izbet Sarta and Tel Zeitah. Indeed, the well-known similarities between Ugaritic epic and early biblical poetry suggest a common literary culture across Syria-Palestine at the end of the bronze age and into the iron age. In a five line text from the late eleventh- or early tenth-century site of Qeiyafa, the language shows some lexical connections with Hebrew (particularly in its use of the more typically Hebrew word *ʿśh* 'to do' as opposed to the Phoenician *p ʿl*), but the script is still quite typical early Canaanite. The later inscriptions from Gezer, Zeitah and Izbet Sarta show some standardisation, but still do not exhibit any marked differentiation with the Phoenician script. Supposedly, the early Israelites rejected Canaanite culture, including its scribal culture; however, this is merely a late idealisation stating what religious reformers during the time of Josiah believed *should have happened*. In terms of the writing system, there is no marked break with Canaanite culture in the early iron age. Rather, the rejection of Canaanite culture is a feature of the Josianic religious reform and its literature. Even biblical literature itself portrays David as employing Hittites in his administration and Solomon as utilising Phoenician craftsmen. David's personal militia consisted of foreign mercenaries, as the biblical texts attest. The beginnings of differentiation probably take place already in the ninth century, although the evidence is quite meagre in

Israel proper. The Mesha stele, a monumental basalt inscription dating to the mid-ninth century, for example, shows marked indications of a script that differentiate it from Phoenician (as well as the nearly contemporary Aramaic inscription from Tel Dan) and suggest the beginnings of independent scribal traditions in the Levant.

The beginning of the flourishing of writing and the production of books in ancient Israel should be located in Jerusalem during the late eighth century BCE, that is, in the days of Isaiah the prophet and Hezekiah the king of Judah. At that time, Jerusalem mushroomed into a metropolis, and writing became part of the urban bureaucracy as well as a political extension of growing royal power. Powerful social and political forces converged at that time, resulting in the collection of earlier, mostly oral, traditions and the formation of new 'books'.[12] What was the local catalyst for such a dramatic transformation of Judaean society? The rise of the Assyrian empire. The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom, exiled its inhabitants, and generally spurred the urbanisation of the entire Near East, which was a catalyst for literary activity in Jerusalem that resulted in the composition of extended portions of the books of the later Hebrew Bible. This period gave rise to the prophetic works of Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah of Jerusalem, to priestly liturgies and ritual texts, as well as to a pre-deuteronomic historical work. The idealisation of a golden age of David and Solomon also inspired the collection of wisdom traditions and poetry ascribed to these venerable kings. For example, the increased activity of Hezekiah's scribes is attested by the remark in Prov. 25:1 that 'these too are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of King Hezekiah of Judah copied'. The statement that Hezekiah's men collected these proverbs certainly is not laden with the same ideological implications that are associated with their attribution to Solomon. The prestige was derived from their Solomonic attribution, not Hezekiah's collecting them.

The classic 'book' of ancient Israel is the Torah, which becomes equated with the Pentateuch (or the first five 'books of Moses' in Jewish and Christian tradition). The story of how the Torah became a book begins with the account of two tablets given to Moses on Mt Sinai in Exod. 24. According to deuteronomic tradition, these two tablets are either 'the tablets of the covenant' (Deut. 9:9–11) or the Ten Commandments (Deut. 4:13, 5:5). In the Hellenistic book of Jubilees, the contents of these tablets will include both the Torah and the revelation of the book of Jubilees (see Jub. 1:5–7, 27). The

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12 See further Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, pp. 64–90, 118–38.

Bible itself describes stone tablets as written by the very finger of God and received by Moses on Mt Sinai (Exod. 24:12, 31:18; Deut. 9:10). Endowed with the tablets, the ark becomes sacred – so much so that the inadvertent touch of the ark now results in instant death (2 Sam. 6:6–7). When the ark comes into the tabernacle or the temple, the very presence of God descends upon the place (Exod. 40:20–1, 34–5; 1 Kings 8:6–11). In the Bible, the tablets themselves function as a symbol, not a book to be read and consulted. After the tablets are placed into the ark (Exod. 25:21–2, 40:20), the ark gains its numinous power. The discovery of 'the book of the law' is associated with the religious reforms of King Josiah in the Bible (see 2 Kings 22–3). The Hebrew terms used in this story are *sefer ha-torah*, which literally translates as 'the scroll/book of the teaching/law', and *sefer ha-brit*, which translates as 'the scroll/book of the covenant'. Scholars usually identify this scroll with the book of Deuteronomy because the nature of Josiah's religious reforms so closely parallels the theology of Deuteronomy.[13] Yet the only other explicit reference to 'the book of the covenant' is the revelation of the law/teaching at Sinai (Exod. 24:4–7), which Moses is said to have written down, suggesting that an editor of the Pentateuch or of the Deuteronomistic History associated this scroll discovered in the temple with the revelation to Moses on Mt Sinai that Moses wrote down.

The production of the Pentateuch as a 'book', or even that of the individual books of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), is much debated among scholars. Scholars have dated pentateuchal literature everywhere from the tenth century BCE to the third century BCE.[14] The reason for this is quite simple: there are few objective internal criteria by which to date the first five books of the Bible. A consensus of continental scholarship places the formation of the Pentateuch largely in the Persian period, although a significant minority understand at least part of this literary production to date back into the late monarchic period. One thing is clear. Writing and written texts do not play a significant role in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus or Numbers. Only in Deuteronomy does writing begin to come to the fore. By the time we get to the post-exilic book of Nehemiah, the book is even more central to religious practice with the public reading

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13 A theory usually credited to W. M. L. de Wette, *Dissertatio critico-exegetica* (1805; his doctoral dissertation), although M. J. Paul has pointed out that de Wette had predecessors; see M. J. Paul, *Het Archimedisch Punt van de Pentateuchkritiek* (The Hague: Boekencentrum, 1988). See the overview by E. Eynikel, *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 7–31.

14 For an overview, see for example, E. Otto, 'Forschungen zum nachpriesterschriftlichen Pentateuch', *TR* 67 (2002), pp. 125–55.

from 'the book of the *torah* of Moses' played out in an elaborate spectacle (Neh. 8:1–5). This diachronic observation becomes all the more striking if we compare biblical literature with the retelling of the Pentateuch stories in the Hellenistic book of Jubilees where writing becomes a main topic from the very first verse. This observation has important implications. It suggests that the first four books of the Pentateuch were largely edited when writing and the production of books were not self-consciously important – or certainly not as pivotal as they would become in the Second Temple period. Deuteronomy's emphasis on writing begins to remedy this omission and can be associated with the spread of writing in the seventh century BCE.

The scribal schools that produced texts and began the formation of the books of ancient Israel were threatened by the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in the early sixth century BCE. The Babylonians did bring part of the royal court to Babylon, where a Judaean entourage including 'the king of the land of Judah, five princes of Judah, and eight officials of Judah' were given monthly rations by the Babylonian rulers.[15] This location might have served for the preservation and even the writing of biblical literature. Back in Judah, however, the situation was more grim. The Babylonians pillaged the region, and Judah was depopulated by destruction, exile and flight. The region of Yehud experienced an 83 per cent decline in the number of settlements in Judah from the late seventh century to the fifth century with an even more marked decline in the area surrounding Jerusalem, and the population also shifted markedly away from urban centres towards small villages.[16] This suggests that the exilic and post-exilic periods would have been times of retrenchment for writing in Hebrew and the production of biblical literature. The biblical literature of the exile and early post-exilic periods mostly complete and update earlier works. The great shift from an oral culture towards a writing culture that began in the late Judaean monarchy suffers an enormous setback in the devastation of Jerusalem and Judah. The conditions in which textuality could flourish disappeared in the hill country. While this might suggest that the Persian period (*c.* 539–333 BCE) was a dark age for biblical literature,[17] most scholars have viewed the period as one of the most productive.

15 See Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, pp. 149–56.
16 O. Lipschits, 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.', in O. Lipschits and J. Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 323–76, at pp. 332–3.
17 As has been argued by Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, pp. 165–94; I. Finkelstein, 'Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah', *JSOT* 32 (2008), pp. 501–20; Finkelstein, 'The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods', *RB* 117 (2010), pp. 39–54.

The Persian district of Yehud was part of the Persian satrapy 'Beyond the River'.[18] While the coastal district of Phoenicia became increasingly strategic in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, the district of Yehud – relegated as it was to the hill country around Jerusalem – was depopulated, impoverished and geographically isolated. The once great city of Jerusalem remained mostly in ruins, even though the temple had been rebuilt. According to archaeologists, Jerusalem only began to recover in the Hellenistic period.[19] While the hill country remained depopulated throughout the Persian period, the coastal plain revived during the fifth and fourth centuries as it formed a strategic link for the Persian kingdom with Egypt. Even the Hebrew language saw a decline as Aramaic scribal culture replaced Hebrew, and Aramaic became the new Jewish language.[20] Although no substantive Hebrew inscriptions have been found dating to the Persian period, hundreds of Aramaic administrative documents dating mostly to the fourth century BCE have been excavated at coastal sites like Mareshah just west of the borders of Yehud, attesting to a vigorous Achaemenid scribal infrastructure. Biblical literature like Ezra–Nehemiah, whose main characters are Persian administrators who even write in Aramaic, fit nicely within this historical context.

In the shadow of the Persian empire, faithful priests who served in the Jerusalem temple would preserve biblical books. For the most part, the work of the priests was not the production of literature, but rather its preservation. This meant that they added the editorial framework to some biblical literature. The great poems of the book of Job, for example, were given an editorial prologue and conclusion. The priests would shape the Psalms into a five-part book that paralleled the five books of Moses. The priest Ezra was an exemplar of this new priesthood. According to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, Ezra was trained in the Aramaic scribal chancellery. Ezra and the priestly leadership were both the guardians and the teachers of the sacred books.

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18 On the organisation of these districts, see Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, pp. 487–90; A. F. Rainey, 'The Satrapy "Beyond the River"', *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1 (1969), pp. 51–78.
19 See D. Ussishkin, 'The Borders and *de facto* Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period', in O. Lipschits and M. Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 147–66.
20 W. M. Schniedewind, 'Aramaic, the Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift in the Persian Period', in S. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Culture* (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006), pp. 137–48.

According to Hellenistic Jewish tradition, Nehemiah founded a library in Jerusalem. We read in 2 Maccabees 2:13–14:

> The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of David, and letters of kings about votive offerings. In the same way Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war that had come upon us, and they are in our possession.

Nehemiah *founds* a library and *collects* books according to the tradition. Of course, this tradition attributes to Nehemiah activities that are typically Hellenistic. These are activities that might also be associated with the editing of literary works, as it was to some extent in the founding and building of the great Hellenistic library in Alexandria. So it is difficult to be confident about the historicity of this traditional attribution of the creation of a library to Nehemiah. But a library of biblical literature was created in Jerusalem, and the books of the biblical tradition were preserved.

The origins of the temple library probably go back to the rebuilding of the temple by the last Davidic line in the late sixth century BCE. The literature of the royal family was probably deposited in the temple archives at that time. The temple library was apparently limited to 'the holy books'. Josephus speaks of holy books 'laid up in the Temple' (see *Antiquities* 3.1.7, 5.1.17, 10.4.2). Interestingly, he emphasises the temple as a repository for the holy books and not for the more widely distributed profane works. Earlier, one of the themes of the book of Ezra is the searching of the archives. Persian officials are repeatedly asked to 'search the archives' for the history of the city of Jerusalem, for permission to rebuild the temple, for letters and documents. These notices reflect the general interest in libraries and archives that began already in the Assyrian empire but continued into the Persian empire.

By the third century BCE, Jewish writing culture began to flourish again during the cultural renaissance of Hellenism. Indeed, it is worth mentioning that the Dead Sea scrolls include Hebrew manuscripts pointing to the active copying and transmission of the books of the Hebrew Bible as well as the production of new literary texts by the third century BCE. Egyptian Hellenistic rule brought peace and relative prosperity back to Jerusalem, the city began to grow again, and scribal schools emerged. By the end of the third century BCE, there were Jewish schools in Jerusalem studying the scriptures as well as producing new literary works, as exemplified in the proverbs of the priestly

schoolmaster Sirach. By the mid-third century the scriptures were being trans-lated into Greek by priests in the Egyptian diaspora,[21] and the Greek-speaking diaspora began producing books in Greek.[22]

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21 See De Troyer in this volume, pp. 267–88.
22 See Hurtado and Keith in this volume, pp. 63–80.

Writing and book production in the Hellenistic and Roman periods

LARRY W. HURTADO AND CHRIS KEITH

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, books functioning specifically as vehicles for literary texts acquired a more widespread distribution and usage than in any previous time. Indeed, it appears that the first two centuries CE comprised a high point of book production in comparison with later centuries. Quite naturally, scholarly interest has tended to focus mainly on the texts composed and read in classical Antiquity, whether general literary texts or biblical texts, with comparatively less attention given to the features of the manuscripts in which they were copied or to the phenomena of copying, distribution and reading in this period. These matters, however, are in fact important and are the main focus here.

Books as physical objects

Whether in modern or in ancient times, a book is itself an object whose physical and visual properties are significant, not only for the history of books but for wider historical questions as well. Of course, a book usually reflects the conventions of its time regarding book production. But a book often reflects also the social and economic circumstances of the first reader(s), and perhaps the social setting(s) in which it was intended to be used.

Writing materials

Restricting ourselves to the writing materials used for literary texts in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, we are mainly concerned with animal skins (leather or vellum) and papyrus. Of these, papyrus had by far the wider usage, although there appears to have been a preference for skins in some eastern areas such as Syria and Palestine. Kenyon noted Herodotus' observation that many 'barbarous peoples' used leather, which probably included

Semitic-language peoples.[1] A Jewish preference for leather, especially for biblical texts, is reflected in the finds at Qumran and other Judaean sites, although for other purposes (e.g. documentary texts) papyrus was apparently acceptable.[2] In rabbinic tradition to this day, a Torah scroll intended for usage in a synagogue must be made from animal skin that has been specially prepared for this purpose.[3]

In preparation for use as writing material, animal skins were first scraped to remove hair from the outer side, but the inner (flesh) side was preferred for the actual writing surface, because this side tended to be a lighter shade, and so offered a more legible surface, and could be made smoother for writing. After drying, sheets of leather were cut to a consistent size and joined together to form a continuous roll, the flesh side forming the inner surface of the roll, on which the text was copied. Different kinds of animal skins were used (e.g. mainly sheep, goats or calves, but also occasionally animals such as antelope). 'Parchment' and 'vellum' were specially prepared skins, created by splitting the skin to produce a thinner and finer quality of writing material.

In general, however, throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods until about the fourth century CE and thereafter, papyrus dominated for most literary texts. Although mainly derived from Egypt, there is some indication that papyrus was cultivated elsewhere as well, but on a much smaller scale.[4] The manufacture of papyrus as a writing material (following Pliny's classic description) commenced with cutting the plant stalk into strips, which were then laid parallel to one another.[5] Thereafter, a layer of additional strips was laid perpendicular to and on top of the first layer, and the layers were pressed together, the juices of the plant, when dried, bonding the layers to form a solid sheet of material (*kollema*), with plant fibres running horizontally on one side and vertically on the other.

Multiple sheets of papyrus were then cut to a consistent size and joined together (the join called a *kollesis*), the sides with horizontal fibres aligned to form a continuous roll of writing material, of commonly twenty or so sheets' length. This side was smoothed with pumice and was preferred for writing, forming the inner surface of the papyrus roll. There were different

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1 Kenyon, *Books and Readers*, p. 42, citing Herodotus, *Histories* 5.58.
2 Tov, *Scribal Practices*, esp. pp. 32–53.
3 There are differences of opinion among Jews about how the skin used for such Torah scrolls is to be prepared, e.g. whether whole skin (called *gevil*) or split skin (a vellum, called *klaf*), and how the surface is to be prepared for writing. See, e.g., Talmud *Baba Bathra* 14b, *Gittin* 54b.
4 Lewis, *Papyrus*, pp. 3–20.
5 Pliny, *Natural History* 13.74–82. Lewis (*Papyrus*, pp. 34–69) gives a detailed discussion.

grades of papyrus, the better quality material tending to be lighter shades and comprising larger sheets (*c.* 23–38 cm wide). As Johnson noted, the average height of papyrus rolls varied considerably across time, some *c.* 30 cm in the Hellenistic period, whereas in the first century CE the maximum seems to have been *c.* 26 cm. In the second century, roll heights were usually 25–33 cm. There were, however, rolls of much smaller sizes, including miniatures *c.* 8 cm high, which were likely intended for portable and personal reading. Roll lengths likewise varied, depending on the amount of text to be accommodated. Literary rolls of this period were most commonly *c.* 3–15 m long.[6] In principle, however, one could paste additional lengths of papyrus to form the length of roll wished. It was, thus, entirely feasible to accommodate literary works of considerable size (e.g. multiple books of Homer), or to combine a number of individual texts on a single roll. The early Judaean evidence shows the twelve Minor Prophets copied on one roll (e.g. the Nahal Hever scroll), and evidence from Qumran suggests that the entirety of the Pentateuch was copied on a single roll. Some rolls from Judaean sites would have measured *c.* 22–7 m or even more in length.[7]

The literary roll

Throughout the classical period, the roll was the standard form of the literary book. Except among Christians, the leaf-book, the 'codex', was rarely used for literary texts, and only became dominant in general usage in the fourth century CE and thereafter. In the literary roll, texts were written in tall narrow columns, prose texts typically in even columns *c.* 15–20 characters wide (*c.* 6–8 cm). The reader held the roll with both hands, unrolling it horizontally, the right hand unrolling the text column by column, the left hand rolling up the scroll as it was read.

There were generous margins at the top and bottom of the columns, and smaller vertical spaces separating the columns. Better copyists wrote separated, consistently formed characters of even height, the tops and bottoms of characters forming straight horizontal lines. The visual effect of good calligraphic copying can be quite elegant; but it also makes demands upon readers. For, in typical Greek literary texts of the time, there is no spacing between words (*scriptio continua*), punctuation is scarce, and there are typically no indications of sense units such as sentences or paragraphs. In short, few concessions are made to readers, who must perceive words and sense units. Reading such manuscripts with any ease required training and skill.

6 Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes*, pp. 141–52.   7 Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 74–9.

As evidenced by the manuscript finds from Judaean sites, Jewish scribal practice of the time, however, exhibits notable differences. There is some word separation, and use of spaces to mark sense units, especially in copies of biblical texts. The most distinctive feature is the special treatment accorded to the divine name (YHWH). In Hebrew manuscripts the name is often replaced with four or five dots, or written in Palaeo-Hebrew characters; and in Greek biblical texts the name is sometimes written in Hebrew characters. In all these devices, the intention is clearly to mark off the name from the surrounding text, and probably also to signal to readers to avoid pronouncing the name.

In fine-quality literary rolls intended for display as well as reading, the outer edges could be painted or even gilt. Labels were attached to allow identification of the contents of unopened rolls, and a protective cover could be used, especially to transport a roll. Multiple rolls could be stored (or transported) in a *capsum*, essentially a bucket in which rolls were placed on end.

We also have examples of reused rolls (opisthographs), which probably reflect the desire to have an inexpensive copy of a text for personal usage.

The literary codex

The leaf-book (codex) is commonly thought to have its ancestors in small wooden tablets with painted or waxed writing surfaces, and also small leather and papyrus notebooks, these items all mainly used for note-taking, lists and other simple writing purposes. The earliest indication of the use of the codex for more extended literary texts is in comments by the Roman poet Martial (*Epigr*. 1.2; late first century CE), who refers to the works of several authors as then available in small parchment-codex form (*brevibus membrana tabellis*), which he recommends as handy for reading on a journey.[8] Indeed, we have remnants of codices used for literary texts (some papyrus and others parchment) dated to the second century CE. But codices form a tiny portion of the total number of all extant manuscripts of that century (*c.* 4 per cent). In general, the codex was not widely used prior to the fourth century CE, particularly for literary texts, which makes the early Christian preference for the codex all the more notable a departure from this pattern.[9]

Part of the reason for the general reluctance to adopt the codex was probably that it required a further set of skills beyond those involved in preparing and

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8 Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, pp. 24–9; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, pp. 49–52.
9 For this and other information concerning manuscripts, an invaluable resource is the Leuven Database of Ancient Books, an online catalogue of published manuscripts: http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/about.php.

copying rolls. Construction of a roll was simply a matter of getting (or creating) a continuous length of writing material sufficient for the intended text. But codex construction was much more complicated. For a parchment codex, a sheet of material could be folded twice to form four leaves (eight pages), multiples of these folded sheets then stitched together to make a book of sufficient size for a literary text. For a papyrus codex, one began with a length of manufactured papyrus in roll form, which was cut into sheets (*folia*), which were then folded once, each folded sheet comprising two leaves (a bifolium of four pages). These folded sheets had to be sewn together in one way or another to form a leaf-book of sufficient capacity. The single folding of the papyrus sheet tended to produce leaves whose width was roughly one half their height, whereas the parchment codex pages tended towards a more square shape. Protective covers of codices too were differently constructed from those prepared for rolls. As with the roll, there are codices of various sizes, ranging from some *c.* 30 cm height down to miniature ones of *c.* 8 × 9 cm, a few even smaller still.

All through the first three centuries CE, we can see various approaches to constructing papyrus codices adequate for literary texts of substantial sizes. It is clear and noteworthy that Christians were very actively engaged in this effort, as attested in the Chester Beatty biblical papyri, which illustrate the different techniques tried. In some cases (e.g. the Chester Beatty Isaiah), codices were formed of as many as fifty or more sheets of papyrus folded together to form one gathering. In other cases (e.g. the Chester Beatty Gospels codex), individual folded sheets were stitched successively to one another in concertina fashion, and in still other cases (e.g. a Chester Beatty Genesis) several sheets were folded to form a gathering, and multiple gatherings, each comprising several folded sheets, were then sewn together to form the codex (which is basically the way in which modern books are constructed). Also, if the copyist wanted the visual effect of the papyrus fibres running in the same direction on both pages at each opening of the codex, the sheets had to be arranged carefully in each gathering so that, for instance, two horizontal sides faced each other, then two vertical sides, and so on. It should be noted that the physical differences between rolls and the various types of codex constructions produce different possibilities of damage and loss of text, and these factors need to be taken more into account by scholars in proposing theories about such matters.

Copying text into a codex likewise required steps and skills not necessary for the roll. For example, one could copy text onto folded sheets and then assemble them into a codex, which required care in ordering (perhaps by

numbering) the sheets properly. But in other cases the codex was apparently constructed prior to the copying of a text, requiring the copyist to calculate in advance how big a codex was needed to accommodate the text. Also, in a papyrus codex the copyist had to cope with writing on both sides of each leaf, which meant also writing on the side with vertical fibres, not ordinarily done in a roll.

Moreover, the layout of text in a codex was different from that in a roll, typically a single and wider column for each page, although we do have a few examples of double-column format. The latter suggest efforts to imitate the layout of the literary roll with its narrow columns. Also, the copyist had to calculate margins at the outer and inner edges as well as the top and bottom of each page. The top and bottom margins were larger (the bottom margin often slightly larger than the top one), and the outer margin wider than the inner one.

Christians and the codex

As noted already, the ancient Christian preference for the codex was surprisingly strong and was formed remarkably early. It is evidenced in the very earliest extant fragments of Christian provenance, some of which may date as far back as the mid-second century CE (e.g. the famous Rylands fragment of John). In the wider book culture of the third century there appears to have been a slow growth in usage of the codex, but it remained very small in comparison to the general preference for the literary roll.[10] Among Christians, however, the preference for the codex seems to have come about much more quickly and fully. Indeed, whatever the impetus and factors involved in the Christian preference for the codex, they must be placed no later than the opening years of the second century, and quite likely even earlier.

But it is also important to note that this preference was expressed with particular emphasis with regard to copies of texts that Christians treated as scripture. For other texts, such as theological treatises, homilies, and texts that may have been used for edification, however, the roll remained somewhat more readily used. To illustrate this, if we focus attention on Christian manuscripts dated to *c.* 300 CE and earlier, about one third of the copies of Christian extra-canonical texts are on rolls (excluding opisthographs), whereas *c.* 90–5 per cent of all Christian copies of Old Testament texts are in codices,

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10 For fuller discussion and copious data, including charts and graphs, see Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, pp. 43–93.

and we have not a single instance of a text that came to form part of the New Testament copied on an unused roll (excluding the few opisthographic copies of New Testament texts).[11] That is, for Christians the text copied appears to have been a key factor in the choice of the book form, and Christians seem to have been particularly keen to use the codex for those texts to which they assigned the highest significance, and which were read as a part of their corporate worship.

This in turn suggests that the Christian preference for the codex was not shaped simply by the sorts of practical advantages of this book form sometimes proposed as decisive by scholars today. Indeed, the physical features of Christian manuscripts do not readily support such proposals. For instance, the varying sizes of Christian codices indicate that they were not all simply intended for portability. Moreover, early Christian biblical codices typically have fewer lines per page than non-Christian literary codices, liberal margins, generously sized writing and ample spacing between the lines, all indicating little concern to make the maximum use of the writing space.

Instead, the intriguing and strong possibility is that Christians may have come to prefer the codex, especially (though not exclusively) for their scriptural texts, to distinguish themselves from the wider book-copying culture of the time. But, whether for practical or for semiotic reasons, the preference for the codex produced perhaps the earliest expression of an identifiable Christian 'material culture', which seems to have emerged already in the second century CE.

With a few exceptions, the copyists' hands exhibited in early Christian manuscripts are legible and practised, but not of the calligraphic quality seen in elegant pagan literary rolls of the time, and also in some early Jewish copies of biblical texts. The likely explanation is either that there were very few high-quality calligraphers among early Christians, and they were reluctant to turn to non-believers to copy their texts, or that most Christian groups of these early centuries did not have the financial resources to pay for the services of professional calligraphers. In short, most Christian texts in this time were likely copied by Christians for themselves and/or for circles of fellow believers.[12]

There are copies of texts which contain a number of features suggesting that these copies were intended for ease of reading, probably reading in

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11 Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, esp. pp. 53–61.
12 Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, emphasises the frequency of private copying in Antiquity generally.

church circles. In addition to the generously sized characters, line spacing and margins mentioned already, these copies also often have elementary punctuation, and the use of devices to signal sense units, particularly paragraph-sized units. All these features are probably to be understood as aids for reading, and collectively they represent a notably different approach to copying texts from that reflected in high-quality pagan literary manuscripts of the time, which appear more elegant but somewhat demanding and even severe in comparison.

Johnson has proposed cogently that this visual character of ancient fine literary manuscripts reflects intentionally the small and elite social circles in which they were read.[13] That is, these literary manuscripts were deliberately designed to be demanding for anyone not of the sophisticated levels in which they were to be used; we will return to this point below. It is worth noting here, however, that this raises the intriguing thought that the features of earliest Christian manuscripts may likewise reflect the social circumstances and settings in which they were used, and that the visual character of these manuscripts (including the codex form) may have been an equally deliberate expression of the non-elite and more diverse and socially inclusive character of these settings.

A final important feature already typical of earliest Christian manuscripts is the practice of writing certain words in a distinctive manner, the so-called *nomina sacra*. The earliest and most consistently handled words are 'Theos', 'Kyrios', 'Iesous' and 'Christos', but very quickly a number of other words came to receive a similar treatment.[14] The distinctive way in which these words were written was to abbreviate them (most often the initial and final letters, sometimes with one or more medial letters as well) and to place over the abbreviated form a curious horizontal stroke. Scholars remain divided over how the practice began and what exactly it represents. Most, however, believe that the scribal practice is a Christian innovation (although influenced perhaps by the reverential scribal treatment of the divine name in Jewish manuscripts), and that the practice reflects a reverential attitude towards the customary referents of the words. The latter view is perhaps supported in the observation that these abbreviations do not appear as consistently in Christian documentary texts (e.g. letters), and are most typical of Christian copies of scriptural texts.

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13 Johnson, 'Toward a Sociology of Reading'.
14 Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, pp. 95–134, gives full discussion and copious references to other scholarly studies.

In any case, with the codex, the *nomina sacra* form notable identifying practices of early Christian copyists, and perhaps the earliest extant physical and visual expressions of Christianity.

Book production, dissemination and collection

In general, the production and collection of literary works in the Hellenistic and Roman periods were processes overseen by the literate elite, who had the resources – principally financial – needed for such processes.

Producing and copying texts

Dictation was the normal mode of authorship in the Graeco-Roman period, and thus most authors did not actually *write* their works themselves. Rather, slaves and freedmen who had been trained in literate skills performed most of the actual writing of texts. A work originated in a scribe's shorthand, and after transcription into full text the author would examine it for the purposes of correction, after which scribes would produce a 'finished' copy. Eusebius claims Origen could keep busy simultaneously seven shorthand writers, the same number of copyists, as well as female calligraphers.[15] Eusebius notes further that Origen eventually allowed shorthand writers to take down his public discourses.[16] Augustine also typically composed by dictating.[17] Those of high status especially disparaged writing when it was in the form of rote copying. The first-century BCE author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* says, 'The laborious is not necessarily the excellent. There are many things requiring labour which you would not necessarily boast of having done – unless, to be sure, you thought it a glorious feat to have transcribed by your own hand whole dramas or speeches!'[18] Jerome considers Pamphilus' willingness to transcribe the works of Origen with his own hand as extraordinary and a sure sign that he 'was on fire with such love for the sacred library'.[19] That is, Pamphilus' commitment to Christian literature was so extreme that he was willing to do what one normally would not – copy it himself. In this sense, there was a direct correlation on the part of the elite between possession of

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15 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23.
16 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.36.   17 E.g., Augustine, *Retract.* prol. 2.
18 *Rhet. Her.* 4.4.6; *Cicero. Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).
19 Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 75; *Saint Jerome. On Illustrious Men*, trans. T. P. Halton, FC (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

literate skills and ability (via wealth or patronage) to avoid using them when desired.[20]

Although the norm, dictation as a method of authorship was not universal. Especially in the case of penning personal correspondence, literates were often willing, even anxious, to write for themselves. Cicero brags that he normally writes in his own hand to his friend Atticus,[21] and states that he prefers when Atticus writes in his own hand.[22] Nevertheless, Cicero reveals his need to use scribes at times due to a hectic schedule or illness,[23] and that this was the case for Atticus as well.[24] While acknowledging that many despise the task, Quintilian places high value on writing letters in one's own hand: 'We shall therefore at all times and in all places, and above all when we are writing private letters to our friends, find a gratification in the thought that we have not neglected even this accomplishment.'[25] The apostle Paul often wrote epistles with an amanuensis, but also occasionally interrupted the scribe's work in order to write in his own hand (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17; Philem. 19; cf. Gal. 6:11).[26]

Thus, though the skill of writing was prized and most authors in the Hellenistic and Roman periods *could* write, book-length literary works were normally produced initially by an author dictating to a scribe. Production of subsequent copies was accomplished by a copyist. The exception, as noted with Pamphilus, was the copying performed by later ascetic Christian scribes, who will receive more attention below.

There were as many skill levels among copyists as there were copyists. The famous village clerk Petaus could copy only his name and a short formula marking his reception of documents, and even this he did imperfectly.[27] He was a 'slow writer', someone who could copy letter-for-letter and perhaps write his name but whose literate skills were limited to these abilities. Another example of a slow writer is the second-century Roman Christian Hermas, who was at one point a slave (Herm., *Vis*. 1.1). He claims that his inability to 'find the syllables' hindered his copying of a little book.[28] Slightly more advanced than Hermas is Cicero's scribe Spintharo, who can take dictation syllable by syllable. Even more advanced still is Cicero's scribe Tiro, who can

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20 Bagnall, *Reading Papyri*, p. 25.   21 Cicero, *Att*. 2.23.
22 Cicero, *Att*. 7.3.   23 Cicero, *Att*. 2.23, 4.16, 8.13.   24 Cicero, *Att*. 7.2.
25 Quintilian, *Inst*. 1.1.28–9; *Quintilian. Institutiones oratoriae*, trans. H. E. Butler, 4 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976–82).
26 See further Keith, '"In My Own Hand"', 39–58. On Paul's use of amanuenses, see E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 2.42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).
27 *P. Petaus* 121 (Köln inv. 328). For Petaus, see especially Youtie, 'βραδέως γράφων', pp. 629–51.
28 Herm., *Vis*. 2.1.4.

follow whole sentences.[29] As noted earlier, Origen's cadre of scribes included calligraphers.

Furthermore, as this brief survey makes clear, those capable of copying texts competently could be found in numerous social locations during the period under consideration. Some were an indispensable part of a wealthy household while others were lowly village clerks working as part of the bureaucratic machinery.[30] Others were employed by booksellers or as members of a library staff or temple. A manumitted slave could ply his trade in a freelance fashion by setting up a location in the local *agora* or *forum* and copying mortgages, divorces and contracts as required, or even becoming a bookseller.[31] One should also keep in mind that the tasks of scribes were not limited to taking dictation or copying. Scribes also had to be proficient in the preparation and handling of wax tablets, papyrus and parchment, as well as ink, reeds and styluses.

Dissemination and exchange of texts

The Graeco-Roman world knew nothing of authorial rights in the modern sense. Thus, the 'publication' of books was a process different from that of today. When an author wanted to make public a work, he would release it in the form of an oral recitation or by sending copies to a select group of friends, often dedicating it to a patron where one existed (cf. Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). When asked for a copy, an author could then direct the inquirer to someone with whom he had deposited an official copy. For example, Jerome tells Desiderius that he can copy any of Jerome's works from exemplars held by Marcella or Domnio (although he states that he will send copies to Desiderius as well upon request).[32] Alternatively, if an author did not want to incur the cost of producing a copy, or did not want to encourage the level of friendship that providing an author's copy would imply, he could respond to a request by sending the person to a bookseller. A combination of these factors appears present when Martial sends Quintus to a bookshop.[33] Another form of 'publication' was for either a teacher or his students to release class notes under the name of the teacher. Quintilian claims two books have been published in his name by this method.[34]

29 Cicero, *Att.* 13.25.
30 Beyond the example of Petaus, see also the scribes mentioned in Josephus, *B. J.* 1.479.
31 For example, Martial refers to the bookshop of Secundus the freedman (*libertum*) in *Epigr.* 1.2.
32 Jerome, *Ep.* 47.3.   33 Martial, *Epigr.* 4.72. See Starr, 'Circulation', 215, 222.
34 Preface to his *Inst.* See also the discussion of Snyder, *Teachers*, pp. 43, 50, with regards to Stoics and Epicureans respectively. This practice continues today, as exemplified in the well-known case of Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*.

Often an author would send a 'pre-release' edition to a friend for review. On occasion this initial version would get out against the author's wishes, but the author was powerless, it seems, to do anything to stop it. Cicero scolds Atticus for making available sections of his 'pre-release' edition of Cicero's *De finibus*, but then relents slightly by admitting that he had failed to specify that he did not want the books circulated.[35] Augustine and Jerome as well complain about 'unauthorised' or incomplete versions of their works circulating.[36]

Emerging clearly from the ancient evidence is the fact that the vast majority of copying and dissemination of books was done through private channels of friendship. The easiest manner in which to acquire a known text was through a friend or acquaintance who had a copy in his private library. Either one could send a scribe to make a copy at one's own expense, or the acquaintance might incur the expense and have a copy made and sent to the individual who made the request. The ancient record is full of such requests, provisions and expressions of gratitude,[37] documenting that one manner in which the minority literate elite solidified their mutual status was through literary exchange. One example of the type of private library that would have enabled such literary exchanges is that of the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, probably the most substantially preserved ancient library, although all its volumes were carbonised in the eruption of Mt Vesuvius in 79 CE. Long buried under the volcanic ash of the eruption, this library has been identified tentatively as the personal library of Philodemus and contained over one thousand bookrolls.[38]

A commercial booktrade certainly existed, at least from the fifth century BCE in Athens.[39] Martial provides ample evidence for the booktrade in the later period. As just mentioned, he directs persons interested in his works to booksellers, and even notes that a pumice-smoothed purple copy of his works costs five *denarii*.[40] Among others, Pliny too was in frequent contact with booksellers.[41] These authors were thus clearly aware of the commercial book market and likely even used particular dealers as 'literary agents'. Despite these facts, however, and although the esteem for the commercial booktrade likely fluctuated slightly at different places and times, it was generally not a lucrative or well-respected business. Since it existed outside the social circles of private

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35 Cicero, *Att*. 13.21a.
36 See the excellent discussion of Gamble, *Books and Readers*, pp. 135–8.
37 See the multiple examples cited by Starr, 'Circulation', 217–18, and Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, p. 3.
38 Snyder, *Teachers*, p. 46, places the estimate at 1,100.   39 Casson, *Libraries*, pp. 26–7.
40 Martial, *Epigr*. 1.117.   41 Pliny, *Ep*. 1.2.

copying, it was prone to error-ridden manuscripts and authors commonly refer to the inferior scribes or manuscripts found in the commercial market.[42] It is significant in this respect that Martial sends Quintus to a bookseller after rejecting his request for an author's copy. Buying books from a bookseller was 'a last resort'.[43]

Christianity was emphatically dedicated to the exchange of texts from the earliest stages of its existence, as a few examples of many demonstrate. Col. 4:16 instructs the church in Colossae to share this Pauline Epistle with the Laodicean church, and to procure from the Laodiceans a copy of the epistle addressed to them. Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians reveals a vigorous exchange of the letters of Ignatius among churches (Polycarp, *Phil.* 13). Scholars have found at Oxyrhynchus at least three copies of the *Shepherd of Hermas* datable to the late second/early third century. Thus, this second-century text composed in Rome had travelled a considerable distance in a short amount of time, evidencing the overall interconnectedness of various Christian communities via their texts.[44] Scriptoria eventually supported Christian literary exchange, be they the atypical type made available to Origen by Ambrose[45] or the scriptorium at Caesarea that allowed Eusebius to provide Constantine with fifty copies of scripture.[46] It is not exactly clear, however, how early Christian scriptoria began to augment the production of early Christian texts through private networks.[47]

'Public' and christian libraries

Outside of private collections and the suspect booksellers, the alternative for accessing literary works in the ancient world was 'public' libraries. A person of wealth could send his or her scribe to a library that contained a copy and have him transcribe it.[48] Booksellers as well appear to have had access to some libraries and made copies there.[49] At least in some instances, libraries also allowed borrowers to take their holdings in order to make copies of them. Ptolemy III borrowed the official versions of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides from the library at Athens to have copies made for his Library of Alexandria. Instead of returning them, however, he kept the originals and sent the copies back to Athens, forgoing the deposit

42 Cicero, *Ad Quintum fratrem* 3.6; Strabo, *Geography* 13.1.54.
43 Casson, *Libraries*, p. 78.
44 Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, p. 27. Hurtado also notes the presence of a late second/early third-century copy of Irenaeus' *Against heresies*.
45 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23; Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 61.
46 Eusebius, *Vita Const.* 4.34–7.   47 See Gamble, *Books and Readers*, pp. 121–3.
48 As implied by Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.57.   49 Strabo, *Geography* 13.1.54.

the Athenians had required.[50] Ptolemy III kept them so that his Library of Alexandria would have authoritative exemplars on hand. Possession of such texts was one of the more important functions that libraries performed, as they were involved with textual criticism, assessing copies against exemplars in order to provide accurate editions. Similarly, according to Possidius, the best copies of Augustine's works were housed at the library in Hippo and one could apply to the library for permission to make copies.[51]

Although libraries established by rulers and/or in conjunction with academies (as, e.g., the Library of Alexandria or the Library of Pergamum) were in some sense 'public' when compared to the private libraries of individual citizens, they were not public in the modern sense. At all points in time in the Graeco-Roman period, there were substantially more illiterates than there were literates.[52] Thus, those who were even capable of utilising a library's holdings were necessarily a minority. Library users were limited furthermore to those who had leisure time that they could spend in study, were in close topographical proximity, and/or could afford to send a household slave there for the purposes of text acquisition or were in the good graces of a patron who financed their time in the library.

Specifically Christian libraries were initially based in church congregations. 1 Tim. 4:13 and Justin Martyr's *1 Apol.* (1.67) indicate that in the first and second centuries Christians were already reading certain Christian texts regularly in liturgical settings. Later, churches collected more Christian texts, and these church libraries became targets in the Diocletianic persecution (303–11). Martyrdom accounts from this period make clear that those charged with responsibility for the sacred texts often chose death over revealing the location of those texts, which were a key object of interest for the persecutors.[53]

In the pre-Constantinian period, however, at least three major libraries emerged. According to Eusebius, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem (212–50), founded the library in that city.[54] The Caesarean library, whose significance 'is difficult to overestimate',[55] was particularly associated with Origen and Pamphilus[56] but no less so with Origen's successor Eusebius. Since Eusebius was able promptly to fulfil Constantine's request for fifty copies of scripture,[57] the Caesarean library must have had a scriptorium attached to it. The Christian library at Alexandria has left no direct evidence of its existence, but is inferred

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50 Casson, *Libraries*, p. 35. 51 Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 18.
52 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*. 53 See Gamble, *Books and Readers*, pp. 145–50.
54 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.20. 55 Gamble, *Books and Readers*, p. 160.
56 Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 113. 57 Eusebius, *Vita Const.* 4.37.

from the presence of the catechetical school there, thriving by the second century under Pantaenus.

Using books: social functions of books

As was the case with the production and collection of books, the usage of literary texts also was located primarily within private social networks.

Social settings of reading

In the Graeco-Roman period, those literates able to do so often used a household servant to read and to copy texts for them. Pliny the Elder was rarely without a scribe ready either to read or to take dictation.[58] Dio Chrysostom remarks that, when engaging with a comedy or tragedy, 'the effect is enhanced when one is relieved of the preoccupation of reading'.[59] On the other hand, Seneca thought that reading a work himself offered more clarity than having it read to him.[60]

Vocalisation of the text (i.e. reading aloud) was certainly a normal practice of the time. However, this should not lead one to think that silent reading was unknown, since we have multiple examples of this practice in Greek and Latin literature.[61] Thus, the notion that *all* reading by Greeks and Romans was aloud, and the concomitant assumption that silent reading of *scriptio continua* presented insuperable cognitive difficulties for the ancients, must be rejected.[62]

Public reading

However, the widescale practice of reading aloud and in a group setting points us to reader/audience expectations, and thus the varying 'reading cultures' of the Graeco-Roman world.[63] A prominent feature of the literate elite social culture was the public reading of works. This could take place in the context of philosophical discussions or as after-dinner entertainment,

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58 Pliny, *Ep.* 3.5.
59 Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 18.6–7 *Dio Chrysostom. Discourses 12–30*, trans. J. W. Cohoon, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939).
60 Seneca, *Ep.* 46.3.
61 See Frank D. Gilliard, 'More Silent Reading in Antiquity: *non omne verbum sonabat*,' *JBL* 112.4 (1993): 689–96, responding to Paul J. Achtemeier, '*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,' *JBL* 109.1 (1990): 3–27.
62 Johnson, 'Toward a Sociology of Reading', 593, more fully 593–600.
63 The phrase 'reading culture' is that of Johnson, 'Toward a Sociology of Reading', 601.

with the lines between these settings often blurring.[64] In these contexts, the actual reading of the text was as much an act of social cohesion as it was a literary activity. Similarly, when school students read publicly in class or privately, mastering together a set of texts, it reinforced their group identity.[65] In this sense, the public reading of scripture in synagogues (which Luke 4:16–17 portrays Jesus as doing) resembles that of philosophical groups. As one scholar has rightfully emphasised, one should view the physical manuscript from which the reading occurred in each of these contexts as an intricate part of that reading culture, indeed a marker of that culture, and not merely as an unimportant repository of text.[66] Furthermore, then as today, it seems that books were used as social capital. Seneca rails against people who collect books for show instead of learning, using them as 'decoration for the dining room'.[67]

Private reading

Numerous examples of private reading contexts exist as well. The Ethiopian eunuch whom Philip overheard was apparently reading to himself (Acts 8:28, 30). Book forms such as opisthographs and miniature codices suggest private usage.[68] Numerous portrayals of ancient literates, such as the sixth-century fresco discovered beneath the Lateran Chapel,[69] depict them reading privately.

Additionally, when considering broader reading contexts, one must ask what value texts had for the majority of individuals in the Graeco-Roman period who were illiterate. This question points us to the symbolic values of texts as physical artefacts, whatever their particular content. We are also to recognise that for an audience which was otherwise unable to access a text the main purpose and result of a public reading was the provision of access to it. Especially in the context of the reading of sacred texts, this placed considerable authority in the hands of the readers, who can be seen to have served as 'text-brokers'.[70]

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64 Seneca, *Ep.* 64.1–3.
65 For an application of this model of 'education-enculturation' to Jewish scriptures, see Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*.
66 Johnson, 'Toward a Sociology of Reading', 616.
67 Seneca, *De tranquillitate animi* 9.4–7.
68 Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, p. 57, n. 49 (opisthographs), pp. 160–1 (miniature codices). Also, Kenyon, *Books and Readers*, p. 60.
69 For an accessible image, see Gamble, *Books and Readers*, p. 163. He surmises that the figure shown is likely Augustine.
70 'Text-brokers' is the term of Snyder, *Teachers*, pp. 2–3.

Books and religion

The phenomenon of 'scribal' or 'sacred' literacy is particularly associated with Judaism and Christianity. Although pagan religions sometimes utilised books,[71] their investment in the use of those texts was not comparable to that of these two religious traditions.

Books as scripture: text and identity

In both ancient Judaism and early Christianity, public reading of the sacred text became a characteristic feature of corporate liturgy. Indeed, the reading of their texts served such an important role that the texts themselves became shorthand expressions of group identity. One result of this was the formation of a canon in both traditions.[72] Moreover, when a group wanted to express a distinctive viewpoint or identity, whether hoping to modify or subversively undermining the larger tradition, a primary method of accomplishing that goal was by producing a text. In Second Temple Judaism this is evident in the flourishing of pseudepigraphical literature that either 'rewrites' a known text (e.g. Jubilees or 1 Esdras) or claims as its author a figure from the 'canonical' texts (e.g. Enochic literature).[73] In early Christianity, the use of texts as vehicles for religious viewpoints is equally abundant. Some Christians appropriated recognised texts, but altered them for their own purposes (e.g. Marcion), and others ascribed texts to respected figures of the Christian tradition. Examples of the latter include the explicit attribution of apocryphal gospels to figures from the fourfold gospels (e.g. Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Mary, etc.) and other texts, such as the Acts of Paul and Thecla.

Copying the text as religious practice

The centrality of the text in Judaism and Christianity also produced an important difference between these two traditions and the broader Graeco-Roman world. Whereas the copying of texts was widely disdained, especially among many members of the elite, the holiness of the text in Judaism and Christianity ensured that its copyists were esteemed highly for their skill. According to b. Sotah 20a, the copying of the Jewish scripture texts was divine work, and one can assume that the interpretative authority associated with scribes in Jewish tradition reflected this conviction. Similarly, in the Christian context,

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71 Mary Beard, 'Writing and Religion. Ancient Literacy and the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion', in Beard et al., *Literacy*, pp. 35–58.

72 See Barton and Verheyden in this volume, pp. 145–64 and 389–411.

73 See Collins in this volume, pp. 165–89.

far from being a menial task, the work of copying the scriptures was an act of piety. In an added note at the end of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the scribe Pionius reveals that he transcribed his manuscript from a well-used exemplar and describes his scribal activity with salvific language: 'I gathered it together when it was nearly worn out by age, that the Lord Jesus Christ might also gather me together with his elect into his heavenly kingdom.'[74] One here sees an attitude towards copying that is nearly the polar opposite of that in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.[75] By the time of monastic copyists, the replication of the holy text had become one of the highest callings available to Christians.[76] This transition was already well under way in the late third century when Pamphilus eschewed the habits of elite culture and was willing to copy Origen's works with his own hand.[77] By the sixth century, Cassiodorus even wrote *De orthographia* as a guide for accuracy for his monastic scribes as they copied the scriptures.[78]

Christians and new book forms

The Christian adoption of the codex, and the codex's eventual dominance of the literary scene, has already been covered. Similarly to the adoption of the codex, the gospel genre was a distinctively Christian modification of a broad type of text already present in Graeco-Roman literary culture, the *bios* genre.[79] The proliferation of gospels led eventually to gospel harmonies, such as Tatian's *Diatessaron*, another distinctively Christian book form. Eusebius forever altered the genre of historiography,[80] and Origen's *Hexapla* presented an innovative book layout.[81] In these ways and more, then, Christianity left its mark on the literary world of the Graeco-Roman period.

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74 *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 22.3; M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers. Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).
75 Cf. Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, p. 131.
76 See Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*.   77 Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 75.
78 On Cassiodorus, see Gamble, *Books and Readers*, pp. 198–202.
79 See Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, rev. edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).
80 See Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 133–232; Mendels, *Media Revolution*.
81 See Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 87–132.

PART II

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THE HEBREW BIBLE AND OLD TESTAMENTS

The Old Testament text and its transmission

EUGENE ULRICH

The Hebrew Bible – Tanakh in Jewish tradition, the Old Testament in Christian tradition – has been transmitted to us in a complex array of variant forms. Most people encounter the text in a single clear form, but the apparent simplicity is the result of editorial or religious selection from among the variant forms. The following chapter will examine the evidence that has been preserved and sketch the main paths by which the text has been transmitted, from its earliest beginnings to the forms in which we encounter it.

As will be seen below in the classic contrast between theories proposing a single urtext (the original form of the text) which spread to multiple forms versus theories proposing an early pluriformity of texts which eventually were supplanted by one standardised text, it is important to explore the full range of the origins and transmission of the text to achieve perspective. To appreciate why scholars propose such contrasting explanations of the evidence we must examine the text from its earliest visibility to its current forms.

The formation and nature of the text

The Hebrew Bible is – in union with convictions of divine inspiration and any other definitions or descriptions one may give – an anthology of ancient Israelite faith literature. Thus, any description of its text and transmission must include the complexity occasioned by the diverse compositions which constitute that anthology in its final form. Each of those diverse compositions, while giving the appearance of homogeneity in its final, collected form as the Bible, has its own trajectory of development from its origins to its final form. Since many of the books are themselves composite works, the origins of each become yet more difficult to sketch. In short, the seemingly unified Hebrew Bible, as its origins and composition are explored, appears more diverse the further back one goes. The text during its early centuries was not a single

static object but an organic and pluriform entity. At least three factors help to explain this.

One of the principal reasons is the adaptability of the subject matter. It is partly because certain ancient texts, meaningful in their original context, could also be experienced as meaningful by new generations in new contexts that they were preserved, handed on, and eventually recognised as sacred scripture. Occasionally, the wording of those traditions was adapted to apply more specifically to the new context, thus creating variant forms of the text.

A second reason for the variation is that the scriptures are for the most part traditional oral literature and thus community-created. That is, each book is not the product of a single author, such as Plato or Shakespeare, but of multiple, anonymous bards, sages, leaders, compilers or tradents. Unlike much classical and modern literature, produced by a single, named individual at a single point in time, the biblical books are constituted by earlier traditions being repeated, augmented and reshaped by later authors, editors or tradents, over the course of many centuries. Thus the text of each of the books is organic and developmental, a composition by multiple stages, sometimes described as a rolling corpus.

Third, the path that stretches from the original 'authors' to our earliest preserved manuscript evidence spans several centuries and is tortuous indeed. Over and over, oral tradents and scribal copyists did their best to hand on the text as accurately as possible, but each was fallible and some were creative; so it is difficult to find any single text that does not have in it unintentional errors and synonymous variants, as well as intentional expansions and clarifications. Each of these factors complicates in its own way the search for 'the original text'.

An earlier view, still held by some today, saw a dichotomy between two virtually discrete periods: the period of the composition or formation of the text, which eventually became fixed, and the period of transmission, which attempted to hand down as faithfully as possible the fixed text. But the evidence from Qumran indicates that the two processes of textual formation and transmission repeatedly overlapped for extensive periods of time. The two must be studied together, since the nature of the text is organic.

Oral beginnings

Large parts of what end up as passages in the written books began as small oral units. Certain legal, cultic or wisdom sayings, for example, secured an enduring existence by becoming part of a law code, a liturgy or a collection

of proverbs. Individual hymns, love songs or dirges were transmitted across generations and immortalised in the psalter, the Song of Songs or narratives involving death. Myths, legends and tales that taught and entertained successive generations became incorporated into the large narrative strands that constitute many of the biblical books. Again, these oral units would normally have been recited and transmitted accurately, but they would also sometimes be logically adapted to the larger context or framework into which they were being placed. This process of incorporation into larger frameworks could happen several times: an initial anonymous saying could secondarily be attributed to Abraham in a certain story, then be included in a form of the larger pre-monarchic national epic, which would finally be incorporated into the major pentateuchal strand which we now read in Genesis. So the search for 'the original text' is blurred from the start, since any of the stages above could qualify as the original.

Biblical scholars starting in the Enlightenment, in analysing book after book, identified both ancient oral and written sources that biblical authors employed, as well as later redactional layers by which those authors organised the sources and finalised the editions of the texts as we receive them. That analytical work was hypothetical, without manuscript evidence, but based on literary and historical clues embedded in the texts. Now the witness of the biblical manuscripts from Qumran provides documentary evidence for that process of compositional development in its last phases and validates the theories of general organic composition by stages of most biblical books in their early, formative phases.

Foreign literature

One of the features that gives the Bible such broad appeal is its ability to speak across cultures, and one reason for that is that Israel drew on the rich religious and literary treasury of older, more established cultures within which it came to be and continued to live. Themes from universally appealing narratives, such as creation and flood stories, derived from Mesopotamia. Elements of religious, lyrical and wisdom traditions from Egypt, the major empire which controlled the Canaanite area at the time of Israel's origins, influenced Israelite wisdom literature. Egypt's hymns to the sun god are reflected in Ps. 104 and its *wasfs* in the love poetry of the Song of Songs. Within the land itself, Canaan's worship of the fertility storm god Baal provided a basis for Ps. 29. Some of the patriarchal stories probably have origins in the traditions of the Aramaeans or Canaanites, from which cultures some of

Israel's ancestors emerged. Additional wisdom traditions from neighbouring peoples such as the Ahikar proverbs, the Sumerian 'innocent sufferer', and a drama exploring suffering and the divine–human interrelationship probably influenced Proverbs and Job. While Israel drew liberally from the literary richness of its predecessors and neighbours, it adapted those sources to fit its cultural character and religious beliefs. In addition to the original Israelite adaptations, further theological changes may well have taken place as such foreign materials were assimilated into a monotheistic text, creating several variant forms of the texts, each of which could be considered 'original', depending upon one's perspective.

Small collections

As time passed, the various oral and perhaps written traditions of Israel were increasingly gathered into small collections, especially as the result of the transition to monarchy. Just as the formation of the Roman empire occasioned Virgil's *Aeneid*, the formation of the Israelite monarchy at the beginning of the tenth century BCE very likely occasioned a collection of narrative themes, such as the promise of the land, the bondage in Egypt, the wilderness stories and the gaining of the land. Further cycles of war stories, of hero stories such as the 'Saviours' cycle in Judges, and of prophetic stories such as the Elijah–Elisha cycle were formed. Similarly, legal and administrative sources, such as early law codes and the boundary and city lists in Josh. 13–21, were collected. Disciples preserved collections of prophetic sayings such as those of Amos, Isaiah and others. Priests gathered traditions of liturgical hymns and sacrificial rituals, and sages collected wisdom materials. Each of these early traditions employed undoubtedly underwent some development when incorporated into larger contexts and frameworks. Double uses of certain units allow us to see some of the variants that could occur: the Yahwistic versus Elohistic psalms, the oracle found in both Isa. 2:2–4 and Mic. 4:1–3, the psalm in both Ps. 18 and 2 Sam. 22.

Early forms of the biblical books: national literature

Just as the cultures that preceded and surrounded Israel had developed rich and varied treasuries of oral and written literature, so too Israel gradually built her own collections. Of these works of national literature, many ended in obscurity, while some were preserved, transmitted and collected in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocrypha or deuterocanonical books or the Pseudepigrapha.

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These works, somewhat parallel to the Homeric poems and other literature, served to articulate the spirit of the culture, to educate and entertain the people, to express proper religious beliefs, and to probe religious themes such as the nature of God and humanity's proper stance towards the divine. In referring to these works as national literature, that is not to say that they did not serve as religious literature, since there was no strong division between the religious and the secular spheres. But, just as theological and spiritual writings produced today are not seen as 'scripture', it is likely that much of Israel's literature was not perceived as such either at the time of its composition. As an example, it is perhaps easy to see that the Song of Songs was, and was considered to be, (merely) literature: a collection of poems celebrating human love. Thus, before it became an analogy of God's love for Israel, it was quite likely susceptible to changes, embellishment and insertion of additional poems. In fact, the Qumran scrolls display different arrangements of the poems. Through their literature, and especially their religious literature, Israel's religious leaders or creative tradents appear to have been seeking to varying degrees to understand the nature of the unseen God and producing literature that probed this mystery. Indeed, the fact that the Song was found at Qumran probably indicates that Israel had already come to view it as an analogy of God's love for Israel.

After the exile, in the early part of the Second Temple period, narrative complexes that had been formed presumably during the monarchic period about the patriarchs, the escape from Egypt, the wilderness wandering and the gaining of the land were gathered and compiled into an epic-scale story of national origins now seen in the narrative portions of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers and Joshua. Eventually, the principal legal corpora in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers were inserted into that national origins narrative. In addition, the main Deuteronomistic History, usually viewed as composed in the late seventh century BCE, was later lightly re-edited due to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the loss of the land.[1]

Earlier small collections of prophetic sayings and stories were gathered into larger books which continued to develop. The collections of 'the words of Amos', for example, originally warnings against the northern kingdom, were expanded and re-edited by the deuteronomistic school after that kingdom had fallen, to apply those warnings to Judah. Similarly, the wisdom literature also continued to develop as, for example, the prose Prologue–Epilogue of Job was combined with the poetic Dialogue.

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1 For an account of the formation of the Hebrew Bible, see Schaper in this volume, pp. 105–44.

Early forms of the biblical books:
authoritative scripture

There was a gradual set of shifts in the various communities' understanding as these books came to be seen no longer as merely religious instruction literature but increasingly as divinely inspired sacred scripture.

One factor is the explicitly stated conviction of the authors that God had spoken certain words. From the ancient pentateuchal stories, it was common to hear that God spoke to Adam, Abraham and Moses. Similarly, certain prophets claimed to be delivering 'the word of the Lord', and many of those claims were endorsed by the ongoing community. Occasionally, textual variants in manuscripts show us secondary editorial introductions to or insertions into the earlier text which helped the books be seen as divinely inspired. Formulas such as 'says the LORD', not in the earlier Septuagint (LXX), were inserted, for example, into the secondary masoretic text (MT) of Jeremiah at 8:3, 9:2, 12:17, 31:14 and so forth. Editorial introductions to oracles such as 'The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah, saying' (7:1), not in the LXX, were also inserted into the MT. These introductions and formulas made explicit what had been implicit beliefs.

A number of developing shifts also helped the community to see the books as scripture. One was the increasing aura due to the antiquity of the books of the Torah and the early prophets. Memory of the origins of the disparate, anonymous oral units was lost, as the books were now envisioned in complete form. Isolated sayings understood as divine messages were collected into books, the entirety of which gained divine status. As the texts increasingly served in liturgical and educational settings, the people regarded them as expressing God's will or commands. The texts, which had held secondary rank relative to the temple and its rituals as the central focus of the religion, rose to primary status and essential importance for the geographically dispersed communities after the destruction of the temple.[2]

Many of these shifts had taken place by the end of the Persian period or early Hellenistic period, as suggested by the Temple scroll (third century BCE?) and the book of Jubilees (second quarter of the second century BCE). The Temple scroll presumes the divine authorship of the Torah by reproducing large parts as direct first-person speech by God. And Jubilees' statement (Jub. 2:1) that 'The angel of the presence spoke to Moses according to the word of the LORD, saying: "Write the complete history of the creation"' shows that

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2 See Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64.

explicit Mosaic authorship had previously been extended to Gen. 1–11, and that the text had been divinely revealed.

These developments indicate that the texts were important not only for the educated and cultured, and spoke not only to the past: they were central to the ongoing life of the entire community and had to be applicable to the future situations which individuals and communities would encounter.

Early translations: Aramaic and Greek

Because the texts were important for the future and had to be applicable to the future situations and foreign surroundings in which the Jewish people would find themselves, the scriptures were translated into Aramaic and Greek, the languages of the Jewish communities in Babylon and Alexandria, and increasingly in Palestine.[3]

It is likely, although evidence is lacking, that the Jewish community in Babylon had begun to translate the Torah and possibly other books into Aramaic by around the third century BCE. These could have been complete, written translations or oral, ad hoc interpretations (cf. Neh. 8:8). The text-critical value of the Aramaic Targums is reduced, however, since all those preserved have been largely revised to agree with an early form of the MT, thus losing their independent value.

In Alexandria a translation of the Torah into Greek during the third century BCE is fairly certain. The legendary Letter of Aristeas elaborately narrates such an early translation, though it is generally believed to be written in support of a version making claims for hegemony about a century later. But several authors appear to use quotations from the LXX in the late third and the second century BCE, and manuscripts dating to the second and first century have been discovered in Egypt as well as in Palestine, indicating that a third-century translation is quite likely. As we shall see, the Old Greek translation is a witness of the first rank for the ancient Hebrew text.

Early manuscript witnesses

The earliest extant manuscript evidence for the history of the biblical text derives from the second half of the third century BCE. The more than two hundred scriptural manuscripts from Qumran and neighbouring sites along the western side of the Dead Sea exhibit two principal features: mainly the

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3 See Stemberger and De Troyer in the present volume, pp. 190–217 and 267–88.

accurate reproduction of each book and occasionally the creative revised edition of some books. For the most part the earliest scrolls show that the books were already in a form easily recognisable from the traditional *textus receptus*, though there are some notable surprises.

The evidence of the earliest as well as most subsequent manuscripts shows that the text of the individual books exhibits a combination of an established large core of text as well as a measured pluriformity in the formulation and quantity of text. These two main features were observable already by 1955 with the publication of the photographs and transcriptions of 1QIsa[a] and 1QIsa[b].

The manuscripts display four levels of variation: (i) differing legitimate or understandable orthographic or morphological forms which seldom involve a difference in meaning, (ii) individual textual variants which involve small-scale differences in meaning but are isolated occurrences not interconnected with other variants, (iii) occasional individual insertions of interpretive verses, and (iv) revised, successive literary editions of a book. Examples of the first would include longer or shorter spellings of words. The second would include simple errors, synonyms or intentional attempts at adding clarifications. The third can be illustrated by the numerous, presumably not interconnected, insertions of apocalyptic interpretive verses beginning 'On that day' interspersed through the book of Isaiah. An example of the fourth is the Hebrew version of Jeremiah preserved in the MT, which is a revised and expanded edition developed from the earlier version documented in manuscripts from Qumran and faithfully translated in the Septuagint.

The first level is linguistically interesting but usually insignificant with regard to meaning. The second level encompasses the vast majority of variant readings usually studied in the domain of traditional textual criticism. The third level illustrates the developmental, cumulative character of the text throughout its history and offers rich rewards for understanding the developing theology and piety of Second Temple Judaism. Many of the large insertions are of the nature of footnotes, homiletical comments or marginal reflections, but they have been incorporated into the ongoing text and are now perceived as a natural part of the text. The fourth level brightly illumines a phenomenon that had been available but mostly unrecognised. Biblical manuscripts from Qumran highlight variant editions of books of the Torah and the Prophets, as well as other works. A variant edition is a new reproduction of a book or passage which faithfully attempts to transmit the text being copied but at the same time revises it substantially according to a discernible set of principles.

For the Torah, Qumran manuscripts of Exodus and Numbers demonstrate that the Torah circulated in at least two forms in the late Second Temple

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period. Several manuscripts show the same edition as that transmitted in the MT, but 4QpaleoExod^m and 4QNum^b present secondarily expanded editions of those books. They are both preserved in numerous large fragments and they show a text similar to the traditional text but clearly intentionally developed. Repeatedly 4QpaleoExod^m records explicitly both God's command to Moses and Aaron and the fulfilment of that command, one or other of which had been left implicit and not repeated verbatim in the MT edition. Both manuscripts also include harmonistic passages from elsewhere in the Pentateuch, often from the parallel narratives in Deuteronomy.

For the Prophets, manuscripts of Jeremiah display two variant editions of that book. 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d witness in Hebrew to the short edition previously known from the Greek Jeremiah. In contrast, 4QJer^a and 4QJer^c witness to the secondary, much longer edition encountered in the MT.

A manuscript of the Psalms, 11QPs^a, is another variant edition which at first roused vigorous debate concerning whether it was a biblical manuscript or a post-biblical liturgical or other type of work. It has many of the Psalms from Ps. 93 to Ps. 151, but in an order quite different from the MT order, plus nine compositions not found in the received psalter. Thus, the weight of early scholarly opinion favoured classification as a post-biblical work. But it became clear that all the extra compositions were culled from or paralleled another passage in the MT, the LXX or Syriac Psalms, or were similar to other MT psalms; that fact plus the accumulating evidence illumining the pluriform nature of the ancient biblical text has shifted the weight of scholarly opinion towards considering it an alternate edition of the psalter.

For the Writings or poetic and wisdom books, the Qumran manuscripts 4QCant^a and 4QCant^b show either an abbreviated or a variant order of the love poems in that book. There is insufficient evidence to prove definitively whether the manuscripts originally contained simply excerpted passages from an established longer text form or whether there were variant editions of the book.

As the Qumran manuscripts were analysed, scholarly appreciation of the accuracy and reliability of other available sources grew. Manuscripts such as 1QIsa^b showed the accuracy of the transmission of the MT. 4QpaleoExod^m and 4QNum^b demonstrated the legitimacy of the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) as a text form produced within general Judaism and altered in only minor ways (textually, if not religiously) by the Samaritans. 4QDeut^q, 4QSam^a, 4QSam^b, 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d showed that the Old Greek translation was often a faithful reflection of an ancient Hebrew text, simply an alternate Hebrew form of the text that had existed alongside the one transmitted in the MT.

These surprises from Qumran offered the possibility of seeing more clearly the dimly lit and insufficiently appreciated evidence that had long been available from other sources. For example, the Old Greek for Exod. 35–40 revealed not a confused text but an earlier edition of those chapters than the edition in the MT. Analysis of the MT and LXX of Ezekiel and Daniel also revealed variant editions of those books. Similarly, Chronicles was seen to be based on a version of Samuel similar to 4QSamª that was different from and often superior to the MT Samuel; thus, the masoretic Chronicles is non-masoretic with respect to its source. Finally, Josephus was seen supporting major readings in 4QJoshª and 4QSamª as opposed to the MT.

Thus, the Qumran manuscripts provide clear evidence for variant literary editions of at least five and possibly six books of the twenty-four in the traditional Hebrew Bible: Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Jeremiah, Psalms and possibly the Song of Songs. Renewed study of the SP and the LXX in light of the Qumran evidence shows variant literary editions for seven additional books (or sections of books): Genesis, Samuel, Kings, Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Proverbs and Daniel. Variant editions for Judges, Job and Lamentations are possible, but the evidence is insufficient for certainty. Thus, variant editions for half or more of the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible existed in Jewish circles at the birth of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism.

It is interesting to observe that the textual character of the MT vacillates with respect to the edition of book after book, just as the LXX does. The MT displays the earlier edition of books such as Exodus (relative to the SP), Numbers, Psalms and Daniel, but the secondary edition of books or major sections of books such as Exodus 35–40 (relative to the Old Greek), Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Jeremiah. The MT was for many centuries viewed as the textual centre of the Hebrew Bible, that is, as 'the standardised text' against which all other texts would be judged; but it can no longer be regarded as such. It is important as the only complete Hebrew text of the Bible, but academically it must take its non-privileged place alongside all other witnesses to the ancient Hebrew form of each book.

Some scholars view the biblical remains from Masada as textually close to the proto-MT, and a few even claim that the Masada manuscripts witness to an already established standard text whereas the Qumran manuscripts were 'vulgar' or marginal. But Masada preserves only a very limited amount of useful evidence for the history of the biblical text. Fragments from only five books are extant, and three of those books do not show the pluriform nature typical of the text of scripture in that period; that is, the possibility for significant differentiating information is quite limited. If a fragment is close

to the MT, but equally close to the SP, the LXX or a Qumran manuscript because all texts agree, classifying it as 'close to the MT' skews the argument; it simply presents the common text, which the MT also presents. The only strong evidence at Masada for agreement with the proto-MT in contrast to an alternate text is MasPs[b], which ends with a blank column following traditional Ps. 150, as opposed to having the additional compositions found in the LXX or 11QPs[a]. But while it agrees with the proto-MT *edition*, the individual wording is not identical to the MT. For the Masada–MT equation to be significant it would be necessary to demonstrate that no non-MT scrolls were ever at Masada.

The illumination of this previously dark and insufficiently understood period of the dynamic, developmental growth of the books of scripture is a major contribution of the Qumran biblical scrolls.

Uniform Hebrew text

The collection of texts preserved by the rabbis and vocalised and transmitted with exceptional care by the masoretes came to be widely envisioned in the modern period as 'the original text', and the assumption of an urtext often accompanied that common view. As a result of the first Jewish revolt (66–73) with the destruction of the temple and the second revolt (132–35) with the banishment from Jerusalem, the rabbis were seen as 'standardising' the text in its proto-MT form and suppressing or neglecting other text forms. Due to these convictions scholars were somewhat slow to adopt the new paradigm provided by the Qumran manuscripts.

But the text form selected by the rabbis for the individual books is not homogeneous; it is demonstrably not the best text to select for some books; and it vacillates: sometimes it is the earlier edition in comparison with the Qumran or LXX texts, and sometimes the later edition. These factors suggest a rather different scenario that requires a different description. Due to the destruction of the temple and the dispersal of Jewish communities, it rather appears that certain rabbis found themselves with a somewhat random collection – one copy from the available forms of each book – and that copy became the text they used and guarded. There is no evidence that they closely compared entire texts and chose the proto-MT because of its textual superiority. After 70, the texts supplanted the temple as the centre of the religion and, as the new centre, the texts now had to be more seriously guarded. Moreover, debates with Jewish followers of Jesus, who were using the scriptures to support their claims, forced a greater focus on the details of the text. And

so the phenomenon of a unified Hebrew text appears to be the result of the double threat of the Romans and the Christians to Jewish identity. Thus, in light of the developmental nature of the books from their very beginnings up to the revolts, it may be more accurate to say that the texts of the various books were 'frozen' in their development rather than 'standardised'.

The transmission of the uniform Hebrew text

The textual profile of the various books collected in the MT differs from book to book, just as the profile of the LXX books differs. But after the second revolt, all Hebrew witnesses (except those in the Samaritan community) and all translations made from the Hebrew attest to the sole consonantal text form for each book that is transmitted in the MT. The texts or fragments circulating under the rubrics or names of *kaige*, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and Origen's Hebrew column, as well as quotations in rabbinic sources, all show close agreement in general with an early form of the MT. There are sufficient individual variants, however, both to rule out the idea of a single Jewish urtext and to show some subsequent minor development in the proto-MT tradition. But from the second century onwards that Hebrew tradition, with only minor variants, was the only one transmitted within Judaism.

As was noted above, the Samaritans adopted a Jewish text that had already been re-edited and expanded, and they added only their specific claims for Mt Gerizim as the central Israelite sanctuary. The Targums and the Peshitta, whatever their origins, were revised in accordance with the proto-MT, so that they seldom serve as major independent witnesses. Jerome's Vulgate also was translated primarily from the proto-MT tradition, although he used the LXX to a greater extent than he admits.

The Old Greek translation, in so far as it survived the challenges of the subsequent Greek recensions, was transmitted through Christian communities and continued to attest for some books an early, alternate Hebrew tradition. The Old Latin for the most part was translated from Old Greek, and so, even where the Old Greek was lost, one can at times work from the Old Latin, through the Old Greek, to attain the Old Hebrew, as J. Trebolle has shown.[4]

Thus, at the close of Antiquity the proto-MT tradition was the uniform text throughout the Jewish diaspora, and the Samaritan text was preserved in that community. Especially in the East the LXX continued to serve as the scriptures of Christianity, while in the West the Vulgate gradually replaced

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4 Trebolle, 'From the "Old Latin"', 17–36.

the LXX and the Old Latin. Through the Middle Ages, this situation changed little, except for the detailed vocalisation and cantillation of the text by the masoretes.

The resurgence of the Hebrew for Christian Bibles

In the late Middle Ages, especially in Spain, there was a rich sharing of Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultures, learning and texts. Although the close of the fifteenth century saw an unfortunate end to that cultural communication, the Renaissance produced a different type of advance. The rediscovery of the Greek and Latin classics had as one by-product the desire in Christian scholarship to return to the Hebrew form of the Old Testament for closer understanding of the meaning than the Vulgate provided. But the desire to return to 'the original text' only half succeeded. Since the MT was the only Hebrew text known, people commonly presumed that it was the original text, but they confused the original *text* with the original *language*. More accurately, the MT was *one* of the forms of the ancient text in the original language.

Appreciation of the ancient languages and the rewards of systematic textual comparison produced the Complutensian polyglot, the first biblical polyglot, in 1514–17. It included the masoretic Hebrew, the LXX, a Targum and the Vulgate. A century later Pietro della Valle travelled to the Near East and returned in 1616 enriched with a manuscript of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which was then included in the Paris polyglot in 1632. The comparison of the SP with the MT highlighted some six thousand discrepancies; and when about one third of those showed agreement with the LXX, the reputation of the LXX as a faithful witness to an ancient Hebrew text climbed and that of the MT diminished. Through this period and for the next few centuries, however, the religious agenda of the researchers often clouded their textual conclusions. The SP–LXX agreement caused some to suggest that the MT had been secondarily revised by the rabbis, and thus the LXX preserved the divine word in purer form. But the Renaissance focus on the original language and the Reformation's concern for translation into the vernacular from the Hebrew rather than from the Vulgate served as a counterweight in favour of the MT.

Pre-Qumran theories of the history of the text

In the eighteenth century B. Kennicott and J. B. de Rossi each collected myriads of variants found in European Hebrew manuscripts, but the variants proved

to be confined to such a small and insignificant scope that the admirable preservation of even the minutiae of the MT proved the reliability of that text tradition.[5] For example, E. F. C. Rosenmüller, towards the end of the eighteenth century, surveyed the variants from Kennicott, de Rossi and other sources, and concluded that all variants within the masoretic manuscripts are relatively late and witness to a single recension. That is, analysis of those assembled variants can lead us only to the early proto-MT of each book, not to 'the original text'.[6]

W. Gesenius in 1815 studied the SP and showed that most of its variant readings displayed a secondary reworking of a base text like the MT. Others, such as Z. Frankel and S. Kohn, added to the devaluation of the SP as a textual witness, due to its obviously secondary nature as dependent on the MT, and thus its inability to penetrate behind the MT.

P. de Lagarde, towards the end of the nineteenth century, took Rosenmüller's idea of a single recension and tightened it to a single manuscript behind the entire masoretic tradition, though in his view that archetype was not a perfect replica of the original text but already contained scribal errors and changes. Others, such as J. G. Sommer, even claimed that the proto-MT archetype originated from the Jerusalem temple. Turning his attention to the LXX, Lagarde theorised that all LXX manuscripts could be traced back to the three recensions of Origen, Hesychius and Lucian, and comparison of those three recensions could lead to the original Greek translation. That translation, even with any imperfections, would witness to a variant Hebrew text that antedated the archetype behind the MT.

Lagarde's theories were highly influential. His general view that a single Greek translation spread to the three recensions which lay behind all extant LXX manuscripts eventually inspired the Göttingen Septuaginta Unternehmen and its series of critical editions of the Greek books. It also proved at least functionally correct against P. E. Kahle's theory of multiple translations eventually standardised into one official text. Lagarde's view of a single Hebrew archetype, or urtext, behind all MT manuscripts, was also widely accepted, though challenges again came from Kahle's evidence of Cairo Genizah manuscripts from the late first and early second millennium showing variant vocalisation and different masoretic systems. But the fact

5 This whole section is summarised from S. Talmon, 'The Old Testament Text', pp. 170–8.
6 This conclusion was subsequently confirmed by M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, 'Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts. Their History and Their Place in the HUBP Edition', *Biblica* 48 (1967), 243–90; reprinted in F. M. Cross and S. Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 42–89.

that those texts were medieval, not ancient, and that the variation was mainly in vocalisation, not in the ancient consonantal text, prevented overthrow of Lagarde's urtext theory. Debate also continued regarding whether that urtext had been, as J. Olshausen argued, officially selected as a result of careful textual comparison or, as T. Nöldeke argued, simply adopted because it happened to be the only collection of texts available.[7]

Post-Qumran theories of the history of the text

The discovery of the remains of more than two hundred scriptural manuscripts from Qumran and neighbouring sites eclipsed and transformed the earlier discussions of the history of the biblical text.[8] For the first time there was authentic manuscript evidence from the Second Temple period, not just learned speculation. F. M. Cross and P. W. Skehan published in the mid-1950s major fragments of 4QpaleoExod[m], 4QDeut[q], 4QSam[a] and 4QSam[b], showing startling agreements with the SP and the LXX against the MT. W. F. Albright then sparked resumption of inquiry into the larger issue of textual history. Perhaps influenced by then-current New Testament textual criticism, which charted its textual history according to a theory of Alexandrian, western and Caesarean local text traditions, Albright quickly by 1955 sketched a theory of Babylonian, Palestinian and Egyptian recensions for the Hebrew Bible.

During the following years, Cross greatly elaborated that theory of three local text types, represented by the MT, the SP and the LXX, which he explained as developing slowly during the Second Temple period in Palestine, Egypt, and a third locale, presumably Babylon. He retreated from Albright's view of 'recensions', since the developments were not so much according to set principles but were more incremental and unsystematic. He amassed a great number of textual readings to illustrate and support this theory, and thus set the standards for serious empirical studies of the issue. For years this theory stood alone and unchallenged, since it was based on a large array of textual readings in the scrolls, the MT, the SP and the LXX, and since it offered a persuasive explanation of the textual history.

S. Talmon, observing the great amount of variants already in the earliest preserved texts, reinvigorated the classic contrast between the theories of

7 Talmon, Tov and Ulrich all concur now on the coincidental or chance nature of the texts found in the MT.
8 The basis for this whole section can be found mainly in Cross and Talmon, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*; Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*; and Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*.

Lagarde and Kahle. In a sense, Lagarde's thinking along the lines of a single urtext which had developed in various manifestations found a parallel in Cross's theory of an original base text developing into three different forms in three different localities. But instead of a 'one-to-three' model, Talmon saw the pattern rather as 'many-to-three'. That is, in light of the great variation in early texts, he concluded that prior to the surviving manuscript evidence there were many forms of the texts; then, at the close of the Second Temple period three main text forms, and only three, survived out of that earlier plethora. Partly from a sociological point of view, he noted that after the two Jewish revolts, only three groups of Jews survived: the rabbinic Jews, the Samaritans and the Christians, and each preserved the form of the scriptures that they had inherited. Only those three groups survived, and therefore only those three socio-religious *Gruppentexte* survived, while other forms perished with the groups that had held them sacred. Thus, just as Cross somewhat paralleled Lagarde's thinking, Talmon paralleled Kahle's view of a spectrum of vulgar or popular texts which were eventually supplanted by a standardised official text (one in each surviving community). Talmon also argued for erasing the established line between 'higher criticism' and 'lower criticism', because he saw creative scribes functioning as minor partners in the compositional process simultaneously with the transmission process.

Currently, E. Tov and E. Ulrich, both students of both Cross and Talmon, continue to explore ways of envisioning the history of the biblical text in light of the complete publication of all biblical scrolls. Tov's wide-ranging and detailed analyses of the MT and LXX textual traditions have justifiably achieved the current position as the most comprehensive explanation of the state of the art. He is surely correct both that the MT, the SP and the LXX are to be seen as simply texts and not recensions or text types, and that many of the Qumran manuscripts do not show consistent agreement with one or other of those three. Noting the difficulty in charting the patterns of variants in the manuscripts, he has called into question both Albright's use of the term 'recension' and the neat text types and text families that Cross and others perceived. He posits that they should be regarded as three *texts* rather than *text types*. To be sure, some manuscripts still merit the term 'text types', that is, texts that are consistently close to either the MT, the SP or the LXX. But he suggests that many of the texts are to be classified as 'non-aligned', in so far as their patterns of agreement and disagreement shift in their allegiance with respect to the MT, the SP or the LXX, as well as displaying unique readings. He also distinguishes a class of 'texts written in the Qumran Practice': texts that in their orthography, morphology and scribal practice show a free approach to

the biblical text, displaying unusual forms and frequent errors and corrections.[9] In addition, Tov maintains the traditional distinction between the period of literary growth of a book and that of its textual transmission as important, with textual criticism pertaining to the latter.

Ulrich, in agreement with Talmon, sees that line between 'higher criticism' and 'lower criticism' as vanishing. He interprets many instances provided by the scrolls' new evidence as revised literary editions of a previous form of a book, and thus sees the literary process still at work and frequently overlapping with scribal variants typically treated as part of textual criticism. He perceives the accumulated literary results of source and redaction critics as one with the new manuscript evidence of revised literary editions – together they manifest at early and late stages of the same process the developmental nature of the biblical texts from their shadowy beginnings up to their abrupt arrest due to the two Jewish revolts and the Christian threat. He envisions the successive revised editions as the deliberate activity of a series of creative scribes or authors. They are the result of traditions being handed on to new generations but creatively updated in light of changing religious, social or historical developments which called for new, insightful relevance of the traditions. Moreover, he sees the pluriformity exhibited by the Qumran scrolls as part of the same pattern seen shiftingly in the different books of the MT, the SP and the LXX, as well as quotations in rabbinic writings, the New Testament (NT) and early authors such as Josephus. That is, the pluriformity and organic growth, seen in the pattern of successive revised literary editions, are characteristic of the biblical text throughout its history up to the second century. There was no 'final form' until the organic development of the texts was halted due to extraneous circumstances.

Current views

Cross's theory of local texts was foundational, both because its insightfulness stimulated scholars to start thinking about the old issue in new ways and work towards a gradual solution, and because it established the empirical model of presenting a large amount of significant textual readings, keeping theories responsible to the new manuscript evidence.

The advantages of hindsight as well as the results from the subsequent complete publication of the biblical manuscripts brought to light several

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9 Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, (2nd edn), pp. 114–17. Tov has since revised his view; see *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, (3rd edn), pp. 100–10.

assumptions that appear to have been operative behind these theories. One assumption behind the local text theory apparently was that there was an urtext, originally a single pristine text which had developed into many forms through scribal activity and scribal error. A second assumption appears to have been that the MT, the LXX and the SP were text types, as opposed to simply texts, as Tov pointed out; scholars are now increasingly aware that the MT and the LXX must be discussed not as a whole but book by book, and that they are not text types but simply exemplars of some edition or other for each book. Another assumption was that a single locality could tolerate only one single text form. This last assumption eventually weakened the local-text theory as it became more and more clear that at Qumran, a single locality, a wide variety of quite diverse texts and text types existed among a strongly scripture-conscious group, and this situation lasted for up to two centuries. Moreover, though it is quite likely that texts developed differently in different localities, an explanation of how different localities specifically effected the development of different text types did not emerge.

The idea of the survival of three socio-religious *Gruppentexte* is a helpful insight, although the three do not seem to offer evidence of being denominationally chosen. That is, there are no sectarian variants characteristic of any of the groups,[10] and so there appears to be no causal relationship between the religious group and the collection of texts they inherited. There was no deliberate choice, but rather each group apparently used the scrolls for each book that they happened to have. Again, these were not text types, but simply exemplars of an available edition for each book.

A fivefold classification of the Qumran manuscripts according to (i) Qumran practice,[11] (ii) proto-masoretic, (iii) Pre-Samaritan, (iv) *Vorlage* of the Old Greek or (v) non-aligned has a constructive function. At the pedagogical level the categories are quite helpful and offer a clear introductory view, since they quickly provide an easily understandable profile of a specific manuscript.

From an epistemological perspective, one begins by assessing new evidence according to previously learned categories, and so those categories are useful. Then methodologically, categories should eventually be reformulated to fit the new data as accurately as possible. At the close of the Second Temple period the MT and the LXX were not text types; their texts for each book are simply copies of one edition or other. Accordingly, they lose their function as

10 That is, beyond the Samaritans' focus on Mt Gerizim and the MT's subsequent change to 'Mt Ebal' at Deut. 27:4 and in Josh. 8:30–5; but the Samaritans already had the non-sectarian expanded edition circulating in general Judaism at the time.
11 See n. 9.

categories for classifying the biblical scrolls. Moreover, because they and the SP are not text types or standard texts, neither should they serve as standards against which other texts should be, or not be, 'aligned'.

With regard to the remaining category, it is logical initially to categorise the more unusual texts found at Qumran as 'written in the Qumran practice'. But the scrolls are the only large source of Second Temple texts extant; there is scant evidence for determining whether the philological features in these texts were unique to Qumran or common in the late Second Temple period. In light of the lack of sectarian variants in the scrolls plus scattered indications such as the growing use of *matres lectionis* in the Nash papyrus, Hasmonaean coins and Aramaic texts, it seems preferable to agree with E. Y. Kutscher that 'we may assume that many of those points in which the Scroll [1QIsa[a]] differs linguistically from the Masoretic Isaiah represent characteristics of the literary Hebrew of the last centuries of the first millennium B.C.E.'[12] Thus, though there appears to be a 'Qumran practice', it may more accurately be termed a general Second Temple Jewish practice.

Four levels of variation in the manuscripts were noted above: (i) different orthographic or morphological forms, (ii) individual textual variants, (iii) insertions of interpretive verses and (iv) revised, successive literary editions of a book. Ulrich has proposed, in light of the developmental history of the texts, classification of manuscripts for each book primarily according to their successive literary editions, earlier and later. The lines of development could be imagined as the branches of a tree: the trunk being the earliest extant edition, the principal forks being the successive editions, and proliferating branches being the textual variants (see below). One could also use a mathematical expression. Presupposing that each book has gone through a number (n) of editions prior to any extant evidence, Exodus texts (for example) could be designated: edition $n + 1$ for the earliest form exemplified in the Old Greek of Exod. 35–40; $n + 2$ for the revised edition behind the MT of Exodus; $n + 3$ for the expanded text in 4QpaleoExod[m] and in the base text of the SP; $n + 4$ for the Samaritan Exodus with its specific focus on Mt Gerizim; and $n + 5$ for 4QPentateuch (*olim* 4QRP). It should never be presumed that we have the original form of a new edition; each of those Exodus manuscripts is simply one copy more or less closely witnessing to its particular edition.

Since most variants encountered can be classified in one or other of the four levels above, it seems that the history of the text can be charted in its primary lines according to the fourth level: successive editions of each book. As each

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12 Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, p. 95.

generation received a form of one book, it recognised and used that edition and then faithfully handed it on to the next generation. But occasionally, new historical, social or theological situations suggested to some creative leader or scribe that the traditional word needed to be augmented to make clear its applicability and guidance in a new situation. That leader then took the old edition and revised it according to a limited number of specific, identifiable ideas or themes, producing a new edition of the book. Subsequent generations then either accepted or rejected the new edition, and either the older or the newer edition eventually became the text of that book transmitted for ensuing generations. But in either case, both the earlier and the revised editions would have circulated side by side for some time, and both would be accumulating minor errors and insertions and would be cross-influencing the text of the other. Affiliation of a certain manuscript with earlier or later editions would result in classification according to this or that major text type.

While the major lines were developing according to successive editions, somewhat smaller lines would be bifurcating as traditions developed. Since systems such as italics or footnotes were not available, influential teachers would occasionally insert interpretive comments perhaps initially spoken in a different tone of voice or written in the margin, but eventually some would find their way into the text. Such larger variants signal affiliation with one text group as opposed to another within a major edition. The inevitable panoply of familiar minor errors and insertions would indicate affiliation with one or another text family within a major edition.

Meanwhile, yet smaller lines would constantly be diverging from each of the branches. Every reciter or scribe would have attempted to reproduce the current edition of a work as accurately as possible, without change. But any oral or written form would already contain some variants, and since all copyists were fallible, usually more minor errors or alternate forms would creep in, words would be misunderstood, and occasionally, when ambiguities were noticed, minor clarifications would be added. This level of activity accounts for most of the individual textual variants encountered in manuscripts.

Moreover, since literacy was not common until relatively late, since Hebrew writing did not have an adequate system of vocalisation, and since different eras or locales might have different spelling practices, different spellings of words were transmitted. The use of *matres lectionis* tended to increase as time went on, either as a guide to pronunciation or to clarify an ambiguous form and indicate what the proper form was. Normally, a manuscript with fuller orthography would be later than one with shorter orthography within the same text family.

No developed critique of Ulrich's 'successive literary editions' theory seems to have appeared yet, but that is probably due to its recent formulation, and such shall surely emerge.[13] The challenge for the near future will be to sift out the permanently useful insights of the pre-Qumran theories and those of Cross, Talmon, Tov and Ulrich, to lay to rest the less useful, and to move the quest ineluctably forward towards an increasingly accurate view.

If Parmenides and Heraclitus were to ask today about 'the one and the many' with regard to the history of the biblical text, it seems that the idea of an urtext would dominate, but in a textual world where pluriformity was ever present at different levels. The dominant pattern was probably the attempt to hand down a source or tradition unchanged, thus something like an urtext; but at least minor pluriformity began undoubtedly with the first oral repetition or the first written copy. On fairly rare occasions a creative tradent would produce a new version or edition of that traditional material, thus a new urtext based on the earlier one. At different times from beginning to end of the history, variant forms of each text existed side by side for a while, due to the traditional form that had been used compared with the new formulation – thus pluriform editions. But in each case one form of each developing book eventually won out as the single form that served as a base edition (albeit with individual variants) for that book's future, thus a new urtext.

From scrolls to codex: Bible and canon

This discussion has involved 'texts' through most of the periods described above, since the individual books developed separately and were copied on separate scrolls. Eventually the collection of texts coalesced into a single text. Books considered to have divine authority formed a special group distinct from other works. The group of five books seen as the revelation to Moses became 'the book of Moses' or 'the Law of Moses'; it together with the group of prophetic books became 'the Law and the Prophets', viewed as a special collection of authoritative scripture in the late Second Temple period. Though that core of the collected writings was well established, books of the

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13 See Al Wolters, 'The Text of the Old Testament', in David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (eds.), *The Face of Old Testament Studies. A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), pp. 19–37, at p. 31. The theory is mentioned alongside other theories in Paul D. Wegner, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic Press, 2006), pp. 31, 67, 185. Stephen B. Chapman discusses it briefly, but mainly in relation to canon, in his thoughtful essay, 'How the Biblical Canon Began. Working Models and Open Questions', in Margalit Finkelberg and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Homer, the Bible, and Beyond. Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 29–51, at pp. 48–9.

Writings, or poetic and wisdom books, were still finding their place in the first century CE. Though the contents of the canon, or official collection, differed for each of the different communities, the process and general timeline were very similar in the several communities. By approximately the third century the codex gradually supplanted the scroll as the preferred form, and the texts that had enjoyed only a mental unity were now transformed into a physical unity, a single text: the Tanakh or the Old Testament.[14]

Modern Hebrew Bible editions and English translations

In the modern English-speaking world the text of those canons can be found, for example, in the New Jewish Publication Society Translation (based on the MT), the Protestant New Revised Standard Version (based mainly on the MT but using the LXX, the versions and the scrolls) and the Catholic New American Bible (based on 'the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources'). Though these Bibles display a single clear text, the complexity that still lies behind them is indicated by the fact that currently there are five distinct critical editions of the Hebrew in progress: *The Hebrew University Bible* (ed. M. H. Goshen-Gottstein et al.); *Biblia Hebraica quinta editione* (ed. A. Schenker et al.); *The Oxford Hebrew Bible* (ed. R. Hendel et al.); *The Qumran Bible* (ed. E. Ulrich); and *Biblia Qumranica* (ed. A. Lange et al.). Each of these attempts a presentation of the text in light of different perspectives and principles.[15]

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14 See Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64. 15 See Tov in this volume, pp. 365–85.

The literary history of the Hebrew Bible

JOACHIM SCHAPER

Introduction

Spinoza, in the seventh chapter of his *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, probably was the first scholar ever to alert his readers to the need for a 'history' of the (Hebrew) Bible. When he uses the term *historia* in this context, he thinks of the setting in which the constituent parts of the Bible were composed and put together. Spinoza intends the reconstruction of the history of the (Hebrew) Bible to serve the purpose of establishing the meaning of the books of 'scripture' by operating in analogy with the method employed in the natural sciences, which is devoted, in Spinoza's words, to establishing a 'natural history'. In so doing, he tries to establish a hermeneutics of scriptural interpretation that equals the methodology of the 'hard' sciences.[1]

While a modern approach to the problem will not be guided by the same trust in the presumed precision of textual interpretation and historical reconstruction, Spinoza's central insight – that we need to establish the history of the Bible in order to understand the meaning of its constituent parts – remains as true now as it was then. Spinoza's *Tractatus* marks the beginning of a seriously historical exploration of the Bible. Any reconstruction of that history is ultimately indebted to him. The methodological breakthrough marked by Spinoza's concept of a *historia Scripturae* lies in the fact that it enabled him to transcend the boundaries marked by the content and order of the biblical canon and, consequently, to explore which processes in the social and political

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1 B. de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, p. 98: 'The [correct] method of interpreting nature consists above all in constructing a natural history, from which we derive the definitions of natural things, as from certain data. Likewise, to interpret Scripture, we need to assemble a genuine history of it and deduce the thinking of the Bible's authors by valid inferences from this history, as from certain data and principles. Provided we admit no other criteria or data for interpreting Scripture and discussing its contents than what is drawn from Scripture itself and its history [!], we will always proceed without any danger of going astray [. . .].'

history of the Hebrews brought forth the texts that later served as the 'raw material' for that canon.

In spite of Spinoza's pioneering work and that of a number of other eminent biblical scholars like R. Simon, and regardless of Hermann Hupfeld's, Ernst Heinrich Meier's and Hermann Gunkel's advocacy of an elucidation of the development of the Old Testament literature in its actual historical contexts,[2] the 'literary history of the Old Testament' never became a constituent part of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible studies in the way in which the 'introduction to the Old Testament' (*Einleitungswissenschaft*), the 'theology of the Old Testament' and the 'history of ancient Israel' were established as such. As far as the critical investigation of biblical literature was concerned, the concept of *Einleitungswissenschaft* became the universally accepted way of dealing with the material: the individual books and/or literary corpora of the Old Testament were subjected to a literary and historical analysis, but there was no sustained effort to understand the production of the texts (and the redactional processes by means of which they were assembled to create, ultimately, what we now know as the Hebrew Bible) as outcomes of the social, political and religious history of ancient Israel and Judah.[3] A short sketch like the present one of course cannot redress the balance, but it can at least try to offer an overview of the insights and problems which a future literary history of the Hebrew Bible will have to address. It is especially important to realise that such a history must not be written without taking into account what one might call 'media history' (i.e. the history of the writing systems, the writing materials and the scribal practices of ancient Israel and Judah).[4] The present sketch of the literary history of the Bible will therefore interact with recent research in media history and the social history of Israel and Judah.

Before moving on to the main part of this study, it is necessary to point out that there are, of course, various ways to lay out a literary history of the Hebrew Bible. The most recent such history organises the material along the lines of the political history of Israel and Judah in the context of Near

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2 Cf. Hupfeld, *Begriff und Methode*; Meier, *Geschichte*; H. Gunkel, 'Die Grundprobleme der israelitischen Literaturgeschichte', *OLZ* 27 (1906), 1797–800 and 1861–6, and Gunkel, 'Die israelitische Literatur'. For a detailed overview of the history of attempts to produce *literary histories* of (as opposed to *Einleitungen* to) the Old Testament, cf. Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte*.

3 On this development cf. Gunkel, 'Die israelitische Literatur', p. 99. There has now been a sustained attempt to provide scholarship with a proper literary history of the Old Testament; see Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte*.

4 Cf. Schniedewind in this volume, pp. 46–62. Also cf. Tov, *Scribal Practices*, and van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*.

Eastern history from the tenth to the second century BCE.[5] This certainly is a legitimate way of structuring a reconstruction of the literary history. However, such a reconstruction cannot delineate the growth of the respective areas of literature – 'genres', for want of a better term – in themselves but has to subject its exposition of the genres' development to the structure and chronology of political history. While the latter may well have had some influence on the development of literary genres, that influence was remote. By contrast, as Wellhausen already knew,[6] social and cultural developments have a much more direct effect on the production of literature, and this is why, in this chapter, we shall attempt to sketch the literary history of the Hebrew Bible as the history of the respective areas of literary production in their social and cultural settings.

In another recent attempt to trace the 'growth of the Old Testament',[7] the author focuses – under the heading of 'Biblical Tradition' – on literary genres but amalgamates such 'traditions' with (his view of the development of) biblical *theologoumena*. Such an approach is in danger of subjecting the reconstruction of the actual history of the formation of the biblical texts to preconceived theological notions. To name just one example: when the author treats, say, the development of Israelite and Judaean prophecy under the heading 'From Prophets of Salvation to Prophets of Disaster', this is likely to put the history of prophetic literature on a Procrustean bed of 'Old Testament theology', instead of following the data provided by the biblical material.

By contrast, I shall attempt, in the present study, to view – as much as that can be attempted at all in the framework of a short essay – the development of the literary areas represented in the Hebrew Bible in conjunction with the history of the social and religious institutions in which they were rooted. This approach is, ultimately, indebted to Hermann Gunkel's concept of what might be called a social history of the literature of ancient Israel, while attempting to refine and develop Gunkel's methodology. Also, and very importantly, following this line of inquiry should enable us to trace and understand the

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5 Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte*.
6 Cf. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: Black, 1885), p. 12, remarking that 'the firemen never came near the spot where the conflagration raged', because critics did not see the importance of the history of Jewish worship as the setting for the literature assembled in the Hexateuch. This is why Wellhausen made the history of the cult the first part of his *Prolegomena* and the introduction to the history of the literary tradition. He was aware of the significance of the wider social and cultural history for any reconstruction of the history of Israelite literature.
7 R. G. Kratz, 'The Growth of the Old Testament', in J. W. Rogerson and J. M. Lieu (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 459–88.

interactions between texts of different types produced in the same periods. It was recently claimed that this was the genuine task of a literary history of the Hebrew Bible.[8] While it may not be the central one, it certainly ranks as one of its most significant.

A note of caution is in order, though. Much of the reconstruction of ancient Israelite history is on rather shaky ground, since there are not many sources on which to build that reconstruction. Furthermore, the most important sources are still the biblical texts themselves, although there is quite a wealth of epigraphic material and an ever-increasing number of architectural and other archaeological finds.[9] There is the danger of arriving at circular arguments based on biblical texts when they are used for the reconstruction of historical events and processes and those reconstructions are in turn employed to interpret the texts. 'Control' material is effectively provided, though, by non-biblical Hebrew and non-Hebrew literary sources and by Israelite and non-Israelite archaeological material, and the argument from analogy is, as always, one of the historian's most important tools.[10]

Orality, literacy and written texts

Without considering the significance of orality, no understanding of written texts is possible.[11] Due to the fact that the production of written texts of high quality was inordinately expensive in ancient Israel and Judah, few written texts existed and most Israelites only came into contact with them when they were *read out* to them. Even those equipped with a reasonable knowledge of reading and writing could not have fully comprehended the written texts produced by the scribes, one of the reasons being that they were unvocalised. In a way, the written texts were *auxiliary*: they enabled the literate members of the population to 'perform' important texts – often of a legal nature – on official occasions, like the reading of the 'law' in Neh. 8.[12]

In the present study, we shall not unduly speculate about the potential oral prehistory of biblical texts but shall nevertheless address the problem of the transition from oral delivery to written documentation, especially with regard to pre-exilic prophecy. An excess of speculation about Israelite oral

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8 See Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte*, p. 25.
9 On the situation with regard to ancient Hebrew epigraphy, see Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', *passim*. For an overview of Palestinian archaeology, cf. Weippert, *Palästina*.
10 See Troeltsch, 'Über historische und dogmatische Methode', *passim*.
11 Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', p. 77.
12 On texts and performance, cf. Watts in this volume, pp. 347–50.

'literature'[13] was a prominent feature of biblical research all the way through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and often led to a distorted notion of the development of literary corpora found in the Hebrew Bible.[14] Much of the proto-biblical oral literature existed in some fairly elaborate form before it was finally written down. Some of the elaborate narratives which have been conserved as part of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History most likely go back to such an 'oral "literature"' stage, a fact which we shall discuss in our section on narrative texts. However, it is not the aim of the present contribution to speculate about the pre-literary traditions (i.e. 'oral texts')[15] that fed into the formation of biblical narratives (and poetry), but to delineate the history of the *written* texts that were combined to form the Hebrew Bible. Although we shall refer to oral texts where the existence of such texts can reasonably be surmised, we shall concentrate on the written ones, while taking into account 'that dictation was the normal way of creating a text in West Semitic'.[16]

Literary and non-literary uses of writing, the origins of ancient Israelite literature and the 'scribal culture' of Israel and Judah

With regard to the history of Israelite and Judahite literature, as with regard to other ancient literatures, it is important to differentiate between the literary and non-literary uses of writing.[17] There was a fairly long history of non-literary writing in Israel before 'literary' texts were first put in writing. The origins of Israelite literature (in the widest sense of the term) must be sought in the economic, social, political and cultic life of the political entities that preceded the state formation of the ninth century BCE. The tenth century saw the establishment of the Davidic 'monarchy', a political entity which was not as structurally complex as the more advanced states of many of the neighbouring societies and could best be described as a 'patrimonial kingdom'.[18] The division of labour characterising such a 'kingdom' was not complex enough to require

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13 On oral 'literature', cf. Goody, *Myth*, pp. 41–57.
14 This was the case especially in Pentateuch research; see 'Introductory remarks' below, pp. 126–7.
15 For a discussion of the (seemingly) paradoxical notion of 'oral texts', cf. K. Ehlich, 'Textualität und Schriftlichkeit', in Morenz and Schorch (eds.), *Was ist ein Text?*, pp. 3–17.
16 B. B. Powell, *Writing and the Origins of Greek Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 108.
17 On the definition of 'literature', cf. Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', p. 74.
18 P. J. King and L. E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, Library of Ancient Israel (Louisville, KY, and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), pp. 201–58.

an elaborate bureaucratic machine. Building on the earliest developments of a proto-Canaanite writing system, the (very few) extant texts from the tenth century still are of a Phoenician type, and were produced in a context in which Phoenician, Hebrew and Aramaic still developed together.[19] Only in the ninth century was a script devised that was used for the production of texts in Hebrew, Moabite and Ammonite, followed by the emergence of a distinctly Hebrew script towards the end of the ninth century.[20]

Among the few very early west Semitic inscriptions which point to literary production in Palestine before the ninth century BCE – but are not necessarily witnesses to Old Hebrew script – are the Izbet Sartah ostracon (probably from the eleventh century BCE), the Gezer calendar (tenth century), some of the Arad ostraca (tenth century?), inscriptions from Tel Batash and Beth Shemesh, the Tel Zayit abecedary and possibly the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon (tenth century).[21]

As far as we know, only in the late ninth century was there a significant increase in the production of written texts in Palestine. Ancient Hebrew text production started, as in so many other ancient cultures, in the administrative and economic realms. The earliest religious texts we know of originated in the late ninth or early eighth century (Kuntillet Ajrud).[22] The monumental inscriptions from Khirbet Beit Lei are characterised by a well-developed formulaic religious language and can be dated to the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh century. Although they should be characterised as 'pre-literary', they nevertheless betray a certain stylistic accomplishment and are reminiscent of Exod. 34:6–7.[23] Other well-known inscriptions include the Arad ostraca (late seventh or early sixth century; some dating to the eighth century) and the Samaria ostraca of the mid-eighth century. It is interesting to see that a significant amount of material from the Hebrew Bible mirrors the type of Hebrew found in the ancient Hebrew inscriptions originating in the period from the late eighth to the early sixth century.[24]

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19 Cf. Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', p. 66.
20 Cf. Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', p. 66.
21 Cf. H. Misgav, Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor, 'The Khirbet Qeiyafa Ostracon' [Hebrew], in D. Amit, G. D. Stiebel and O. Peleg-Barkat (eds.), *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority and the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), pp. 111–23; and Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa. Vol. 1: Excavation Report 2007–2008* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009).
22 Cf. Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', pp. 71–2.
23 Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', pp. 74–5.
24 Cf. Renz, 'Die vor- und außerliterarische Texttradition', p. 65, with references to secondary literature.

A recent study has rightly stressed the importance of the material culture of Israel and Judah and the parameters this culture set for the development of the work of the scribes who produced the Israelite and Judaean literature.[25] It is of paramount importance to understand that ancient Near Eastern literature, including ancient Hebrew literature, cannot be understood without understanding the tasks and working conditions of the scribal class. We shall address them soon. It is significant that the concept of the 'author' was unknown in the culture that brought forth the Hebrew Bible.[26]

The growth of the text types which contributed to the formation of the Hebrew Bible

Since among all the text types in the Hebrew Bible prophetic texts are the most easily datable, our survey should start with them. It makes sense to follow Gunkel's view of this matter, not least because he was cautious enough not to overestimate the precision with which we can date any Old Testament text.[27] We shall not follow Gunkel, though, where his fairly arbitrary periodisation of Israelite literature is concerned. Most importantly, present-day scholarship can no longer share his assuredness with regard to the reconstruction of Israelite oral literature and its *Gattungen*. However, recent anthropological research confirms Gunkel's approach generally in that it arrives at rather similar results regarding the genres of oral literature, or 'oral genres': 'folktales', 'songs', 'folk drama', 'myth' and 'legends and historical recitations'.[28] The epic, however, is not an 'oral' genre,[29] and this is important: those textual complexes in the Hebrew Bible which can be called 'epics' are composite in nature and can only be the result of written composition, just as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* probably were not composed orally but required the practice of writing in order to come into existence.[30] An analogy closer to the world of ancient Israel is that of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the 'standard version' of which was the result of editorial activity, combining written and (probably) oral sources as well as new written material produced specifically for the incipient 'standard version': 'With considerable skill a single work is created out of diverse elements. The methods used to stitch the pieces together are several . . . Set phrases, in particular the formulaic introduction to direct speech, also give a certain cohesion, although they are not quite standardized throughout the

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25 See van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*.   26 See van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 28–31.
27 Cf. Gunkel, 'Die israelitische Literatur', p. 52.   28 Goody, *Myth*, pp. 46–55.
29 Cf. Goody, *Myth*, pp. 44–5.   30 Cf. Goody, *Myth*, pp. 44–5.

epic and help to betray its composite nature.'[31] *Gilgamesh* thus consists, like its modern equivalents (e.g. the *Kalevala*), of 'distinct poems . . . conflated into a continuous folk epic'.[32] The genesis of the standard version of *Gilgamesh* gives valuable insights into the growth of texts found in the Pentateuch and especially with regard to the successive editions of Deuteronomy,[33] and of the Deuteronomistic History.

Prophetic texts: from oracle to scroll

In the modern study of prophecy, scholars realised fairly early on that, in the eighth century BCE, a momentous change occurred in Israelite and Judahite prophecy: the shift from an earlier type of prophecy, delivered orally and – at least to our knowledge – never written down, to a new one which entailed the fixing of the oracles in writing. Scholars accordingly called representatives of the latter type the 'writing prophets'. This is a bit of a misnomer since the prophets so designated did not write down their oracles themselves. Rather, the oracles were written down – in some cases by the prophets' 'pupils' – and collected and redacted by scribes of the following generations who often effectively acted as interpreters of the traditions thus established.

We shall return to this point soon. First we should note, however, that the shift cannot be described as one from one *type* of prophecy to another. Rather, the growing importance of writing gave adherents of a given prophet the means of publicising and conserving the divine oracles he claimed to have received.[34] The concept of a transition from an 'early', 'ecstatic' to a 'mature', 'classical' type of prophecy which informed research for most of the twentieth century seems more and more dubious. The literary traces left by earlier prophecy are preserved in some originally independent narrative accounts (e.g. the Elijah and Elisha cycle) preserved in the Deuteronomistic History.

Be that as it may: the Bible itself provides traces of the processes of 'publication' which seem to have led to the later collections of written texts attributed to individual prophets. One of the most interesting examples of this is the 'placarded revelation'[35] of Hab. 2. Here we have an instance of a prophetic oracle written down to be publicised. The order to fix it in writing is ascribed to the

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31 S. Dalley (ed.), *Myths from Mesopotamia. Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, rev. edn, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 46.
32 Goody, *Myth*, p. 45.   33 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 125–32, 150–2.
34 There were female prophets in ancient Israel (e.g. Huldah; see 2 Kings 22:14 and 2 Chron. 34:22) but not among the 'writing prophets'.
35 Cf. W. H. Brownlee, 'The Placarded Revelation of Habakkuk', *JBL* 82 (1963), 319–25, *passim*.

deity, which underlines that the production of a written text of the oracle, as opposed to 'merely' an oral one, is invested with the highest possible authority. This is a significant indication of the esteem in which writing was held when the book of Habakkuk was authored and redacted, and the supposed date of authorship assumed by many (i.e. in the seventh century) accords well with the fact that there was a significant increase in the importance of writing in Judahite society in that period.

These observations can probably be used to explain the earliest stages of the growth of collections of prophetic oracles. Jer. 36, like Hab. 2:2, would seem to support this view,[36] given that the Jeremianic text seems to indicate that procedures very similar to those informing the collection of oracles on the Neo-Assyrian *ṭuppu*-type tablets characterised the earliest forms of preservation of prophetic material in Israel and Judah.[37] It may be possible to make a significant further step and gain insights into the subsequent processes contributing to the formation of prophetic 'books'. According to one voice in the recent debate, the collection of Neo-Assyrian prophetic material should be seen as a key to understanding the formation of the book of Isaiah.[38] There are a number of considerations that militate against this view. One of them is that the neo-Assyrian material was kept exclusively in an archival context. As far as one can see, those Assyrian oracles never gave rise to the kind of living literary tradition of prophecy that characterised Israelite and Judahite religious culture and was a source of constant renewal of the Yahweh religion from within. This fundamental difference is not always acknowledged by students of ancient Near Eastern prophecy traditions. As Assyriologists remind us, we have to differentiate between archival storage and a living tradition of textual production, reinterpretation, recitation and so forth.[39] Nevertheless, the processes of prophetic 'traditions' being handed down through the generations, of scrolls being written and rewritten, of collections being expanded and revised until they received a (more or less) 'final' form, can possibly be reconstructed with the help of such non-Israelite examples.

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36 Cf. J. Schaper, 'On Writing and Reciting in Jeremiah 36', in H. M. Barstad and R. G. Kratz (eds.), *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*, BZAW 388 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 137–47; and Schaper, 'Exilic and Post-Exilic Prophecy'.

37 Cf. S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, State Archives of Assyria 9 (Helsinki University Press, 1997), p. liii.

38 Cf. M. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets. A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies*, VTS 117 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), *passim*.

39 Cf. W. Röllig, 'Aspekte der Archivierung und Kanonisierung von Keilschriftliteratur im 8./7. Jh. v. Chr.', in Schaper (ed.), *Textualisierung*, pp. 35–49.

The book of Jeremiah can serve as a 'test case'. It has been said, with regard to Jer. 36, that the account of Jeremiah dictating his oracles to a scribe

> is historically suspect because it is obviously designed to prove that the collection had the authority of the prophet . . . It is highly unlikely that Jeremiah took the initiative to put his oracles on record, and it was certainly not at the command of God. Prophets . . . were not in the habit of writing their messages; nor were they accustomed to dictating them to others.[40]

However, the practice of dictation of prophetic texts was not unknown in the ancient Near East, as is demonstrated by a text from the ancient kingdom of Mari.[41] We therefore cannot categorically exclude the possibility that, at least in some cases, prophets dictating the oracles they claimed to have received from Yahweh to an amanuensis produced the nucleus of the book named after them.

In Jeremiah scholarship, the exploration of Jer. 36 normally results from an interest in the literary history of the book of Jeremiah.[42] The text nevertheless permits wider-ranging conclusions.[43] The text is not just about the dictation of the oracle. Jer. 36:4 should be read in conjunction with verse 5 – it then becomes obvious that the ultimate aim is the public reading, an understandable aim in a society in which only a small elite was fully literate and the majority was dependent on the lecto-oral transmission of texts.[44] At the same time, Jer. 36:4–5 may well describe the origins of the Jeremiah collection itself.

A recent reconstruction of the literary history of the book of Jeremiah has rightly traced the development of the scroll. Regardless of the disagreement between the present interpretation of Jer. 36:4–5 and that provided by the author of the reconstruction in question, there is agreement that 'those parts of the book that present themselves as a genuine autobiographical document by Jeremiah, namely the so-called confessions, are in fact the work of scribes':[45] it has been claimed that the 'confessions' (Jer. 1:4–19, 6:9–11, 6:27–30, 9:1–6, 11:18–12:6, 15:10–21, 17:14–18, 18:18–23, 20:7–18) are, not unlike texts such as the Babylonian *Man and His God* and *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, the results of the work of scribes steeped in wisdom literature and painting an image of Jeremiah along

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40 See van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 186.
41 Nº 414 (= A.431+A.4883) in the *Archives royales de Mari* critical edition.
42 Cf. studies like K. Schmid, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches. Untersuchung zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30–33 im Kontext des Buches*, WMANT 72 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996).
43 Cf. J. Schaper, 'On Writing and Reciting'.
44 On the category of the 'lecto-oral', cf. Goody, *Myth*, p. 41–2.
45 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 188–9.

the lines of exemplary 'prophets' of the tradition, especially Moses, Samuel, Elijah and Micah.[46] In any case, 'Jer 26:17–19 refers to Micah as a precedent of Jeremiah. He quotes from Micah's oracles and thereby attests to the existence of the written collection.'[47]

The Oracles against the Nations, now found in chapters 46–51 of the book, help us to see that 'the scribal nature of the book is revealed by its use of existing oracle collections to create new oracular material'.[48] Jer. 50:41–3 takes up the text of Jer. 6:22–4, leaves it virtually untouched and recontextualises it to serve the new purpose, whereas Jer. 51:15–19 takes up Jer. 10:12–16, and Jer. 49:7–22 is a veritable pastiche of quotations taken from Obadiah and alludes to numerous other passages in Jeremiah.[49]

The book of Jeremiah may thus be described as the result of scribal *relectures*[50] of early collections of prophetic oracles.[51] The book can serve as a paradigm of the production of the great prophetic books named after prophets of the pre-exilic period,[52] and three aspects are decisive here: that Jeremiah is a 'scribal artifact',[53] that 'the core of the book is based on personal and collective memory' and that 'the scribes expanded the original Jeremiah collection with material associated with Jeremiah but not necessarily from him'.[54]

The case of the book of Jeremiah helps us to understand the processes which also brought the other great collections of the 'writing prophets', especially the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel, into being. These processes can rightly be described as indicating that a progressive '"scribalization" of prophecy'[55] was unfolding from the exilic period onwards.

The impact of political and social history on the institutions and processes which formed the respective prophetical collections was decisive for their respective theological approaches, and it is true that 'Jeremiah and Ezekiel both worked too closely under the immediate impact of the fall of Jerusalem to give them that sense of perspective which was required, their role too much that of interpretation and explanation.'[56] It was indeed only in the book of Isaiah 'that the larger sweep of God's dealings with Zion in both judgement

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46 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 191–2.
47 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 189–93, at p. 192.
48 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 189.   49 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 193–4.
50 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 194.
51 On the formation of the book of Jeremiah, also cf. Schmid, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches*.
52 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 203.
53 In other words, it is 'a scribal composition as opposed to a prophetic memoir'; 'the scribal nature of the book [being] revealed by its use of existing oracle collections to create new oracular material'; van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 188–9.
54 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 188.   55 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 203.
56 Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*, p. 242.

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and mercy is to be found'.[57] However, while there are all these – and many more – differences in theological outlook between the prophetic collections assembled in the Hebrew canon, the processes by means of which these collections were put together are essentially the same: a 'deposit'[58] of oracles going back to the eponymous prophet (e.g. the eighth-century Jerusalem prophet Isaiah) was expanded upon by scribes (or by prophets who worked like scribes, as in the case of Deutero-Isaiah and the persons behind 'Trito-Isaiah'),[59] and sequences of *relectures* led to new 'editions' and, eventually, resulted in the prophetic 'books' – which are not really books in the modern sense[60] – assembled in the Hebrew Bible.

The history of the formation of the Twelve Prophets scroll is a particularly complex one. The redactional processes which the constituent individual collections underwent and which, subsequently, the nascent 'book' of the Twelve was subjected to in order to harmonise the component parts, were similar to, yet not identical with, those operative in the formation of the Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel scrolls:[61] from an early point in the literary history of the Twelve Prophets scroll onwards, the carriers of the Hosea and the Amos traditions respectively related the two to each other in order to underline what the two very different prophets and their different 'messages' had in common. This process started in the seventh century CE[62] and led to an increasing intertwining of the nascent books of Hosea and Amos and of the other, later constituent texts of the collection.

Narrative and 'historical' texts: from stories and annals to historical 'books'

Narrative and 'historical' texts (i.e. especially annalistic, or rather archival, ones) are among the most prominent text types of classical Hebrew literature preserved in the Old Testament. Some of them are also among the oldest texts in the Bible. Our category of 'narrative and "historical" texts' is roughly identical with Gunkel's second 'main class' of texts, that of *Erzählung*, which

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57 Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*, p. 242.
58 Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*, p. 240.
59 Cf. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*, *passim*, on Deutero-Isaiah's redactional and editorial contribution to the collecting and shaping of Isaianic material. Cf. also the work on the *schriftgelehrte Prophetie* which shaped Isa. 56–66, e.g. Steck, *Studien zu Tritojesaja*.
60 On the differences between the 'books' of the Hebrew Bible and the modern concept of what constitutes a book, cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 20–3.
61 On the origins of the Twelve Prophets corpus, cf. especially Jeremias, *Hosea und Amos*, pp. 35–54.
62 Jeremias, *Hosea und Amos*, pp. 52–3.

he further differentiates into the two classes of 'poetic' narrative (*poetische Erzählung*) and 'historical' narrative (*Historie*). The first consists of the subgroups of 'myths', 'sagas' (*Sagen*), 'fairy tales' and 'fables' (and, later, also 'novellas' and 'legends'),[63] while the second is not thus differentiated: Gunkel simply refers to it as 'historical narratives' (*Geschichtserzählungen*).[64]

In ancient Israel, as in other ancient Near Eastern cultures, narrative and related texts were among the earliest text types produced. Some of them ended up in the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets, of which more later. Among these early narratives and narrative cycles (*Erzählkränze*), which existed independently of one another before they became parts of larger literary units, were, alongside numerous others, the patriarchal narratives and the Moses-Exodus story (which later became constitutive parts of the 'proto-Pentateuch') and a number of traditional narratives (e.g. the conquest narrative, Josh. 2–11*, stories of Israelite heroes, Jdg. 3–16* and the Elijah and Elisha stories), the Saul traditions and the so-called 'succession narrative' now found in 2 Sam. 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2 (considered below). These texts may well have had an oral 'pre-history' which, however, is impossible to reconstruct. There also were numerous other texts of a 'historical' nature: archival material; administrators' lists enumerating officials, placenames, areas and other important data; and so on. Given their form and subject matter, those 'historical' texts are likely to have been composed as written texts. Furthermore, the Hebrew Bible explicitly refers to some 'source texts' of whom no trace has remained: the 'chronicle of the Kings of Israel' (1 Kings 14:19, 15:31; 2 Kings 15:26) and other such texts ('the book of the kings of Israel', 1 Chron. 9:1, possibly identical with the chronicle mentioned in 1 Kings 14:19). Its narratives also draw on other official documentation, for instance lists of officials (2 Sam. 8:16–18; 1 Kings 4:1–19), 'census' lists (Ezra 2) and so forth.

The narrative text that has probably found most attention among scholars is the so-called 'succession narrative' in 2 Sam. 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2.[65] As J. Barton has pointed out, '[t]he essential issue of perception is that these chapters have a unifying theme', and '[t]he strange gap in the story between the end of 2 Samuel and the beginning of 1 Kings . . . can only be explained if the work . . . is intended to deal with just those incidents that bear on the theme of succession'.[66] The text is an excellent – maybe the best – example of pre-deuteronomistic, pre-exilic Hebrew narrative literature.[67] Its narrative

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63 Gunkel, 'Die israelitische Literatur', p. 66.
64 Gunkel, 'Die israelitische Literatur', pp. 73–4.
65 Cf. especially Rost, *Überlieferung*.   66 Barton, '"Succession Narrative"', p. 97.
67 On the dating, cf. Barton, '"Succession Narrative"', pp. 98 and 103.

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structure seems simple but is in fact characterised by a highly complex plot, lively presentation and ironic twists, not unlike the Elijah and Elisha stories.[68]

J. Barton has rightly drawn attention to the fact that the narrative texts of the Hebrew Bible can be organised as belonging to one of the following three compositional 'styles': the 'classical', the 'Deuteronomistic' and that of the 'Jewish novel'.[69] With regard to the earliest period of Israelite and Judaean literary production that is accessible to us (i.e. the time from the tenth to the eighth and seventh centuries), it is fascinating to observe that we have numerous examples of a highly subtle, laconic prose style that Barton terms 'classical'. It is decidedly pre-deuteronomistic with regard both to the stylistic features themselves and to its underlying ideological features, and Barton rightly says, with regard to H. Schulte's earlier observations,[70] that this pre-deuteronomistic style indeed has an 'ethical flavour. As [Schulte] observes, in both J and the Succession Narrative the weight falls on custom rather than law: on "what is not done in Israel", on misdeeds as "folly".'[71]

Compared to that early, laconic narrative style, deuteronomistic narrative texts, such as the ones that constitute the 'backbone' of the Deuteronomistic History, are characterised by a highly formalised style, a distinctive legal vocabulary inspired by the earliest texts in Deuteronomy and constant reference not to custom but to 'law', and often specifically to legal texts in their *written form*.

The third narrative style originated in the post-exilic period, has much in common with that of the Hellenistic Greek novel and has consequently been referred to as the style of the 'Jewish novel' by Lawrence Wills. Wills identifies Jewish novels – and he devotes special attention to the 'Daniel/Susanna tradition', Tobit, Esther, Judith, Joseph and Aseneth and the 'Joseph tradition' – as 'highly entertaining prose narratives, of roughly the same length [as Greek novels of the time; J. S.], that tell the dramatic adventures of named but non-"canonical" individuals of the ancient past'.[72] As Wills also points out, they 'manipulate the written medium, utilizing such techniques as description, dialogue, and psychological introspection'.[73] With regard to the latter point especially they are worlds apart from the pre-exilic, 'classic' narrative of the 'succession story' and similar texts, not least because those earlier texts are on the whole much more intricate and complex, in spite of their lack of 'psychological introspection'. Another, crucial difference between the two is

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68 Cf. the remarks in Barton, '"Succession Narrative"', p. 102.
69 Barton, '"Succession Narrative"', pp. 102–3. The category of 'Jewish novel' is taken over from Wills, *Jewish Novel*.
70 Schulte, *Entstehung der Geschichtsschreibung*.   71 Barton, '"Succession Narrative"', p. 103.
72 Wills, *Jewish Novel*, p. 212.   73 Wills, *Jewish Novel*, p. 212.

that the Jewish novels 'were read as fictions; that is, neither the author nor the audience presumed any referent in past events'.[74] This was very different in the case of 'classic' and deuteronomistic narratives.[75]

With regard to the Hebrew narrative tradition more generally, it has rightly been pointed out that 'it has preserved elements of oral saga-narratives through the medium of writing', typically characterised by an 'anonymous narrator who identifies with the tradition', a concept that is very different from the characteristics of early Greek historiography; Hebrew historical narrative is thus best understood along the lines of a 'model of complex compositions into which pre-existing traditions have been integrated as "building blocks"'.[76] As we shall see later, this insight is particularly relevant in the context of research into the Deuteronomistic History.

We can thus trace the development of ancient Hebrew and early Jewish narrative in and through the history of the formation of the Hebrew Bible. Much of the material we have discussed became part of the Deuteronomistic History and the Pentateuch, and other, later texts survived as units in their own right, like, for example, the books of Esther and Judith.

Legal texts

'What regulated Mesopotamian life was its oral laws[,] not the code of Hammurabi.'[77] Similarly, it can be said with regard to Israel and pre-exilic Judah that societal life was regulated along the lines not of law but of custom; decisive was what was and was not 'done in Israel' (cf. 2 Sam. 13:12).[78] However, out of pre-exilic legal texts did grow a sophisticated legal literature and a concomitant concept of religious practice which became a more and more dominant factor in Israelite and post-exilic Jewish religion, entailing a transformation of legal reasoning into a type of ethical thought and practice which was to characterise Judaism and its daughter religions forever after.[79] Tracing the development of Israelite and Judaean legal literature affords us some insight into that transformation.

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74 Wills, *Jewish Novel*, p. 212.
75 Cf. the discussion in Barton, '"Succession Narrative"', pp. 96–9, 104.
76 E. Blum, 'Historiography or Poetry? The Nature of the Hebrew Bible Prose Tradition', in S. C. Barton, L. T. Stuckenbruck and B. G. Wold (eds.), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity. The Fifth Durham–Tübingen Research Symposium (Durham, September 2004)*, WUNT 212 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 25–45, at p. 41.
77 A. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, *The Transformation of Torah from Scribal Advice to Law*, JSOTS 287 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 92.
78 Cf. our section on narrative texts, pp. 116–18.
79 Cf. E. Otto, *Theologische Ethik des Alten Testaments*, ThW 3:2 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), *passim*.

The Hebrew Bible enables us to reconstruct the history of written legal texts in ancient Israel and Judah. It preserves some prime examples of the genre. Pride of place belongs to the book of Deuteronomy, which is largely the result of a long process of growth of a legal core (Deut. 12–26*) that was itself essentially the product of the interpretation of an earlier law collection. That earlier collection was the so-called Covenant Code (preserved in Exod. 20:22–23:33). The third major collection of legal texts preserved in the Bible is the Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26). As we shall see, the Holiness Code presents us with a special set of problems, which will be addressed in due course.

It is true that, '[t]hough scholars continue to debate their individual compositional histories, the pentateuchal law collections are each characterized by unifying literary, linguistic, and ideological features that allow them to be analyzed as discrete textual complexes'.[80] Most of the law collections now found in the Pentateuch originally existed independently of it. Let us start with the earliest of those collections. The Covenant Code, in its original, ninth- or eighth-century form, was a catalogue of legal rules which some see as having been influenced by the Code of Hammurabi.[81] The designation 'code', well established in biblical scholarship, is a little misleading since the Covenant Code never seems to have had the function of a legal 'code' in the strict sense (i.e. of a collection of laws to be enforced by jurists).[82] Rather, like other ancient Near Eastern law collections, it probably served as a 'book' (cf. Exod. 24:7) of exemplary rulings (*Rechtssätze*) put together to serve as training material for legal decision-makers in ancient Israel and Judah. According to a recent theory, the *mishpatim* assembled in the book of the Covenant were 'secular' rulings (*profanrechtliche Bestimmungen*), which were not thought to be of divine origin. Whereas Yahweh was seen as a kind of guarantor of justice and proper legal procedure, he originally was not conceived of as the source of Israelite law. Later editions of the Code, however, linked it to the God of Israel, which led to a 'theologisation' of Hebrew law with significant consequences for the development of the Yahweh religion and the practices it encouraged.[83]

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80 J. Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah. Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation*, FAT 52 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), p. 1.
81 Cf. Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, passim.
82 On the same problem with regard to the Code of Hammurabi, cf. the discussion in Wright, *Inventing God's Law*.
83 Cf. Crüsemann, *Die Tora*; Otto, *Theologische Ethik*; E. Otto, *Wandel der Rechtsbegründungen in der Gesellschaftsgeschichte des antiken Israel. Eine Rechtsgeschichte des 'Bundesbuches' Ex XX 22–XXIII 13*, Studia Biblica 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1988); and E. Otto, 'Vom Profanrecht zum Gottesrecht. Das Bundesbuch', *ThR* 56 (1991), 412–27.

At the heart of the book of Deuteronomy lies the collection of stipulations in Deut. 12–16* which are, by and large, the result of a legal-exegetical *relecture* of the Covenant Code in the light of the demands posed by a society which had changed very considerably during the roughly two hundred years since the Covenant Code had been put together. The point is not that '[a]dministrative and legal reforms became necessary because the [Assyrian] invasions had shattered, if not totally destroyed, local and family structures'.[84] Rather, Judahite society had for centuries been undergoing, like similar societies at the time, a slow process of an increasing division of labour which went hand in hand with the rising importance of writing and the diversification of all kinds of administrative processes. This general development took place regardless of, and in spite of, the difficult political and military constellations in which the Judahites found themselves. That development inexorably led to the corrosion of family and clan structures which Deuteronomy inadvertently mirrors when – to choose just one example – it privileges marriage over other kinship institutions.[85]

Whereas it is true that, in the course of several centuries in the pre-exilic period, legal traditions became more and more 'theological',[86] in the sense that they were ascribed to Yahweh as their source, it is also true that the figure of Moses started to attract, already in the pre-exilic Moses-Exodus narrative, those legal traditions like a magnet. Moses became the focus for the legal traditions because of his quasi-royal function:[87] kings are the source of the law and the guarantors of legal procedure in the ancient Near East, and this traditional function made Moses the ideal figure onto which to project legal traditions. That quasi-royal function, which is ascribed to Moses in the narratives preserved in the Hebrew Bible, made him such an obvious focal point because he was, after the demise of the Judahite monarchy, the only 'royal' figure the legal traditions could be pinned on. Although Yahweh was now depicted as the ultimate source of law, to Moses was attributed a central function as the law's 'channel'.

The Holiness Code, found in Lev. 17–26, confronts the reader with yet another collection of legal stipulations. They are, in presentation and content, unlike both the Covenant Code and the deuteronomic/deuteronomistic

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84 Ska, *Introduction*, p. 189.
85 Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, 'Deuteronomy and the Politics of Post-Mortem Existence', *VT* 45 (1995), 1–16.
86 Cf. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, *Bundesbuch*; Otto, *Theologische Ethik*, and, focusing on research on the Covenant Code, Otto, 'Vom Profanrecht zum Gottesrecht'.
87 See J. W. Watts, 'The Legal Characterization of Moses in the Rhetoric of the Pentateuch', *JBL* 117 (1998), 415–26, *passim*.

material. The so-called Holiness Code is unlikely ever to have existed independently, as will be discussed in the context of the formation of the Pentateuch.[88] It is the last step in the process of the evolution of Israelite law from early collections of practically orientated stipulations towards complex legal works in the service of a Yahweh theology devised and continually refined by Judah's intellectual and political elite.

Sapiential texts: from proverbs to 'wisdom' books

The term 'wisdom' is often used to describe a world view supposedly characteristic of certain social classes in ancient Israel and other ancient Near Eastern cultures. The education of the sons of the nobility and other members of the leading classes was characterised, so it seems, not least by 'wisdom' teachings. However, it is hard to demarcate the precise shape of 'wisdom' ideology.

It is not clear whether the sapiential tradition in Israel originally was, like the Israelite legal tradition, independent of the practice and theology of the Yahweh religion. The oldest wisdom texts in the Hebrew Bible are found in the book of Proverbs, and Prov. 10:1–22:16 probably is the most ancient collection of sapiential texts preserved in the book.

With regard to the production and collection of wisdom literature, the Persian period probably was the most productive of all.[89] 'Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes, the main canonical wisdom books, are placed in a line of theological development that begins in Proverbs whenever we date it'[90] – and we can trace the beginnings of the book of Proverbs to the pre-exilic period, as we shall see soon. However, it is impossible to trace even elements of the extant material back to 'the earliest tribes and clans of Israel in their everyday life, sharing experiences and passing them down from one generation to another in the form of short pithy sayings'[91] – this would require an uncritical, speculative rehash of the 'classic' form critics' views. Speculations about the presumed oral prehistory of wisdom literature are just that: speculations. Yet anthropological research into oral cultures makes it perfectly clear that proverbs (and songs) are fundamentally important in such societies and tend to be memorised verbatim (which is not the case, in oral cultures, with regard to longer texts!); 'mimesis' (in the sense of 'exact reproduction from memory

88 See 'The formation of the Pentateuch' below, pp. 129–40.
89 Cf. Gese, 'Wisdom Literature'.
90 K. J. Dell, 'How Much Wisdom Literature Has Its Roots in the Pre-Exilic Period?', in J. Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel. Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, JSOTS 406 (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2004), pp. 251–71, at p. 252.
91 Dell, 'Wisdom Literature', p. 253.

store') leaves 'little room for imprecise reproduction', and that extends to 'short events such as proverbs and songs' and 'also occurs with short narrative sequences such as those found in folktales'.[92] We can therefore assume that many of the proverbs and sayings found in the Hebrew Bible may well go back to the earliest stages of Israelite culture and have been little altered in their process of transmission, but we are unable to reconstruct their precise *Sitz im Leben*. Many of these texts were 'transcribed' when they became attractive to 'collectors' and in some cases it is clear that extant folk sayings and proverbs were collected and given some cohesion along the lines of common themes. Prov. 10.1–5 is such a case: originally independent sayings have been assembled; the proverbs found in verses 2–4 now serve to unfold aspects of verse 1, and verse 5 summarises verses 1–4.[93] Such processes of collecting and organising folk sayings and proverbs were the beginning of what we call 'wisdom literature', and of all the extant biblical texts it is Prov. 10:1–22:16 that affords us the deepest insights into these processes which probably first took place in the tenth and ninth centuries BCE. The collections thus produced were possibly put together in educational contexts and for educational purposes, for use in schools,[94] or in any case in teaching. However, it has been pointed out that it is difficult 'to make out a case for wisdom literature in Israel having been composed *specifically* for the professional and educational purposes of the state administrators'.[95] With regard to the way in which proverbs and sayings were collected, the procedure described in Qoh. 12:9ff. may well reflect the actual process of collecting and editing wisdom sayings in ancient Israel and Judah.[96]

There are a number of significant parallels – and in some cases more than just parallels – between Israelite and Egyptian wisdom literature. One of the most significant facts is that Prov. 22:17–24:22 – or at least its first segment, namely 22:17–23:11 – in many ways resembles the Egyptian 'Teaching of Amenemope', which is commonly dated to the Ramesside period. It is reasonable to assume that parts of the Egyptian text were taken over by the biblical author-editor, who had probably received it through Phoenician contacts. What this means is, among other things, that not everything in the Hebrew Bible that looks like a collection of wisdom sayings was put together

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92 Goody, *Power*, p. 41.
93 T. Krüger, 'Komposition und Diskussion in Proverbia 10', *ZThK* 89 (1995), 413–33.
94 G. I. Davies, 'Were There Schools in Ancient Israel?', in J. Day, R. P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson (eds.), *Wisdom in Ancient Israel. Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 199–211.
95 Weeks, *Wisdom*, p. 160, emphasis added.   96 Weeks, *Wisdom*, p. 160.

by Israelite or Judahite editors or redactors. At the same time, it is likely that the 'Teaching of Amenemope' is itself based on elements taken from earlier collections.

In any case, we can be sure that in wisdom literature, as in the case of legal traditions, there was a movement from small collections to larger ones, a movement which can be traced – to name just one example – in the book of Proverbs: the Hebrew version of the Teachings of Amenemope presumably originally existed independently and was only later combined with the other segments that now constitute the third part of the book of Proverbs, namely 22:17–24:22, which was assembled in the pre-exilic period.

The history of the formation of Proverbs most likely started in the pre-exilic period with what are now its parts II and V, namely 10:1–22:16 and 25–9 (probably both dating to the eighth century BCE). Parts III (22:17–24:22) and IV (24:23–34) were added later (but still in the pre-exilic period), parts VI (chapter 30) and VII (31:1–9, 10–31) were added later still, and the collection was finally prefaced by what we now know as Proverbs 1–9 (part I of the present Hebrew text) and received an apposite conclusion (the second part of part VII, i.e. 31:10–31) that, together with part I, frames the collection. The final redaction can tentatively be dated to the fourth or, at the latest, the third century BCE.[97]

It was widely assumed in Old Testament scholarship that early Israelite wisdom material was 'secular' in nature and was only later brought under the umbrella of Yahwistic religious literature. This view can no longer be upheld.[98]

Cultic texts: from 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' to 'hymn-books'

Cultic texts (i.e. texts used in worship), typically of a poetical nature, were produced throughout Israel's and Judah's history, and they can be found across the Hebrew Bible, with the psalter and the book of Lamentations consisting virtually entirely of cultic and quasi-cultic texts of various genres (*Gattungen*). Other, non-cultic poetry was, of course, also a feature of Israelite and Judaean life, the most prominent example being the Song of Songs, which probably originated as a collection of 'secular' love poetry. However, we are here concerned with poetical (and other) texts which were produced in cultic contexts. Some examples of biblical cultic poetry can be traced back

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97 For this reconstruction cf. L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, 'Das Buch der Sprichwörter', in Zenger et al. (eds.), *Einleitung*, pp. 371–9, at pp. 376–8.
98 Weeks, *Wisdom*, pp. 57–73.

to the earliest history of Israel and maybe beyond (Pss. 29 and 104), and it makes sense to differentiate according to their origins: between texts from the sanctuaries of Israel, on the one hand, and ones produced in the Jerusalem temple, on the other.[99] In both Israel and Judah there existed, from the tenth to the eighth centuries, numerous Yahweh sanctuaries, but presumably only the most significant ones produced cultic literature that left traces in the Hebrew Bible. Among them we can probably count – as far as Israelite material is concerned – the Zion psalms, of which more anon.

Recently, the well-worn idea that prophets – 'cultic prophets' – played a significant role in pre-exilic sanctuaries of the Yahweh religion, and, indeed, at the post-exilic Jerusalem temple, has been restated, this time on the basis of comparisons with Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracles.[100] These prophets are assumed to have made a significant contribution to the early cultic literature of Israel and Judah. The only problem is that we cannot be sure they ever existed.

Psalms were written in all periods of Israelite and Judaean history, before, during and after the Babylonian exile, and, as has recently been demonstrated, 'a good case can be made that the following psalms are pre-exilic: the Royal Psalms, as well as other psalms which allude to the king, psalms which presuppose and proclaim Zion's inviolability, psalms which imply the presence of the Ark, Enthronement Psalms, and Communal Laments which imply that Israel has an army'.[101] This includes Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132 and 144:1–11; 46, 48 and 76; 24, 63, 68, 132; 47 (possibly; the psalm may be post-exilic but contains pre-exilic material),[102] 93, 96–9; and 44, 60 and 108 (Ps. 60:7–14 = Ps. 108:7–14), respectively, and probably others.[103]

Psalms and psalm-like compositions are not just found in the psalter, of course, but in other collections incorporated into the Hebrew Bible, most notably in the book of Lamentations, but also in 1 Sam. 2:1–10, 2 Sam. 22 (cf. Ps. 18!) and 2 Sam. 23:1–7. Outside the Deuteronomistic History, there are psalms in the Pentateuch and in 'historical' works: Exod. 15:1b–18; Deut. 32, 33;

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99 Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte*, pp. 62–5.

100 J. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms*, BZAW 352 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2005), *passim*. Notable earlier work on cultic prophecy includes S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 vols., trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), vol. I, p. 154, and vol. II, pp. 24, 93; and A. R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*, 2nd edn (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962).

101 J. Day, 'How Many Pre-Exilic Psalms Are There?', in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, pp. 225–50, at p. 244.

102 J. Schaper, 'Psalm 47 und sein "Sitz im Leben"', *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 106 (1994), pp. 262–75, *passim*.

103 Cf. Day, 'Psalms', pp. 225–40.

Jdg. 5; and the amalgamation of Pss. 96, 105 and 106 in 1 Chron. 16:8–36. In prophetic texts, we find psalms in Isa. 38:10–20 and Jonah 2:3–10. As has rightly been observed by students of the Hebrew Bible, it is significant that key junctures in narratives are thus emphasised and supported by psalms, which gives us an impression of the importance of this text type well beyond its original *Sitz im Leben* and 'normal' use.

Recent years have seen the attention of some scholars move from the exegesis of individual psalms to that of the collections of psalms that constitute the Hebrew Bible psalter, and indeed to the exegesis of the psalter as a whole. This change is due to the fact that, as in the exegesis of Hebrew prophecy, the accent has moved from the supposed earliest, oral forms of literature to the actual evidence of written texts which we have inherited and which so far had not found much attention. A welcome 'side effect' of that change is that more attention is now given to the transformation psalms underwent in the process of being collected and edited to fit into those larger collections (like the 'Elohistic Psalter', i.e. Pss. 42–83) and, ultimately, into the five 'books' of the psalter (Pss. 3–41, 42–72, 73–89, 90–106, 107–45, with Pss. 1–2 and 146–50 framing the five 'books'), a process which lasted altogether from the sixth to the early second century BCE.

Major literary complexes in the Hebrew Bible

Introductory remarks

The major literary complexes in the Hebrew Bible unite texts from the genres we have discussed. In order to understand why such major works, and especially the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History, were composed in the first place, it is imperative to recognise the driving forces of literary production in Antiquity: the 'law of antiquity or precedence', the 'law of conservation', the 'law of continuity and updating' and the 'law of economy' in ancient literature.[104] The second follows from the first: 'if what is ancient has such great value, then nothing can be eliminated. If a tradition is ancient, it must be maintained even if it has been superseded. A law cannot be abolished, even if it is no longer applicable.'[105] Both in legal and in narrative texts, the redactors of the biblical texts followed a literary aesthetics at variance with our own: 'Different versions of an event [or of a legal stipulation; J. S.] are juxtaposed but not harmonized.'[106] It is especially true with regard to the

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104 Ska, *Introduction*, pp. 165–83.   105 Ska, *Introduction*, p. 169; cf. pp. 165–9.
106 Ska, *Introduction*, p. 170.

Pentateuch that 'the desire to collect everything that tradition had handed down became particularly strong during the time of the Second Temple. In the first stages of composition, however, the redactors and editors felt freer to rewrite an ancient text in accord with their own style and criteria.'[107] J. Assmann has provided us with criteria to evaluate this process.[108]

The formation of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH)

Let us start with what was chronologically the first major literary complex in the history of ancient Judaean literature. The history of the formation of the textual block extending from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings and called, ever since M. Noth's groundbreaking work, the 'Deuteronomistic History', is inextricably bound up with the history of the Pentateuch. De Wette's momentous insight – that the 'rediscovered' text referred to in 2 Kings 23:2, 21 (cf. 23:3, 24 and also 2 Kings 22:8, 11) is (the earliest version of) the book of Deuteronomy – continues to be the central tenet of Pentateuch studies in that it gives us a date for that earliest form of Deuteronomy (and thus a key date for the history of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History): 622 BCE. The extent of that earliest form is very difficult to determine: the oldest material in Deuteronomy is found in chapters 12–26*.[109]

The history of Deuteronomy is interwoven with that of the Deuteronomistic History. In spite of the doubts which have recently been cast on Noth's concept of DtrH, some of the major current experts remain convinced of the essential validity of Noth's model.[110]

Noth assumes that the text of Deut. 4:44–30:20 was combined with a number of traditional narratives (e.g. on the conquest, Josh. 2–11*, and on Israelite heroes, Jdg. 3–12*), the story of Saul and David – comprising the Saul traditions, the history of the rise of David and the succession narrative (1 Sam. 9–1 Kings 2*) – and other material now found in Kings. According to Noth, the Deuteronomist combined all the older material and contributed an

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107 Ska, *Introduction*, p. 170; on the following pages he discusses that point.
108 Cf. Assmann, *Fünf Stufen*, passim, and Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64.
109 For a recent theory on the formation of the book of Deuteronomy, cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 143–72.
110 Cf. E. Blum, 'Pentateuch–Hexateuch–Enneateuch? oder: Woran erkennt man ein literarisches Werk in der hebräischen Bibel?', in T. Römer and K. Schmid, (eds.), *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l'Hexateuque et de l'Ennéateuque*, BETL 203 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), p. 93: 'In its main layers . . . Deuteronomy does not just present itself as an autonomous Torah/Covenant document, but shows itself to be the self-sufficient beginning of an opus to which belonged at least *Joshua and, in my view, additionally a basic amount of material in *Judges–*Kings.' Cf. also T. Römer, 'L'histoire deutéronomiste (Deutéronome–2 Rois)', in Römer, Macchi and Nihan (eds.), *Introduction*, pp. 315–31.

introduction (Deut. 1–3) and 'bridging' passages (Deut. 31–4*; Josh. 1 and 23; Jdg. 2; 1 Sam. 12; 1 Kings 8 and 2 Kings 17) to create a coherent narrative. Contrary to recent critics of Noth's concept and of the whole notion of a 'Deuteronomistic History', it is indeed hard to see why Deut. 1–3 should prove that there never was an independent DtrH, as has recently been argued.[111] Rather, 'Martin Noth has demonstrated that this summary was designed to open and set the tone of the Deuteronomistic History.'[112] The chapters in question make sense as a rewriting of 'the text [of Deuteronomy] so that it might serve as the beginning and the basis of a much larger historical work. From a reform document and, later, a theocratic vision, Deuteronomy became part of a historiographic project.'[113]

That 'historiographic project', the DtrH, most likely developed in two successive stages, at the hands of the two compilers / authors Dtr[1] and Dtr[2], as outlined by F. M. Cross, modifying Noth's theory.[114] It should be pointed out in this context that the 'block model' of the development of the DtrH is more convincing than the 'Göttingen model' (which assumes several *layers* of text), not least because of the material facts of the production of written texts in ancient Israel which have been pointed out by van der Toorn.[115] The fact that written texts were produced in the form of scrolls 'is not merely a matter of form; it affects the mode of writing, editorial strategies, and the way in which readers use the text'.[116] Cross's thesis is further supported by Vanoni's observation that the typical deuteronomistic terminology characterising the DtrH virtually throughout is conspicuously missing from 2 Kings 23:26–25:30. That passage was most likely added (like some others), as Cross claims, by an exilic redactor Dtr[2] who thus modified the positive, propagandistic message of the late pre-exilic work and its celebration of Josiah's achievements, reinterpreting that message under the impact of the catastrophe of 586 BCE.

The DtrH is therefore best understood as the work not of *one* single *author*, as Noth sees it, but as that of *two compilers*. The notion of 'author' is not a helpful one in trying to understand ancient works of literature, and it has rightly been pointed out that, in many cases at least, it makes more sense to

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111 Cf. E. Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch. Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumrahmens*, FAT 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 110–11.
112 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 161, cf. p. 331, n. 49, referring to Noth, *Studien*, pp. 12–18 (pp. 54–60 in original publication).
113 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 160–1.
114 Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 274–89.
115 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 9–49.   116 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 23.

think of biblical books as compilations rather than 'a carefully crafted whole with a plan that is reflected in all its parts'.[117] The first compiler, Dtr[1], organised the material he had at his disposal in such a way as to produce a coherent narrative ranging from the speech of Moses on the day before the crossing of the Jordan to the celebration of Passover based on the 'rediscovery' of the 'book of the covenant' in the Jerusalem temple (2 Kings 23*). That first compiler was active in the Josianic period, and his work was later modified by the second compiler, Dtr[2], who added 2 Kings 23:26–25:30 and 'a limited number of passages which appear to be addressed to exiles and to call for their repentance'[118] and thus transformed, under the influence of the experience of exile, the DtrH into a pessimistic account of Israel's history.

Early in the Achaemenid era, the Deuteronomistic History, ranging from Deut. 1:1 to 2 Kings 25, was united with the 'proto-Pentateuch' and the priestly writing to form a *groß-deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk*.[119] What we now know as the Pentateuch was then created by the Holiness school later on in the Persian era, a process which we shall discuss soon.[120]

The formation of the Pentateuch
The problem

After decades of a stable consensus in scholarship over the question of the formation of the Pentateuch, it became increasingly clear that some of the constitutive elements of the 'classic' Graf–Kuenen–Wellhausen 'documentary hypothesis' might prove to be untenable.[121] It cannot be our task here to discuss in depth the history of Pentateuch research.[122] Suffice it to say that the relation between the priestly and the non-priestly parts of the Pentateuch, the observation that the patriarchal narratives and the Moses-Exodus story may have been combined later than hitherto assumed, and a number of other important issues gave rise to a critical re-evaluation of the literary history of

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117 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 15–16.
118 Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, p. 287; cf. pp. 285–7.
119 In their very different ways, both Zenger and Schmid arrive at this ultimate result.
120 See 'The legal material as a structural element' below, pp. 134–40.
121 J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Reimer, 1876–7; 3rd edn, 1899), had built on and transformed earlier research (cf., for instance, K. H. Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments. Zwei historisch-kritische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1866), and A. Kuenen, *Historisch-kritisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des ouden verbonds*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Akademische Boekhandel van P. Engels, 1861–5)), thus formulating a coherent Pentateuch theory, based on the notion of four 'sources' or 'documents', the youngest being the priestly source, P.
122 See especially E. Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century. The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford University Press, 1998), *passim*, and Houtman, *Pentateuch*, *passim*.

the Pentateuch which started in the 1960s, gathered pace in the 1970s and still has not come to an end.[123]

P as the starting point of a reconstruction of the Pentateuch's literary history

There is only one tenet of 'classic' Pentateuch theory that is still virtually universally held: the view that a priestly writing 'P' (regardless of whether it is thought of as a 'source', a 'composition' or some other text type) can be traced through the whole or parts of the extant Pentateuch.

E. Blum, who has put forward the most precisely and coherently argued new Pentateuch hypothesis so far, also identifies a priestly element in the Pentateuch, but does not see it as an originally independent *source*. According to Blum, what he calls K[P] (roughly speaking, the equivalent of P in traditional parlance) is a compositional layer (*Kompositionsschicht*). This is why, in Blum's reconstruction of the literary history of the Pentateuch, K[P] can also be the decisive stage in the Pentateuch's formation. In Blum's view, K[P] is the result of both authorial and editorial work: the person producing K[P] combined the primaeval history (written in the seventh century) with the patriarchal history (*Vätergeschichte*) and K[D] (the *deuteronomistische Komposition*) and produced the resulting narrative by supplementing and structuring it with pieces he authored himself. In Blum's model, there is thus no need for an R[P] (Pentateuch redactor), either along the lines of the 'classic' model or along those of, say, E. Otto's concept. The process postulated by Blum can best be described as one that is both compositional and editorial: K[P] – the first Pentateuch, in a manner of speaking[124] – was produced by an author-editor and is characterised by doublets, contradictions and so forth, consciously accepted by that author-editor.[125]

It is a conundrum of Blum's theory, though, that its author has to claim that the multifaceted and often utterly diverse nature of the material found in K[P] was put together *intentionally* by the author-editor responsible for K[P]. Blum explains this strange feature – and he thinks that K[P] is more or less identical

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123 Cf. especially Winnett, 'Reexamining the Foundations', and Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch*. For an outline of the problems cf. T. B. Dozeman and K. Schmid, 'Introduction', in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, pp. 1–7.

124 The final text of the Pentateuch is, according to Blum, the result of later material (Gen. 15, Exod. 4*, etc.) being added to K[P] (in the late Persian period) to form what we now know as the Pentateuch.

125 Cf. E. Blum, 'Esra, die Mosetora und die persische Politik', in R. G. Kratz (ed.), *Religion und Religionskontakte im Zeitalter der Achämeniden* (Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2002), pp. 231–56.

with the Pentateuch in the form in which it has been handed down to us –
as the result of a unique political constellation in the Achaemenid empire:
in his view, the production of K^P was triggered by a supposed 'imperial
authorisation' of the Torah.[126] Persian 'imperial authorisation' probably was
a secondary reason for the formation of the latter. However, it is unlikely to
have been the reason for its formation. Also, the theory of Persian imperial
authorisation does not explain the presence of so many non-legal texts in the
Pentateuch.

Even more significantly, though, the extent and nature of the priestly
material in K^P is the most serious question mark against Blum's theory.
G. I. Davies points out that, in the book of Exodus, 'there is no evidence
that necessitates the view of P as a *Bearbeitung* or "reworking" of an older
narrative, and evidence that *prima facie* favors the original composition of P
as an independent source can only be accommodated within such a view by
means of improbable hypotheses, if indeed it can be accommodated at all'.[127]
In fact, the evidence supports the old insight that P came into existence as an
independent, separately existing source.[128]

The pre-priestly material in the Pentateuch

However, the fact that we can affirm with reasonable certainty that P originally
existed as an independent, coherent narrative tells us little about the history
of the *non-priestly* material preserved in the Pentateuch. It is especially the
tensions between the patriarchal narratives and the Exodus story which have
led scholars to revisit the question of the formation of the Pentateuch in recent
years. It is significant that the starting point of Blum's newer reconstruction
of the Pentateuch is the assumption, inspired by Rendtorff's work,[129] that
the primaeval history and the patriarchal narratives on the one hand and the
Moses-Exodus material on the other originated separately, were handed down
separately all the way through the pre-exilic period and were only combined in
K^P in the early post-exilic period. It is true that these tensions had already been

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126 Cf. Blum, *Studien*, pp. 345–60. The theory is based on P. Frei, 'Zentralgewalt und Lokalau-
tonomie im Achämenidenreich', in P. Frei and K. Koch, *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im
Perserreich*, OBO 55 (Freiburg and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1984; 2nd edn 1996),
pp. 7–43. For wide-ranging discussions of Frei's thesis, cf. Watts, *Persia and Torah*.
127 G. I. Davies, 'The Composition of the Book of Exodus. Reflections on the Theses of Erhard
Blum', in M. V. Fox et al. (eds.), *Texts, Temples and Traditions. A Tribute to Menahem Haran*
(Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), pp. 71–85, at p. 83.
128 Cf. Emerton's and Koch's reminder that P must originally have existed as an independent
source: J. A. Emerton, 'The Priestly Writer in Genesis', *JTS* 39 (1988), pp. 381–400; and K. Koch,
'P – kein Redaktor! Erinnerung an zwei Eckdaten der Quellenscheidung', *VT* 37 (1987), pp. 446–61.
129 Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch*.

discovered by earlier generations, 'but most such earlier studies (e.g. Noth) argued that the marked difference between, say, the Jacob traditions and the Moses traditions resulted from their oral prehistory'.[130] In recent scholarship, however, there has been, as pointed out above, a (salutary) move away from a hypothetical reconstruction of oral texts[131] that may have preceded the texts that have come down to us. Rendtorff's work contributed much to that change in outlook. Since the 1970s, we have witnessed, especially with regard to the varied nature of the components of the Pentateuch, the growth of 'hypotheses about the joining of more fixed, probably written versions of these separate sections of the Pentateuch'.[132]

One of the results of this shift has been a heightened awareness of the problem posed by the conjunction of the patriarchal narratives and the Moses-Exodus story which has led many scholars to believe, like Rendtorff and Blum, that they did not only originate independently, but were joined only at a comparatively late stage (i.e. during the late pre-exilic, the exilic or the early post-exilic period). This view is held by numerous scholars who otherwise have very diverse concepts of the history of the Pentateuch: E. Blum, T. Römer, E. Otto, K. Schmid, J. C. Gertz, D. Carr, T. B. Dozeman and others. However, no new consensus has emerged regarding the question of whether the patriarchal narratives and the Moses-Exodus story were first combined by P (Schmid, Gertz), K^P (Blum)[133] or a non-priestly (and pre-priestly) 'bridge' (Carr and Dozeman).[134]

There is one observation in particular that has triggered a re-evaluation of the non-priestly material in the Pentateuch. It is the insight that there is 'a sharp divide in conceptuality and ideology surrounding Egypt in the Joseph and Exodus stories: in Genesis the land of Egypt is a place of relative refuge, while in Exodus it becomes a place of genocide and oppression'.[135] Most of the scholars who argue along those lines view the links between the

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130 D. Carr, 'What Is Required to Identify Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections between Genesis and Exodus? Some General Reflections and Specific Cases', in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, pp. 159–80, at p. 159.

131 On the notion of 'oral literature' and 'oral texts', cf. Goody, *Myth*, pp. 41–57, and Ehlich, 'Textualität'.

132 Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', pp. 159–60.

133 Thus recently E. Blum, 'Die literarische Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus. Ein Gespräch mit neueren Endredaktionshypothesen', in Gertz, Schmid and Witte (eds.), *Abschied vom Jahwisten*, pp. 119–56. In his *Vätergeschichte* and his *Studien*, he still held the view that the two were already joined by K^D.

134 Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', pp. 167–75, and T. B. Dozeman, 'The Commission of Moses and the Book of Genesis', in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, pp. 107–29, at pp. 127–8.

135 Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', p. 161. Carr refers to Schmid and Gertz.

patriarchal narratives and the Moses-Exodus story – which used to be ascribed, in the 'classic' hypothesis, to J, E and JE respectively – as later, post-priestly additions.[136] In their view, the non-priestly texts in the Pentateuch which combine ancestral traditions and the Exodus tradition – roughly speaking, the material formerly ascribed to the Yahwist and dated in the tenth or ninth century – were modelled on the example of the priestly joining of those originally independent traditions. The consequence is, of course, that precisely those pentateuchal texts which used to be thought of as being the earliest now become the latest. Thus, the Yahwist is now thought by some to be post-exilic rather than early pre-exilic. The alternative position is that held by Blum, who ascribes much of the material assigned to a post-exilic (!) J by Levin[137] and others to K^P instead. In fact, it does not make much sense any longer to speak of 'the Yahwist',[138] although some prefer to do so in order to refer to a 'running strand of pre-Priestly material in the Tetrateuch'.[139] As Carr rightly points out, '[t]hat definition . . . makes the term "Yahwist" so different from the older use of the term as to make it functionally nonusable'; instead, the point is 'whether there once was some kind of pre-Priestly Pentateuch'.[140]

The central question with regard to the material formerly ascribed to J and E, the question that more than any other fuels the current debate, is whether there are any links between the patriarchal narratives and the Exodus tradition that are *non*-priestly, yet demonstrably *pre*-priestly. D. Carr claims that such connections exist. He finds them especially in two types of links between the Abraham narrative and the Moses-Exodus story in the non-priestly material in the Pentateuch. First, he posits, there is 'a network of travel commands and promises spanning Genesis that link Gen 46:1–5 to the story of Moses and the Israelites in Egypt'.[141] They are, according to Carr: Gen. 12:1–2, 26:2–3, 31:3aβb and 46:3b–4. There is a balance between moving into the Land (Gen. 12:1–2 // 31:3aβb) and moving out of it (Gen. 26:2–3 // 46:3b–4). Second,

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136 Cf., to name just two examples, J. C. Gertz, 'The Transition between the Books of Genesis and Exodus', in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, pp. 73–87, and K. Schmid, 'The So-Called Yahwist and the Literary Gap between Genesis and Exodus', in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, pp. 29–50.

137 Cf., for example, C. Levin, *Der Jahwist*, FRLANT 157 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1993); C. Levin, 'The Yahwist and the Redactional Link between Genesis and Exodus', in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, pp. 131–41; and J. Van Seters, 'The Report of the Yahwist's Demise Has Been Greatly Exaggerated!', in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, pp. 143–57.

138 Cf. Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', p. 160.

139 Cf. the reference to Gertz in Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', p. 160.

140 Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', p. 160.

141 Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', p. 165.

Carr refers us to 'the other set of links between the non-Priestly narratives of the patriarchs and the Moses story', that is 'a set of terminologically linked stories of destruction in Genesis that build on God's promise to Abraham in Gen 12:2–3 and correspond to two texts in Exodus',[142] namely 3:1–4:18 and 14:1–31.

Thus Carr manages to explain the history of the formation of the Pentateuch without having to classify material which is most likely pre-priestly as post-priestly (as is the case with Levin), or as priestly, as Blum does. Carr offers the most convincing theory when he assumes 'that a late pre-Priestly author/editor created the first proto-Pentateuch' but 'there is agreement [between Carr's position and that held by Schmid and others; J. S.] that the joining of the ancestral and the Moses traditions came relatively late and – outside the Abraham story – is reflected primarily in insertions such as Gen 46:1–5 or Exod 3:1–4:18'.[143] This view is supported and strengthened by G. I. Davies's work, which has added a number of further important points supporting the conclusion that there was a pre-priestly bridge between the patriarchal and Moses traditions; indeed, Davies 'refer[s] to the non-Priestly narrative as JE' and finds 'enough indications of a double strand in the non-Priestly material, both in Genesis and in Exodus, to justify a form of the older view that it includes extracts from what were once two separate versions of the story of Israel's origins, which used to be called J and E with good reason'.[144] He dates the 'completion of JE' to the late pre-exilic or exilic period at the latest and estimates that the 'underlying material from the sources' goes back to the ninth or eighth century.[145]

The legal material as a structural element in the formation of the Pentateuch: from the Enneateuch to the Pentateuch

Identifying the relations between the most significant portions of legal texts (i.e. the Covenant Code, Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation), leads straight on to the centrally important question of what insights those relations give us into the history of the formation of the Pentateuch and what impact that has on its modern exegesis, especially with regard to Leviticus. 'Indeed, we are bound to ask what difference it makes – at least from a historical perspective – for the interpretation of Leviticus and other "P" laws if it can be

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142 Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', p. 166.
143 Carr, 'Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections', pp. 179–80.
144 Davies, 'Transition', p. 77.   145 Davies, 'Transition', p. 78.

demonstrated that some parts of this corpus are already an exegesis of earlier instructions.'[146]

A comparison between the treatment of asylum legislation, seventh-year and manumission laws and the tithing laws in Deuteronomy (D) and the Holiness Legislation (H) shows that H takes up and transforms the deuteronomic material.[147] To name just one example: a comparative reading of the tithe laws in Deut. 14:22–9 and Num. 18:20–32[148] (a Holiness text) elucidates 'significant thematic, lexical, and syntactic parallels that persist throughout each respective pericope',[149] indicating a 'direct literary relationship between the Deuteronomic and Holiness tithe laws'.[150] Num. 18:20–32 'attempts to implement an entirely new tithing system, one that accords better with P than with D' – 'P's cultic program is strongly impressed upon the Holiness tithe, even though H does not fully adhere to P's strict limitations.'[151]

This is one of many reasons why the Holiness Legislation should be seen as 'a supplement to P and not as an independent source or legal collection'.[152] This view is able to accommodate both the insight that H is demonstrably different from P and the observation that it is well integrated with the priestly document. It was Elliger's fundamental insight that the Holiness Legislation in Lev. 17–26, the *Heiligkeitsgesetz*, presupposes P.[153] The view of H as a supplement to P, adopted in the present study, thus takes seriously Elliger's insight, but goes against Blum's view of H as being integral to P.[154] While an analysis of H in relation to P makes it clear why Blum can think of H as being authored by the priestly writer, such an analysis also shows why Blum's view of H is not tenable after all. H is highly distinctive and cannot be ascribed to P – or, for that matter, to the 'Pentateuch redactor' posited by E. Otto and others. The cultic concepts and terminology of H 'militate against Otto's attribution of this code to the same "pentateuchal redactor" (*Pentateuchredaktor*) as the one responsible for, e.g., the post-Priestly redaction of Ex 19–24 or the final edition of Deuteronomy'.[155]

H supplements P and at the same time mediates between P and D. The Holiness Legislation is an attempt to harmonise the divergent legal traditions

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146 Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 17.
147 That comparison is provided by Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, pp. 31–208. For a full list of 'Correspondences between Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation', cf. *Rewriting the Torah*, pp. 7–8.
148 Cf. Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, pp. 175–91.   149 Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, p. 175.
150 Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, p. 182.   151 Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, p. 205.
152 Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, p. 13, n. 35.
153 Cf. K. Elliger, *Leviticus*, HAT 1:4 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966), pp. 16–20.
154 Cf. Blum, *Studien*, pp. 318–32.   155 Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 561.

assembled in the nascent Pentateuch. It does not replace earlier legal traditions, but supplements them.[156] This result ties in well with observations made in recent years by a number of scholars, especially I. Knohl.[157] In Lev. 17–26, which he sees as the laws promoted by a 'Holiness school', Knohl finds 'the removal of the barrier between morality and the cult', as opposed to P, where 'holiness is concentrated in ritual and applies primarily to the cultic enclosure': the Holiness Legislation 'includes all areas of life and applies to the entire community of Israel and the land they inhabit'.[158]

While Knohl's view of the relation between H and P, and of the theological significance of H as a breakthrough in the conceptualisation of holiness, is convincing, his dating of P and H is not. The ideology of the Holiness school, which permeates Lev. 17–26 and related texts and which Knohl analyses so precisely and convincingly, fits much more easily into the late post-exilic period than it does into the (pre-)exilic. The subordination of everything to the aim of establishing the holiness of Israel and the land is typical of the situation in which the inhabitants of Yehud and the returnees from the Golah found themselves under foreign domination: with no opportunity left to express themselves politically, the whole effort went into the 'reinvention' of 'Israel' as a people characterised, *in its entirety*, by its holiness (Lev. 20:7). The final stages of the formation of the Pentateuch have to be seen in the context of the struggle for a new identity for the community of Yahweh in Yehud.[159] The Holiness Legislation is the latest stage, in the Pentateuch, of a development that increasingly subjected legal and ethical material to theological scrutiny and reinterpretation.[160] 'The Holiness legislators . . . reconceptualize the Covenant Collection and Deuteronomy' and 'exploit the precedent of their sources to introduce further revisions aimed at undermining the existing legal tradition'[161] – only that it was not so much an undermining[162] of the existing tradition (or rather traditions) but an ingenious way of creating a history of revelation of Torah that gave the nascent Pentateuch its form. This is the

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156 With Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, and against Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*. Cf. E. Otto, '*Ersetzen* oder *Ergänzen* von Gesetzen in der Rechtshermeneutik des Pentateuch. Zu einem Buch von Jeffrey Stackert', *ZABR* 14 (2008), pp. 434–42.

157 Cf. Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, pp. 101–3, on the editing of the Pentateuch.

158 Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, p. 180. Knohl's insight ultimately goes back to W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 5th rev. edn, 2 vols., trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1961–7); cf. Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, p. 180, n. 37.

159 Cf. J. Schaper, 'Torah and Identity in the Persian Period', in G. Knoppers and O. Lipschits (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Age. Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), pp. 27–38, *passim*.

160 Cf., among others, Otto, *Theologische Ethik*, pp. 233–56.

161 Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, p. 224.   162 Cf. Otto's review of Stackert.

'legal hermeneutics of the Pentateuch'[163] which emerges from an attentive synchronic reading of its final form[164] and leads on to a refined understanding not just of the Pentateuch's overall 'theme',[165] but of its literary history, too.

Given all of the above, it seems likely that the final redaction of the Pentateuch was the work of the Holiness school, or that the Holiness school is at least responsible for the penultimate redaction of the Pentateuch. A few scholars have now opted for one of the two solutions.[166] It was the aim of the Holiness school to interact with all the important legal traditions, to draw them together and to subject the resultant macro-composition to its concept of a progressive revelation of divine law, while also integrating the narrative material adopted from the pre-priestly material. The apogee of the legal revelation is reached in Lev. 17–26, which the Holiness school posited in the centre of the nascent Pentateuch: 'Hence ch. 26 has been devised as the conclusion not only to ch. 17–26, but to the entire revelation made at Mt. Sinai; and with the introduction of Lev 17–26, this revelation has now been brought to an end.'[167]

However, there is an important question that arises from this reconstruction: if Lev. 17–26 is central to the Pentateuch, in that it presents the climax of the revelation of the Torah, and if it was put in its position at the ultimate or penultimate stage of the Pentateuch's composition, how then does Deuteronomy fit into the picture? How can the Pentateuch present another revelation of the law after the Sinaitic revelation?

It has rightly been pointed out that, in the narrative logic of the Pentateuch, 'Deuteronomy has now become a second legislation (a notion still preserved in the Greek tradition).'[168] Indeed, the Greek term *Deuteronomion* was coined because the Hellenistic Jewish translators thought of the law contained in the fifth book of Moses as a second law, a concept for which they are sometimes derided by modern exegetes. As it turns out, their view is not just

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163 Cf. N. Lohfink, 'Prolegomena zu einer Rechtshermeneutik des Pentateuchs', in N. Lohfink, *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur*, vol. v, SBABAT 38 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), pp. 181–231.
164 The term 'final form' here refers not to the MT, but to the oldest form (of the final text of the Pentateuch) that can be established by textual criticism; see Lohfink, 'Prolegomena', p. 181.
165 Cf. D. J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978).
166 E. Otto takes a similar view when he ascribes the Holiness Code and related material in Numbers to the 'Pentateuch redactor'; cf. Otto, *Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch*, p. 259. However, Otto does not accept the concept of a Holiness school put forward by Knohl. Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, has now adapted Knohl's insight to his, Nihan's, analysis of the formation of the Pentateuch. But Nihan also adopts the views of R. Achenbach and assumes that only the so-called 'theocratic redaction' gave the Pentateuch its final shape.
167 Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 552 (in italics in the original).
168 Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 553.

understandable but also provides the appropriate interpretation of the role of Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch's 'hermeneutics of revelation'.[169]

It is obvious that Deuteronomy cannot seriously be understood as a *commentary* on the legislation which precedes it in the Pentateuch. Such an attempt at an explanation is precluded not only by the wording of Deut. 1:5[170] but also, and most importantly, by the fact that much of the deuteronomic material is so different from its equivalent parts in the Holiness Code that no amount of 'creative' exegesis can present the former as a commentary on the latter. What Deut. 1:5 *does* say, however, is that what follows is being put in force by Moses through announcing it publicly and through having it written up, referring, in cataphorical manner, to what follows, especially to Deut. 5:1–26:19.[171] What is being announced and written up, in fact, is a second law; according to the logic of the overall pentateuchal narrative, Deuteronomy is the *application* of the original and supreme legislation expressed in the Holiness Code to the situation of the imminent conquest of and settlement in the Land. This construct is made possible by the fact that the first Exodus generation has died (as described in the book of Numbers) so that the laws of Deuteronomy can be 'presented as a complementary revelation for the *second* generation of the exodus',[172] with Deut. 1:3 taking up, with precisely the same terminology, the statement in Exod. 25:22.[173] Interestingly, Deut. 1:3 says that the Torah (cf. 1:5) is announced to the Israelites 'according to all that which ʏʜᴡʜ had ordered him [Moses] with regard to them [the Israelites]': the claim is not that the Torah which is being announced is *identical* with the earlier law, but that the Torah offered to the Israelites in the plains of Moab *is like* (*ke*) and therefore *accords with* 'all that which ʏʜᴡʜ had ordered him with regard to them'.[174] Our observation lends further support to the view that Deuteronomy functions, in the narrative logic of the Pentateuch, as a *second law* that is in accordance with the first.

It is certainly true 'that the creation of the Torah in the Persian period should not be viewed simply as a compromise between conflicting traditions,

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169 The phrase 'hermeneutics of revelation' is used by Nihan (e.g. *Priestly Torah*, p. 553) and others to characterise the 'logic' of the sequence of revelatory divine acts in the Pentateuch and its constituent parts. That 'logic' is one of progressive revelation(s), as is pointed out above in the present study.

170 See J. Schaper, 'The "Publication" of Legal Texts in Ancient Judah', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 225–36, building on Lohfink's and Braulik's work.

171 The evidence from Akkadian literature supports this view; cf. Schaper, '"Publication" of Legal Texts in Ancient Judah'.

172 Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 554, building on Lohfink, 'Prolegomena', pp. 19–20.

173 Cf. Lohfink, 'Prolegomena', pp. 19–20.

174 Cf. Lohfink, 'Prolegomena', and Schaper, '"Publication" of Legal Texts in Ancient Judah'.

united into a single document by an anonymous yet genial redactor, but also between conflicting schools in which these traditions – such as D and P – were continuously copied, reinterpreted, and supplemented'.[175] However, that process did not go on forever, and it is a common problem in some areas of recent Pentateuch scholarship that contemporary exegetes do not seem to be able to come to terms with the problem of the ultimate 'closure' of the Pentateuch.[176] Also, and very importantly, the Pentateuch is more than just 'a compromise between conflicting traditions' – as we have seen, the compromise was crafted so well, despite the earlier competition between the 'conflicting schools', that the resultant piece of literature made sense as a whole, regardless of the disparate origins of its constituent parts: it is the successful result of a 'deliberate pseudohistoricizing process'.[177] As we outlined above, in the early Achaemenid era the Deuteronomistic History, ranging from Deut. 1 to 2 Kings 25, had been united with the 'proto-Pentateuch' (the JE of earlier scholarship) and the Priestly Writing to form a *großdeuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk*. What we know as the Pentateuch was probably created by the Holiness school through a process of supplementation, harmonisation and demarcation, thus creating a 'Pentateuch' incorporating the proto-Pentateuch, P and a modified Deuteronomy. The Pentateuch and the Hexateuch, whose existence is made likely by the content and function of Josh. 24, probably existed side by side for a time, until the Pentateuch established itself as the authoritative work.

The key question is: what sense would the earliest readers of the Pentateuch have made of it? How would they have assessed the relative importance of the Covenant Code, the Holiness Code and Deuteronomy and the

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175 Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 562, building on E. Blum's work. As B. M. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 147, n. 26, has rightly pointed out, the hypothesis of a compromise between conflicting groups 'is most often associated with Erhard Blum' but was in fact already argued by M. Smith in 1972; cf. Blum, *Studien*, and Smith, 'Pseudepigraphy', pp. 191–215 (also cf. the documentation of the panel discussion on pp. 216–27), especially p. 201: 'This supposition would fit the other indications that there was originally considerable friction between the priestly and the Deuteronomic schools, and that the present Pentateuch is a product, not only of compilation, but of compromise.' The article was reprinted (without the panel discussion) in M. Smith, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, ed. S. J. D. Cohen, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), vol. I, pp. 55–72. Also cf. M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1971; 2nd edn, 1987), pp. 132–5.

176 U. Rüterswörden, review of R. Achenbach, M. Arneth and E. Otto (eds.), *Tora in der Hebräischen Bibel. Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte und synchronen Logik diachroner Transformationen*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), in TLZ 134 (2009), cols. 160–2, *passim*, rightly criticises the postulation of more and more redactors, recensions, etc. to explain the final form of the Pentateuch. Much of that proliferation of theorising is the result of misunderstanding the role which the Holiness school played in the production of the Pentateuch.

177 Smith, 'Pseudepigraphy', p. 205.

textual relations between them? N. Lohfink has demonstrated that a 'synchronic' reading of the Pentateuch inexorably leads up to Deuteronomy and its law, which is intended to be understood as the summary of all 'the preceding berith-texts' and all divine stipulations made 'between Sinai and Arbot Moab'; in cases of dispute Deuteronomy is perceived to be the ultimate arbiter, but 'the other laws of the Pentateuch' have their function in open disputes.[178]

Having attempted a sketch of the literary history of the Pentateuch, it remains to be seen how this can be located in terms of an absolute chronology. Here it is decisive to note that the essential observation made by W. M. L. de Wette in 1832[179] – that the book found in the temple according to 2 Kings 23 was the nucleus of Deuteronomy, the *Ur-Deuteronomium* – can still be considered as providing the chronological 'anchor' of all Pentateuch theory. As we have seen, the sequence of three legal corpora that are so essential to the Pentateuch's formation can be determined, and this leaves us with the conclusion that the Covenant Code precedes the *Ur-Deuteronomium* (which came into being during the reign of Josiah) and thus is pre-exilic, whereas the Holiness legislation builds on both the Covenant Code and the *Ur-Deuteronomium* and integrates material found in the earlier priestly writing. This leaves us with the conclusion that, 'once the post-P and post-D origin of this collection [i.e. the Holiness Code] is acknowledged, the historical and literary context for such a process of systematic reception and inner-biblical exegesis should be sought in a first edition of the Torah in the Persian period'.[180]

A 'chronicler's history'

It is a powerful statement made by those responsible for the canon of the Hebrew Bible to have assigned to Chronicles the final position in that canon, presumably thus implying the final and summative nature of the work. And indeed, it ranges from Adam to the arrival of Cyrus and therefore, as S. Japhet has pointed out, 'from a beginning to a new beginning'. Its end opens a window into the future of Israel, and, in a very subtle manner, Chronicles is indeed characterised by and preoccupied with an eschatological expectation, the hope for a restoration of the Davidic house to power and the restoration

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178 Lohfink, 'Prolegomena', p. 225; also cf. pp. 210–12.
179 See de Wette, *Dissertatio* (cf. translation in ZAR 14 (2008)).
180 Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 548.

of 'Israel' in and through the returnees from exile and the people of Yehud.[181] In a way typical of the political situation of the inhabitants of Yehud – with its administration run by the Jerusalemite high priest, but ultimately subordinate to the might of the Achaemenid empire – Chronicles paints the history of Israel and Judah in an 'apolitical' manner: it centres on the temple and its cult. Through this lens, its author reconceptualises the whole of 'history' as he sees it, in dialogue with the Deuteronomistic History, especially with Samuel and Kings, and possibly with sources which are now lost (1 Chron. 9:1, 29:29, 2 Chron. 9:29, 13:22, 20:34, 32:32, 35:25). Chronicles also reuses material which pre-dates the Deuteronomistic History and is preserved in it, like the list of David's officials (2 Sam. 8:16–18), elements of which are used in 1 Chron. 11.

Contrary to the majority opinion of earlier generations, we have to assume that Chronicles was written and transmitted as a work of its own, not in conjunction with Ezra–Nehemiah.[182] It presents a coherent and very distinctive view of 'Israelite' history and religion, formed under the impression of the Babylonian exile (cf. 1 Chron. 9:1) and its aftermath, which minimises the importance of the historical Israel and focuses virtually entirely on Judah, David and the Jerusalemite cult. In scope, it attempts to rival the Deuteronomistic History, and it certainly presents a more focused and more coherent view of Israelite and Judaean 'history'. It was most likely authored by one person, and the *Grundschrift* that resulted from that author's activity was later added to by another hand, most likely a 'priestly reviser'.[183] The Chronicler (here understood as the author of the book of Chronicles only, not of Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah) provides some interesting examples of a new use of older material when he interacts with narratives found in Samuel and Kings. A fine example is provided by 2 Sam. 24:1–25, the story of David's census found among other additions to the book of Samuel in chapters 21–4. That story of the census is used by the Chronicler in 1 Chron. 21:1–28 to make a very important point at a crucial juncture of the Chronicler's narrative, using it to lead over to the building of the Jerusalem temple. 'This new focus to the chapter thus draws it closely into line with the purpose of his account of the second half of David's reign as a whole, namely, various aspects of preparation for Solomon's later temple building.'[184] It is a fitting testimony to the Chronicler's narrative artistry.

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181 Cf. H. G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 3, 125–31, 135.
182 Cf. for example, H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, pp. 5–11.
183 Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 14.   184 Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*.

Chronicles is indeed an example of a developed stage of Hebrew narrative, somewhere between the 'deuteronomistic' style and that of the 'Jewish novel'. It betrays a careful, 'scholarly' style of fashioning a clearly developed, systematically presented and theologically significant, yet not very engaging, narrative. 'Both by the actual mode of production and by the self-conscious parading of scholarship, Chronicles is evidently a product from the scribal workshop.'[185] Yet, given its scope, its intricate 'architecture' and its theological ambition, it is the third great attempt in the Hebrew Bible at propounding a major literary and theological synopsis and interpretation of the 'history' of Israel and Judah *coram deo*.

The formation of the Hebrew Bible and 'inner-biblical interpretation' as a response to historical experience

'Inner-biblical interpretation' is the name that has been given to a phenomenon that has always been well known but probably received too little attention.[186] It is a remarkable fact that 'biblical' texts (i.e. texts that became part of the biblical canon) are quoted, and often also reinterpreted or rewritten, in other 'biblical' texts. Obvious examples are texts which had already been assigned special status when the texts that quote them were produced. That is especially true of pentateuchal texts, since the Pentateuch enjoyed the status of 'scripture' from at least the third century BCE onwards. But to be quoted and/or rewritten or reinterpreted, texts did not necessarily have to be of such special status. It was sufficient for them to be regarded, often by unspoken universal consent, as authoritative.[187] This was the case with texts like the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy 12–26* even before they were 'canonised' as part of the Pentateuch. The Covenant Code provides an interesting example: it was taken up and reinterpreted in Deuteronomy and again later in the Holiness Code.

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185 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 117.
186 Cf. what one may call the 'founding documents' of this type of biblical research, i.e. Seeligmann, 'Voraussetzungen der Midrasch-Exegese', pp. 150–81; and Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd edn. Cf. also how this kind of research has been developed further in the works of some of Fishbane's pupils; cf. especially Levinson, *Deuteronomy*; and B. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture. Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford University Press, 1998).
187 Cf. Collins in this volume, pp. 165–89; and Assmann, *Fünf Stufen*, on the 'steps' on the way to canonisation.

Another example is found in the reinterpretations of Deut. 23:2–9 in Ezekiel 44:6–9 and Isa. 56:1–8 respectively.[188] Deuteronomy's view of the exclusion from and inclusion in the community of Israelites of certain groups of people is taken up and developed further in the Ezekiel passage in order to facilitate the reorganisation of the priesthood, while it is flatly contradicted in Isa. 56:1–8. In both cases, the *traditum* underwent changes while it was in the process of transmission (the *tradition*), in the former case through adaptation to new requirements, in the latter through abrogation: Isa. 56:1–8 is the only passage in the Hebrew Bible which displays an actual outright abrogation of a law contained in an *authoritative*, maybe even *scriptural*, text,[189] and is a remarkable case of an 'inner-biblical' dispute in which no attempt is made to gloss over the fact that the two views are irreconcilable – *either* Deut. 23:2–9 *or* Isa. 56:1–8 will be upheld.

The processes of 'inner-biblical' interpretation which can be reconstructed give insights into the respective *Sitze im Leben* of the texts. They give us insights into the conflicts between rival groups of Judahites, groups which expressed their antagonisms in theological terms and used their exegeses of 'scriptural' and otherwise authoritative texts to stake their political and religious claims.

Another remarkable example is provided by the conflict between the different views of the ancestry of the priesthood held by different priestly groups in the late pre-exilic, exilic and early post-exilic periods.[190] For the purpose of staking its claim to religious (and thus political) leadership in the Persian period, the victorious faction (i.e. the Zadokides, operating against the Abiatharides, Aaronides and rural Levites) amalgamated and rewrote the priestly genealogies of the pre-exilic period for its own purposes.[191] The resultant 'Aaronide' genealogy that characterises the priestly writing is a compromise devised to ensure the smooth operation of the post-exilic temple hierarchy. Power struggles are expressed through conflicting reinterpretations of authoritative texts. In this particular case, the struggle focused on genealogies; this was often the case in ancient societies since they tended to explain real-life societal changes by means of 're-adjusting' older genealogies and passing off the 'revised' genealogies as ancient and to base claims of authority for new

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188 Cf. J. Schaper, 'Rereading the Law. Inner-biblical Exegesis of Divine Oracles in Ezechiel 44 and Isaiah 56', in B. M. Levinson and E. Otto (eds.), *Recht und Ethik im Alten Testament*, Altes Testament und Moderne 13 (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), pp. 125–44, *passim*, which takes its cue from Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 118–19, 138–43.
189 H. Donner, 'Jesaja lvi 1–7', VTS 36, pp. 81–95.
190 Cf. Schaper, *Priester und Leviten*, p. 40.   191 Cf. Schaper, *Priester und Leviten*, pp. 39–40.

political and religious leaders and new social formations on those modified genealogies.[192]

We may conclude that the purpose of the major works was the search for identity during and after the exile and the need for 'Israelite' self-assertion in the difficult situation in the Persian period of Yehud. In many ways, the time under Achaemenid rule can be described as the decisive epoch of the literary history of the Hebrew Bible. It necessitated the exploration of the diverse traditions of Israel and Judah with a view to making use of those which would provide orientation for the future. Where necessary, compromises were made to accommodate that diversity, not least because the 'law of conservation' required such compromises.

The search for literary building blocks for the future seems to have been the main reason for the formation of the Deuteronomistic History, the Pentateuch and the book of Chronicles. In the case of the Pentateuch, the most significant and most momentous literary product of Achaemenid Judah, its production is best explained as being the result of a desire for 'national' (for want of a less anachronistic term) self-assertion and cultural and religious self-preservation. While the Deuteronomistic History, after its exilic reworking at the hands of Dtr[2], had provided a 'history' of 'Israel' as seen from the perspective of the demise of Judah, the Pentateuch countered that by situating that 'history' in the overall context of Yahweh's purpose from creation to the day before the entry into the Land, opening a window into the future by rearranging key works of the literary heritage and thus reinterpreting the past. Chronicles then offered yet another perspective on the 'history' of 'Israel', ranging from the creation of humanity to the decree of Cyrus. Here again, a window into the future was being opened, and this time the narrative carried distinctly eschatological overtones.

While these three major works of 'history' were created, during the time span ranging from Josiah's reign to the late Persian period, other literary traditions were being assembled, sifted and codified, some of them in dialogue with one or other of those works of 'history'. This resulted, over time, in the emergence of the canon of the Hebrew Bible,[193] unplanned, yet consistent with the overall development of the literary production of ancient Israel and Judah and the varied and challenging political and social history in which it unfolded.

192 Cf. the examples adduced by social anthropologists, e.g. Goody and Watt, 'Consequences', pp. 31–2.
193 See Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64.

The Old Testament canons

JOHN BARTON

The canon of the Old Testament did not much interest biblical scholars during the greater part of the twentieth century. Though its origins had been an interest of some older scholarship,[1] Old Testament introductions by the late twentieth century had relegated it to a short section at the very end;[2] only in the 1980s did it re-emerge as a central concern. Thanks especially to the rise of the 'canonical approach' in biblical interpretation associated with the work of Brevard S. Childs, the word 'canon' has become a more important one in the discussion of the Bible, and a recent generation of scholars has reopened old debates about the canon's origins and development.[3]

Diversity in the Old Testament canon

This chapter is called 'The Old Testament canons' because there is more than one canon. The Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament sections of Greek, Latin and Ethiopic Bibles show major areas of difference, and at least in the case of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles the differences may be pointers to important aspects of the growth and delimitation of the canons in question.

The Hebrew canon

Modern Hebrew Bibles follow the contents and arrangement of traditional manuscript Bibles, which is already clearly attested in the Talmuds. The Bible is

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1 For the older literature see the surveys in Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*; Anderson, 'Canonical and Non-Canonical'; and Mulder, *Mikra*.

2 For example, A. Weiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961); O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament. An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965); Fohrer, *Introduction*. Contrast more recent works such as R. Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1981); J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1989).

3 Childs's contribution began with *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979); for other works see the discussion in M. G. Brett, 'Canonical Criticism and Old Testament Theology', in A. D. H. Mayes (ed.), *Text in Context. Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 63–85.

divided into three sections: Torah (Genesis–Deuteronomy), Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets) and Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra–Nehemiah, Chronicles). The division of the Prophets into Former (historical books) and Latter (Isaiah, etc.) is not marked in the Hebrew text itself and is post-talmudic. The threefold division of the Hebrew Bible provides the basis for the acronym Tanakh or Tenach sometimes used in Judaism today: T(orah), N(eviʾim), K(etuvim).

The Greek canon

The Greek Bible or Septuagint (LXX)[4] has been transmitted almost entirely by Christians, but it is important to stress that the additional books which it contains by comparison with the Hebrew Bible are all of Jewish origin: Christians never added their own books to their Old Testament. The additional books are similar in character to the books of the Hebrew Bible and are generally placed next to those they most resemble (Tobit and Judith next to Esther, Wisdom and Sirach next to Proverbs) or with which they were thought to have a historical connection (Baruch next to Jeremiah). There are also longer forms of Esther and Daniel, and a noticeably shorter form of Jeremiah.

Here too there is a division into three parts, though this is not functionally important as the threefold division is in the Hebrew Bible. The sections are historical books (with the Pentateuch and Former Prophets regarded as very much on a par), didactic or wisdom books, and prophetic books. The fact that the prophets are placed last may be connected with the transmission of the Greek Bible in Christian circles, since when the Bible is written on a codex the prophetic books then lead into the New Testament where their predictions are seen as fulfilled.

The Latin canon

The official Latin Bible of the western church (the Vulgate) is primarily a translation into Latin of the Greek canon as it existed in the time of Jerome (c. 345–420), the main translator, but is based on the Hebrew text, where the older Latin version (the Old Latin/Vetus Latina) had been made from the Greek text. This canon is very close to the Greek one: the only variations are the omission of the Greek 3 and 4 Maccabees, and the addition of 2 Esdras,

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4 See A. C. Sundberg, 'The Septuagint. The Bible of Hellenistic Judaism', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 68–90.

a Jewish work (4 Ezra) with Christian supplements (5 and 6 Ezra) deriving from the first century CE. The order normally follows that of the Greek Bible.

Since the Reformation the Protestant Old Testament has consisted only of the books in the Hebrew canon, but arranged in the order of the Greek canon. The additional books of the Greek canon are extracted and placed in an appendix known as the Apocrypha. Catholic Bibles contain all the books of the Latin canon arranged in the Greek/Latin order, and though the additional books are known as 'deuterocanonical', they are not in practice differentiated from the protocanonical books shared with the Hebrew Bible. Protestants differ in the degree of authority they ascribe to the Apocrypha. In the Reformed tradition they are little known; Lutherans sometimes include the Apocrypha in their Bibles but make little use of them; Anglicans have traditionally used them in public worship, though not regarding them as critical in deciding on doctrinal matters.

The Ethiopic canon

The contents of the Ethiopic canon may be enumerated in two ways, yielding a total of eighty-one or forty-six books, but the two 'canons' do not differ much in their actual contents, except for the strange feature that Ezra–Nehemiah is included in the shorter version but excluded from the longer. In addition to including the deuterocanonical books of the Greek tradition, the Ethiopic Bible also recognises Enoch and Jubilees, and the medieval *History of the Jews* by Joseph ben Gorion: taken together these works give the Ethiopic Old Testament a quite different character from the other canons. In what follows we shall not deal further with this Bible, different as it is from those familiar in the rest of the world, but it is worth noting how differently the other canons might have developed, given different circumstances: there is nothing predetermined about the contents of the Old Testament.[5]

Origins of the various canons

There have been three main theories to account for the differences among the various canons, and in particular the crucial difference between the Hebrew and Greek traditions.

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5 On the Ethiopic canon see E. Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), and Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*.

The Alexandrian canon

The oldest explanation of the longer Greek canon rests on attributing great importance to the difference between the Hellenised Jews of the diaspora, and especially the community based in Alexandria, in Egypt, and the non-Hellenised Jews of Palestine. The deuterocanonical books have come down to us only in Greek. Though in the last hundred years fragments of them have been found, from substantial sections of Sirach found in the Cairo Genizah to short portions of other works (Tobit and the Letter of Jeremiah) now known from Qumran, as a corpus these books are clearly associated with a Hellenised form of Judaism, and some (e.g. the Wisdom of Solomon) were certainly written in Greek originally. P. Katz argued that the longer Greek canon was the Bible of the Jews of Alexandria, the Hebrew canon that of the Hebrew- or Aramaic-speaking Jews of Palestine.[6] This seemed to be confirmed by the fact that the Palestinian Josephus, even though writing in Greek, drew only on the books of the Hebrew canon, whereas Philo of Alexandria shows knowledge of books such as Wisdom.

The theory of an Alexandrian Jewish canon explains the fact that the Greek Old Testament contains books not in the Hebrew Bible without having to argue that the deuterocanonical books were added by Christians, which would be counterintuitive: why should Christians have added extra *Jewish* books to their canon? It does not, however, account for four other facts: (i) we have no Jewish manuscripts of the LXX canon, only Christian ones; (ii) Jewish sources never mention the difference in canon between Palestine and Alexandria; (iii) the Hebrew canon differs not only in its contents but also in their arrangement; and (iv) we now know that Jews in Palestine were heavily Hellenised, and some of them may have used the Bible in Greek in any case.

Jewish and Christian canons

Most scholars have now abandoned the Alexandrian canon hypothesis in favour of the theory that the LXX is in origin a Christian selection from the Jewish works available around the turn of the era, arranged to suggest a movement from past history to eschatological fulfilment; the Hebrew canon, according to this theory, represents the work of rabbinic scholars who selected fewer books and arranged them so as to reflect their own religious system, centred on observance of the Torah, to which the other books were seen

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6 P. Katz, 'The Old Testament Canon in Palestine and Alexandria', *ZNW* 47 (1956), 191–217. The Alexandrian canon hypothesis was first formulated by R. Lee in E. Grabe and F. Lee (eds.), *Vetus Testamentum iuxta LXX interpretes*, vol. II (Oxford University Press, 1719), Chapter 1, sections 75–7.

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as adjuncts. This shift in scholarly opinion came about through the work of Albert C. Sundberg.[7]

Sundberg took as his starting point the wide consensus that the three sections of the Hebrew Bible probably reflect the order in which books were accepted as authoritative. The Pentateuch (Torah) is traditionally seen as having been fixed and promulgated by Ezra, and this may well reflect historical reality at least in the sense that it was already both complete and of unquestioned status by the end of the fourth century BCE. The prophetic section must be later than this: since some of the texts it contains are probably from late in the Second Temple period, the finished corpus must post-date the fixing of the Pentateuch. The Writings contain even later works, such as Daniel, so cannot have come together until shortly before the writing of the New Testament, in which almost all of them are cited. Sundberg's creative suggestion was that the differences between the Hebrew and Greek canons do not involve any of the books now in the Torah or the Prophets in the Hebrew canon, which must therefore have been agreed among all Jews, whether in Alexandria or in Palestine. Differences exist only over late books, some but not all of which found their way into the Writings but none into the Torah or the Prophets.

On Sundberg's interpretation, there was agreement among all Jews in the years around the turn of the era that there were holy books additional to the Torah and the Prophets, but there was as yet no agreement about which these were: there was, in fact, no canon of the Writings. Different groups made different selections from what Sundberg called 'a wide religious literature without definite bounds'.[8] It may well be that Alexandrian Jews tended to have a high regard for some books less well thought of in Palestine, but it would be anachronistic to say that they had a different 'canon'. The early Christian movement made a more generous selection from this religious literature than rabbinic Judaism eventually settled on: hence the greater compass of the Greek Bible. Once we can talk meaningfully of different canons, the Hebrew one is Jewish and the Greek, Christian.

Since Sundberg's work other scholars have argued for an even more radical shift of perspective. He largely continued to assume that the Bible was seen as tripartite in the Second Temple era, but this may not be a safe assumption. The New Testament generally describes scripture as 'the law and the prophets', with only Luke 24:44 ('the law, the prophets, and the psalms') possibly hinting

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7 Sundberg, *Old Testament of the Early Church*; Sundberg, 'The "Old Testament"'.
8 Sundberg, *Old Testament of the Early Church*, p. 102.

at a tripartite arrangement, as does Sirach 24 ('the law, the prophets, and the other writings').[9] Perhaps the division between Prophets and Writings is a later one. Leiman has pointed out many places where the Mishnah (second century CE) refers to the Law and the Prophets where the later Talmud speaks of all three divisions, which might suggest a date well into the Christian era for the threefold division as an official one.[10] One might then take Sundberg's argument further and propose that only the Torah was really fixed, and that Prophets and Writings were both selected from 'a wide religious literature'. That might also account for the fact that the LXX has not only different contents but also a different arrangement, with what the Hebrew Bible calls the Prophets split in two, the historical books being added to the Torah and the Prophets proper placed in a section of their own at the end of the canon.

Indeed, one might go even further and ask whether the Torah itself was a totally fixed entity in the Second Temple period. At Qumran the Temple scroll clearly had very high prestige, and this work, Torah-like in character, represents a considerable reworking of the Pentateuch as it is known to us.[11] Perhaps Jews agreed that there was a Torah, but were not yet clear exactly what the Torah contained, and for some, such as the Qumran community, it was still being reshaped as late as the second century BCE. Sundberg's great contribution was to open up the possibility that scripture was a far more fluid concept than talk of 'the Palestinian canon' or 'the Alexandrian canon' tends to imply. We may even not yet have appreciated quite how fluid it was.

A resurgence of traditional theories

If Sundberg moved scholarship on from the Alexandrian canon hypothesis, recent years have seen a tendency to go beyond it to an even earlier consensus. This has been brought about through an alliance between Jewish and evangelical Christian scholars who wish to defend the authenticity of the Hebrew canon against the LXX as the only true canon of scripture for Jews and Christians alike.

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9 It is sometimes suggested that 4QMMT, probably to be dated around 150 BCE, attests a tripartite arrangement in referring to 'the book of Moses and the books of the prophets and of David', but see the critical examination of this by Craig A. Evans, 'The Scriptures of Jesus and His Earliest Followers', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 185–95, and especially E. Ulrich, 'Qumran and the Canon of the Old Testament', in Auwers and de Jonge (eds.), *The Biblical Canons*, pp. 57–80.
10 Leiman, *Canonization of Hebrew Scripture*, pp. 60–4.
11 See the discussion in M. Zahn, 'New Voices, Ancient Words. The Temple Scroll's Reuse of the Bible', in J. Day (ed.), *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 435–68.

Leiman and Beckwith both argue that the canon was complete, for all Jews and Christians, well before the Christian era, so that both the Alexandrian canon hypothesis and the revisionist account of Sundberg are alike in arguing for much more diversity than ever existed in Antiquity. They base their conclusions on a detailed examination of rabbinic sources, holding that these provide hard evidence for attitudes in the last centuries before the Common Era. Since the New Testament does not cite 'as scripture' anything beyond the Hebrew canon, the Greek Bible must represent an amplification of the Hebrew one, which already existed as a fixed entity. Both use the old argument that Daniel would have been among the Prophets in the Hebrew canon if the Prophets section had still been 'open', so it must already have been closed by the late second century BCE. Beckwith adds that even the order of the Writings must have been fixed by the time of Jesus, since his reference (Matt. 23:35) to 'the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah' means 'from the beginning to the end of the Bible', taking 'Zechariah' as referring to the character mentioned in 2 Chron. 24:20–2.

It is not hard to think of objections to this theory. The New Testament does in fact use material that is not in the Hebrew canon, including notoriously a reference to 1 Enoch in Jude 14–15 and the clear indebtedness of Paul to the Wisdom of Solomon for his theory of the origin of sin and death in Rom. 2:23–4 and 5:12–21.[12] To say that these references are real but do not involve treating the deuterocanonical books 'as scripture' is simply special pleading. The antiquity of traditions recorded in the Mishnah and Talmud is also very questionable, and most do not even claim to go back into Second Temple times. The argument from the reference in Matt. 23:35 is also tenuous, since by no means all Hebrew Bibles have 2 Chronicles as the end of the canon anyway, and indeed the Leningrad Codex itself places the books of Chronicles at the beginning of the Writings, even though printed Bibles based on it follow the traditional Jewish arrangement. But the theories of Beckwith and Leiman have been accepted by some scholars, and are definitely among those that remain viable within current scholarship.

Study of the origins of the Old Testament canons thus seems to have reached something of an impasse. The most recent studies have tried to move on by questioning more carefully what exactly is meant by 'canon' in any case. This may help both to show that some of the discussions have been at cross purposes, and also to suggest positive ways forward to break the log jam.

12 On this see J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (London: SCM Press, 1992).

Scripture and canon

A major problem in the study of the canon is a disagreement about terms. If we define the canon as 'books that have a high status', then we shall conclude that it is an early development in Judaism; if we define it as 'an official list of sacred books to which nothing can be added', we are more likely to think it a late arrival, probably not finalised until well into the Common Era. This is not really a disagreement about facts, but largely a matter of vocabulary. Some at least of the difference between Leiman and Beckwith, on the one hand, and Sundberg, on the other, is on this level. Eugene Ulrich has argued that the word canon should be used only when we are talking of fixity, of the positive exclusion of books other than those on an agreed list, and this seems to me the wisest course.[13] Then there are two questions rather than one: (i) which books came to be accepted as sacred by either Jews or Christians, and when; and (ii) when did the idea arise that certain of these books formed a closed corpus to which nothing might be added? I would call the first a question about *scripturality* and the second a question about *canonisation*.

The growth of scripture

The growth of what would be the Old Testament scriptures was for the most part not marked by any formal decisions to adopt the books in question. They established themselves as sacred and authoritative through use and custom. Thus no one ever 'canonised' the Pentateuch, or most of the books of the prophets: they simply grew in people's esteem until it was unthinkable not to regard them as holy books. As we saw in relation to the Qumran Temple scroll, this did not necessarily mean that some particular version of these books was regarded as peculiarly authoritative: their exact textual form was probably negotiable long after they were in principle accepted as scriptural, and in practice each community would have regarded its own version of the scroll in question as the definitive document. But the idea that 'the books of Moses and the prophets' were a crucial document for Jewish life seems to have established itself well before the turn of the era: the New Testament takes it wholly for granted.

What are the signs that a book is being accorded scriptural status? Nine characteristics may be mentioned.

13 E. Ulrich, 'The Notion and Definition of Canon', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 21–35; cf. my own arguments in *The Spirit and the Letter*.

Prevalence of manuscripts

Widespread dissemination of books tends to suggest that they have a high level of authority and popularity. We know little about the existence of manuscripts of the Old Testament books in Antiquity except for the evidence from Qumran, but there the books that make up the present Old Testament undoubtedly enjoyed a high status. There are manuscripts containing all or part of all the books now in the Hebrew Bible except Esther, with a particularly high occurrence of the Pentateuch and the Psalms.[14] Because of the element of randomness in what has been found at Qumran, we cannot safely deduce the relative status of different books from these statistics, but they do suggest roughly the kind of importance we should expect for the Pentateuch and some of the prophets, especially Isaiah. As we have noted above, there may be other books that enjoyed a similar status at Qumran, such as the Temple scroll and, of course, the Community Rule. The tendency of scholarship to distinguish between 'biblical' and 'non-biblical' manuscripts among the finds at Qumran has the unfortunate effect of prejudging the question of the status of such works: at the time, and within this community, there is no way of knowing that the distinction was meaningful. We can certainly say, however, that *at least* the books now in the Hebrew canon were regarded as highly important by the community, though we cannot know that it was these books *at most* (which would mean they already formed a 'canon' in the technical sense proposed above).

Citation and commentary

The citation of books by other authors implies that such books are being seen as important, and here there can be no doubt that books such as the Pentateuch, Isaiah and the Psalms were very highly regarded by the time of the New Testament, which cites extensively from them all. Citation statistics do not necessarily paint the same picture as later overt decisions about canonicity: thus Philo, for example, cites little outside the Pentateuch, but when he does he is most likely to draw on Psalms and Proverbs – which later formed part of the third division of the canon, the Writings – rather than the Prophets, which would officially become more important. Few books are not cited or at least alluded to in the New Testament, but (as mentioned above) the New Testament's effective canon also includes Wisdom and even Enoch. Even more critical than citation is the writing of commentaries, and for this we

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14 See the table in Ulrich, 'Qumran and the Canon of the Old Testament', p. 80.

have evidence from Qumran in the form of the so-called *pesharim*, verse-by-verse commentaries on particular books. Again the choice of texts for commentary may be surprising to us: possibly the most important *pesher* is that on Habakkuk, a prophetic book rarely seen as central in later Jewish or Christian tradition.

Translation

The translation of texts into another language generally implies that they are accorded a high status, and the very existence of the Greek Bible is thus a testimony to the status of the Old Testament books. It has traditionally been thought that the LXX was in origin a translation simply of the Pentateuch, which would confirm the centrality of the books of Moses over all others. But other translations into Greek followed, and the Dead Sea finds have yielded Greek versions of a number of biblical books. The Aramaic Targums are from a somewhat later period, but are good evidence of the increasing status of certain biblical books at least, especially the Pentateuch and Isaiah. The felt need for translations implies that these books were regularly studied, and probably read liturgically in synagogue-style worship, as we know they were from early in the Common Era, and as the New Testament confirms.

Exemplification

Jewish and Christian writers use incidents in the Pentateuch and historical books to illustrate how a good life should be lived and sins avoided, and how God deals with people of various types. It is of course possible to do this with books that are not scriptural, but repeated recourse to the same books for *exempla* tends to suggest that the books in question enjoyed a high prestige. A work such as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* draws morals from incidents in the lives of the patriarchs, and thereby shows that its author regarded Genesis as a text of great authority for the life of the Jewish community. The New Testament cites David as an example of good conduct, and thus shows that it accepts both the record of his life in the books of Samuel and the scriptural commendation of him as a righteous example, despite his recorded sins. Similarly Philo and Josephus frequently mention historical characters in the Old Testament with approbation: Philo is particularly fond of Hannah[15] and Josephus, oddly, of the witch of Endor.[16]

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15 Philo, *De ebrietate* 144–53.   16 Josephus, *Antiquities* 6.340–2.

Consistency

This has two aspects. Books that have scriptural authority are expected to be internally consistent – this is part of their God-given perfection – and writers who use them need to explain away apparent internal contradictions. Thus Philo, commenting on Psalm 75:8 (LXX 74:8), where the Greek text reads: 'In the hand of the Lord there is a cup of unmixed wine, full of mixture', explains that the powers God uses are unmixed from his point of view, but mixed from a human perspective, 'for it cannot be that mortal nature should have room for the unmixed . . . Can you think it possible that your understanding should be able to grasp in their unmixed purity those uncreated potencies which stand around [God] and flash forth light of surpassing splendour?'[17] It is reasonable to argue that such an explanation would not have been called for, had not the book of Psalms been regarded as a work of authority. Later rabbis discussed the internal consistency of Proverbs, which again they felt it necessary to defend.[18] The second aspect is the mutual consistency of holy books. This obviously becomes more of an issue once there is a closed canon, but it is already a concern in the New Testament in the discussion of divorce, where Jesus is reported as commenting on the discrepancy between Moses' permission for divorce and the apparent implication of Genesis 2:24 that husband and wife are 'one flesh' (Mark 10:2–12 and parallels).

Truth

Few if any religions can tolerate the existence of scriptural texts which make untrue assertions. Conversely, a concern to defend the truth of particular texts is often an indicator that the texts in question are regarded as scriptural. Where the surface meaning of a text cannot be defended, then a common technique is to resort to an allegorical or otherwise non-literal interpretation, and it may be said that texts treated allegorically can normally be taken to have a high status. In the Hellenistic world the works of Homer and even Plato were often read allegorically, which they would not have been if they had been thought of as simply everyday books, and Jews and Christians similarly practised allegorical exegesis on the books that would come to be part of the scriptural canon. Origen, for example, says that it is only stupid people who read the biblical texts literally: intelligent readers know how to interpret them allegorically.[19] To Philo it seemed obvious that the essential meaning of the Pentateuch was an allegorical meaning. Thus, if we did not know that Psalms

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17 Philo, *Quod dues immutabilis sit* 77–8.   18 *Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan* 1.4.
19 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.20.

was a scriptural text for the writers of the New Testament, we could deduce the fact from the way Psalm 16:10 is interpreted in Acts 2:22–36. Here the words of David (as they were believed to be), 'thou didst not suffer thy holy one to see corruption', are made to refer to the resurrection of Jesus by the argument that David died and therefore did 'see corruption': the text cannot be untrue and must therefore have some further reference, understood in Acts to be a reference to Jesus. No one would practise this kind of interpretation with a text of low status.

Overinterpretation

A common feature of scriptural texts in a number of religious traditions is that they are seen as highly pregnant with meaning, and this results in what modern scholarship would regard as overinterpretation – pressing small and perhaps really insignificant or subsemantic details as though they carried a great weight of meaning. Conversely, where such overinterpretation occurs we may be sure that the text being interpreted is regarded as having scriptural status. A classic example is Paul's insistence in Gal. 3:16 that Gen. 15, in speaking of Abraham's 'seed' (singular) is referring to Jesus, when the natural interpretation of the text would be that 'seed' means descendants (plural) – indeed in context Gen. 15 must be so taken, since it is speaking of a progeny for Abraham that will endure indefinitely. It is evident from this that for Paul the text of Genesis is a holy text, capable of enshrining hidden or allegorical meanings. Thus Paul is a witness to the status Genesis had in first-century Christianity (not that that is in doubt). Similarly, when Dan. 9:24 interprets Jeremiah's prophecy of a seventy-year exile (Jer. 25:11–12, cf. Dan. 9:2) as referring to seventy 'weeks' of years (i.e. 490 years), it is clear that for the author of Daniel the book of Jeremiah had an oracular character and could be interpreted as containing a coded message. Its predictions could not be allowed to conflict with the facts of history, and so must be reinterpreted to fit in with what had actually happened. This, again, bears witness to the status Jeremiah must have had by the time Daniel was written.

Non-triviality

Many books contain trivial remarks or details that bear only on the original context of composition – letters, for example, may refer to incidents of only passing importance. One of the key features of a scriptural text is that its details are never seen as trivial, but are always regarded as having a lasting validity and significance. An example from Genesis as read in early Jewish exegesis will illustrate the point. Gen. 35:22–23 reads: 'While Israel dwelt in that land,

Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine; and Israel heard of it. And the sons of Jacob were twelve.' At first sight, the two sentences here appear unconnected, and indeed the text continues by listing the sons of Jacob, so that it is natural to take the second sentence as the beginning of a new section. As traditionally written in manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, however, the two sentences are treated as though they conveyed a single idea. The first question for the interpreter is therefore why this is so. The second arises from the odd clause 'and Israel heard of it', which does not – as we should expect – report any consequence of what on the face of it was a grave offence. A modern reader is likely simply to note that the text appears to be inconsequential. The solution, which is preserved in Jubilees, is this: there was a consequence. Jacob had no further relations with Bilhah, his concubine, since his son had 'defiled' her; consequently there were no more children, so 'the sons of Jacob were twelve' – not more. The 'trivial' detail of the way the text is punctuated is thus seen as a pointer to a great weight of meaning.[20]

Contemporary relevance

In a modern Bible-study group it is not an option to say that the passage being studied has nothing to say to us today: because it is scripture, it is perennially relevant. This was certainly already the assumption in Antiquity, and again one may argue, in reverse, that any text that is treated as perennially relevant is being regarded as scripture. The relevance may take one of two forms. The text may be seen as containing reflections on human life that are true in all ages (as with proverbs or maxims) or applicable to ever-new circumstances (as with laws interpreted as Torah, a system of right living). Or the text may be seen as 'fulfilled' in contemporary events, as though it was a piece of prophecy directed to precisely the age in which the reader is living. This is how both the Qumran community and the early Christians understood scripture. On the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2:14–21, Peter interpreted the manifestation of the Spirit as a fulfilment of Joel 2:28 (Hebrew 3:1). Similarly the Qumran community understood the activity of the Teacher of Righteousness as fulfilling the prophecy of Habakkuk 'that he may run who reads' (Hab. 3:1). From this it is obvious that the books of Joel and Habakkuk must have had a high status, or else there would have been no incentive to link the events described to the prophecies contained in them – though,

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20 This example is taken from J. L. Kugel, *The Ladder of Jacob. Ancient Interpretations of the Biblical Story of Jacob and His Children* (Princeton NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

conversely, the events enhanced the status of books that were capable of predicting them!

Although there is very little overt comment about the status of particular books during the Persian and Hellenistic periods, it is thus clear from the indirect evidence of how certain books were treated that they had a status we would call 'scriptural'. On the strict definition of 'canon' we are using, however, this is not yet evidence of the books' canonicity, since there is no concern to delimit the corpus and insist that *only* these books had such a status. That represents a second stage.[21]

From scripture to canon

The earliest witness to the idea that the books of the Old Testament form a closed corpus or canon is Josephus. In his treatise *Against Apion*, a diatribe against Hellenistic culture and a defence of Judaism, he writes:

> 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 own time just as they occurred, it follows that we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. Our books, those which are justly accredited, are no more than twenty-two, and they contain the record of all time. Five of these are the books of Moses, comprising the laws and the traditional history 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 time 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

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21 For a suggestion regarding the history of canonisation of authoritative texts, cf. Assmann, *Fünf Stufen*.

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.[22]

It has become traditional to count the Hebrew Bible as twenty-four books, but perhaps Josephus wants the count to correspond to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is impossible to know exactly which books he included, or how he counted them – whether he reckoned Lamentations with Jeremiah, for example, as in the Greek Bible: claims to know the answer to this question are spurious. The division into three parts corresponds more to the Greek Bible (histories and laws; prophets; teaching books) than to the present Hebrew canon, but it is possible that Josephus is listing the books in a way that will be congenial to his Hellenised audience rather than reflecting any 'official' system. What is undeniable is that he believes in a fixed and closed canon. The criterion for inclusion is prophetic inspiration, but the test of this appears to be date – all the books were written before Artaxerxes, which probably means before Ezra and Nehemiah. (Josephus was of course unaware that Daniel, for example, was in fact written much later than this, simply believing the book's own claim to come from the Babylonian exile.) There is no reference to any canonising *authority* in Josephus' account: the books seem to have established themselves on their own inherent merit, and this, indeed, is probably not far from the truth. No one ever legislated for the canonicity of the Pentateuch, for example, which certainly formed a closed collection before Josephus: this is clear from the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch. This is not exactly the same as the present Pentateuch in the Hebrew Bible, as it contains a few passages from the Prophets and the Writings, but it is recognisably the same text in essence, and hence the basic fixing of the Pentateuch must pre-date the schism between Samaritans and Jews, probably in the fifth or fourth century BCE.[23]

As we have seen, it is much less clear when the present Prophets became established. The New Testament suggests on the whole a bipartite division – Law and Prophets – which probably implies that the Prophets were reckoned to include much that is now in the Writings, since it is not conceivable that books such as Psalms or Proverbs were not yet scriptural. Sirach has been thought to imply the threefold canon, since the prologue speaks of 'the law, the prophets, and the other writings', but again it is not certain

22 Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.37–43. See the discussion in S. Mason, 'Josephus and His Twenty-Two Book Canon', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 110–27.
23 On the Samaritan schism see R. J. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975).

that they correspond to the present three divisions of the Hebrew canon: they could be closer to Josephus' enumeration, which in turn more closely resembles the Greek Bible. (The great heroes of the faith are presented in chronological, not 'canonical', order in Sir. 44–9, suggesting that Ben Sira, like Josephus, probably felt free to arrange the material to suit his own purposes.) In favour of a bipartite division is the evidence of the Mishnah, which tends to talk of Torah and Kabbalah (tradition) rather than Torah, Prophets and Writings, whereas by the time of the Talmuds the threefold division is well established.

Where the Writings are concerned, there is essentially only one piece of evidence that has been held to suggest an actual canonising decision. This is the text in Mishnah Yadaim 3:5:

> All holy scriptures [*kitbe-haqodesh*, 'writings of holiness'] make the hands unclean. The Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes make the hands unclean. R. Judah said: The Song of Songs makes the hands unclean but there is a dispute concerning Ecclesiastes. R. Jose said: Ecclesiastes does not make the hands unclean but there is a dispute concerning the Song of Songs. R. Simeon said: Ecclesiastes is among the lenient decisions of the School of Shammai and among the stringent decisions of the School of Hillel. R. Simeon b. Azai said: I have heard a tradition from the seventy-two elders on the day that R. Eleazar b. Azariah was appointed head of the Academy, that the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes make the hands unclean. R. Akiba said: God forbid that any man in Israel ever disputed concerning the Song of Songs, saying that it does not make the hands unclean, for the whole world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the scriptures [or, all the Writings] are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holiest of the holy. If there was a dispute, it concerned Ecclesiastes. R. Johanan b. Joshua, the son of R. Akiba's father-in-law, said: According to what was said by Ben Azai, thus they disputed and thus they decided.

As is now widely acknowledged, this is the only text that supports in the least degree the idea that the canon of the Hebrew Bible was fixed at the 'council of Jamnia' (Jamnia or Yabneh is where the rabbinic Academy assembled after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 CE), which used to be scholarly orthodoxy. It is now generally agreed that this council is in fact a scholarly figment.[24] Nevertheless the idea has persisted that the dispute about whether

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24 See J. P. Lewis, 'Jamnia Revisited', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 146–62, and J. N. Lightstone, 'The Rabbis' Bible. The Canon of the Hebrew Bible and the Early Rabbinic Guild', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 163–84.

certain books 'make the hands unclean' was a dispute about canonicity, and thus that there were still doubts about Qoheleth and the Song of Songs as late as the end of the first century CE (i.e. that the canon was not closed till then).

But there are compelling arguments for thinking that the disputes recorded here (which incidentally involve rabbis from different periods, as is common in such texts) were not about canonicity, but rather about the ritual status of books in any case considered scriptural. Adjacent sections of m. Yadaim discuss whether scrolls not written in square script defile the hands, and whether Aramaic translations do so. It seems clear that the disagreement is not about whether these two books are scripture: if they were not, there would be no interest in discussing whether or not scrolls containing them defile the hands. The disagreement relates to some physical feature of such scrolls, and the present writer has suggested that this may be the fact that both books lack the divine name, the Tetragrammaton.[25] It is interesting that later Talmudic texts report similar disputes about Esther,[26] which was certainly part of the canon – it even has its own tractate of the Mishnah – but which also lacks the divine name.

If the status even of the Song and Qoheleth was not in dispute by the end of the first century CE, then we can probably conclude that there was no doubt by then that scripture contained all the books now in the Hebrew Bible – as the evidence of citation in the New Testament makes probable in any case. What is not clear is that the Bible formed a *canon* by that period, since, as we have seen, other works also claimed scriptural authority and were cited on a par with the books now in the Hebrew Bible. The only book about which we have explicit evidence of a rabbinic ruling is Sirach, which was known to be of recent origin and was therefore excluded. Otherwise we do not know when Judaism decided to accept only the Hebrew books, by contrast with the Christian church. Melito of Sardis, in the second century CE, claims that the Jewish Bible was shorter than the Christian one in that it contained only the books in Hebrew, and actually recommended that the church should follow this principle, though it did not. The evidence of citation in the Mishnah, where no books other than the Hebrew ones are ever cited, confirms that by the second century CE the Hebrew canon was indeed closed.

25 Barton, *The Spirit and the Letter*, pp. 108–21; see also J. Barton, 'The Canonicity of the Song of Songs', in A. Hagedorn (ed.), *Perspectives on the Song of Songs / Perspektiven der Hoheliedauslegung*, BZAW 346 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), pp. 1–7.
26 Megillah 7a.

The order of the canon

We noted earlier that the Hebrew and Greek canons have different ways of arranging the books of which they are composed. These orders have often been interpreted as significant hermeneutically and theologically. In the Hebrew arrangement, the Torah is central, while the Prophets and the Writings constitute as it were larger concentric circles around it. It is traditional Jewish teaching that there is said to be a diminution of *inspiration* as one moves from the centre to the periphery. The Torah is direct divine revelation; the Prophets are divine revelation mediated through prophetic figures; the Writings are human reflection on revelation. This corresponds in some measure to the contents of the three divisions, since (for example) it is the Writings that contain Psalms, Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes, which are not presented as revealed by God, though the correspondence is far from perfect – it does not provide any rationale for Chronicles being in the Writings when Kings is in the Prophets. It is also sometimes suggested that in Judaism the degree of *authority* diminishes as one moves away from the Torah. This is exemplified in the liturgy of the synagogue, where only the Torah is read in full, and from special scrolls, whereas the Prophets provide only selected readings (the *haftarot*) and the Writings are not read at all in the Sabbath lectionary system, though of course many psalms are regularly used in worship and the 'five scrolls' (*megillot*: Lamentations, Esther, Song of Songs, Qoheleth and Ruth) are read in full on particular holy days. It is doubtful, however, if the supposed gradation of authority is really seen in practice when matters of torah are discussed. The Mishnah, for example, cites Proverbs much more often than it cites most of the Prophets, and in many ways the effective 'canon' for Jewish practice consists of the Torah, the Mishnah and the Talmud, with the Prophets and Writings playing more of a supporting role.

The arrangement of the Greek and, following it, the Latin Old Testament can also be seen as theological in character. The historical books tell of what has been; the didactic books give advice on living in the present; the prophetic books tell what will be in the days to come. In a codex of the whole Bible, the last prophet (normally Malachi, but in some codices Isaiah) leads into the Gospel according to Matthew, where the prophecies are all said to be fulfilled in Jesus. The Greek Old Testament can thus be seen as focused on the development of salvation history, and as having an eschatological thrust.

On the other hand, it is doubtful whether any message is conveyed by the detailed arrangement of books within each section. In both Hebrew and Greek manuscripts the order of the Minor Prophets varies considerably, and

attempts to show that there is some kind of progression of thought in the prophetic corpus have not convinced many scholars. One important Talmudic passage (b. Baba Bathra 14b–15a) does see the order (*seder*) of the Prophets as significant:

> Our Rabbis taught: The order of the Prophets is, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Twelve Minor Prophets. Let us examine this. Hosea came first, as it is written [Hos. 1:2]: God spoke first to Hosea. But did God speak first to Hosea? Were there not many prophets between Moses and Hosea? R. Johanan, however, has explained that he was the first of the four prophets who prophesied at that period, namely, Hosea, Isaiah, Amos, and Micah. Should not then Hosea come first? – Since his prophecy is written along with those of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi came at the end of the prophets, he is reckoned with them. But why should he not be written separately and placed first? – Since his book is so small, it might be lost [if copied separately]. Let us see again. Isaiah was prior to Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Then why should not Isaiah be placed first? – Because the book of Kings ends with a record of destruction and Jeremiah speaks throughout of destruction and Ezekiel commences with destruction and ends with consolation and Isaiah is full of consolation; therefore we put destruction next to destruction and consolation next to consolation.

The order being justified here is an order not known in any actual manuscripts of the Prophets. It is clear that it is understood as thematic in character, paying no attention to chronology, though there appears to be an assumption that a chronological arrangement would somehow be more natural. The concern is that the books of the Prophets (which include, of course, the historical books) convey a message of disaster followed by restoration. But it is unlikely that this was a major factor in the actual compilation of the Prophets. An important factor to remember in this is that the Hebrew Bible long existed not as a codex, but as a series of scrolls, which do not have an 'order' in the same sense. Judges obviously does 'follow' Joshua, because the story continues from one into the other, but there is no similar sense in which, say, Amos 'follows' Joel. If there were any principles involved in the many different arrangements recorded for the Prophets, they are now lost to us.

The Writings vary even more among different manuscripts, and there are even some in which the five *megillot* are placed between the books of the Pentateuch, so as to appear roughly in the place where they fall in the annual lectionary scheme. Traditionally the Writings end with Ezra–Nehemiah and Chronicles, in that order, which reverses the historical progression of the

story. But there are manuscripts that preserve other orders, and indeed the great Leningrad Codex itself, the exemplar for all modern printed Hebrew Bibles, deviates from this order and has Chronicles as the first of the Writings and Ezra–Nehemiah as the last, thus separating these two books even while rearranging them chronologically. It is very doubtful whether any of these arrangements express meaning.

In the case of the Greek Old Testament there is also little reason to think that the order within sections is significant. The Minor Prophets appear in various orders in different codices, and never in the same order as in the Hebrew Bible, but there do not appear to be any reasons of principle involved. Scholars are perhaps too unwilling to allow for mere accident in the way the Bible came to be arranged in its various versions, and too inclined to read deep significance into this. In a way this probably reflects their own attachment to the Bible and their belief in its non-triviality in every aspect. But in the end there is a great deal we still do not know about how the Old Testament came to be canonised and arranged.

The 'apocryphal' Old Testament

JOHN J. COLLINS

'Many great teachings have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them.' So wrote the grandson of Ben Sira in the late second century BCE, in the preface to the translation of his grandfather's book. The passage is often cited as evidence for the emerging notion of a tripartite canon.[1] The third part ('the others') was ill-defined and open-ended. Ben Sira himself aspired to contribute something analogous. We do not know how the corpus of 'the Prophets' was delimited, and even the exact understanding of the Law might be open to some debate. But there is no doubt that by the second century BCE there existed a corpus of authoritative writings, although its extent and the authority of the various books might vary from place to place. The existence of such an authoritative corpus is clearly presupposed in the Dead Sea scrolls.[2]

The existence of a body of authoritative writings by no means signalled the end of literary production in ancient Judaism. Ben Sira was not alone in wishing to contribute to the tradition. But the traditional corpus influenced the new writing in various ways. At one end of the spectrum, we see the beginnings of explicit interpretation of the old books, in the *pesharim* of the Dead Sea scrolls and the allegorical commentaries of Hellenistic Judaism. At the other end, even writings that were quite original in theme and genre usually allude to the older writings in various ways.[3] In between there is a range of compositions that are modelled in various ways on the antecedent literature, or invoke the great figures of the tradition as pseudonymous authors or narrators for new works.

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1 J. J. Collins, 'Before the Canon. Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism', in his *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic–Roman Judaism*, JSJSup 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1997) pp. 3–21; McDonald and Sanders, *The Canon Debate*.
2 VanderKam, 'Authoritative Literature', 382–402.
3 D. Dimant, 'Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha', in Mulder and Sysling (eds.), *Mikra*, pp. 379–419.

The literature of the period around the turn of the era (roughly the last two centuries BCE and the first century CE) is usually classified in four corpora that reflect the manner of its transmission: the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Hellenistic Jewish writings and Dead Sea scrolls. The term 'Apocrypha' is applied in Protestant Christianity to those books included in the Greek and Latin manuscripts of the Old Testament that had no prototypes in the Hebrew Bible and were not included in the Protestant canon. These comprise 1–2 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, additions to Daniel and Esther, Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon and Baruch, all of which are regarded as canonical in the Catholic tradition (where they are sometimes called 'deuterocanonical'), and some others (1 and 2 Esdras, Prayer of Manasseh, 3 and 4 Maccabees, Ps. 151) that have never been regarded as canonical in the Christian West. With the exception of 2 Esd. 1–2 and 15–16 (5 and 6 Ezra respectively), all these compositions are Jewish and can be dated with some confidence to the period between 200 BCE and 132 CE. The 'Pseudepigrapha' is a much broader, ill-defined collection of writings, most of which are attributed to biblical personalities (Enoch, Moses, Adam, Ezra, Baruch, etc.), while some are ascribed to figures of pagan Antiquity (the Sibyl, Orpheus, etc.).[4] Many of these writings are of uncertain date. All were transmitted by Christians, and in many cases their Jewish authorship is disputed.[5] A third category consists of Hellenistic Jewish writings written in Greek. In addition to the major works of Philo and Josephus, there are several other writings, many of which are known only from citations in the Church Fathers,[6] but some of which were transmitted independently (*Joseph and Aseneth, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Testament of Job*, etc.). Some of these compositions (the *Testaments*, Sibylline oracles, Pseudo-Phocylides) are also pseudonymous, and so there is some overlap between 'Hellenistic Judaism' and 'Pseudepigrapha.'[7] Finally, the Hebrew and Aramaic writings found in the Dead Sea scrolls are undeniably Jewish, and can be dated with confidence to the period around the turn of the era.[8] Here again there is some overlap with the Pseudepigrapha. Two of the major Pseudepigrapha, 1 Enoch and Jubilees, are also found among

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4 *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (= *OTP*), ed. Charlesworth; *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (= *AOT*), ed. Sparks.
5 Davila, *Provenance*.
6 Holladay, *Fragments*; J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, rev. edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).
7 Many of these writings are included in *OTP*, vol. II, and some in *AOT*.
8 F. García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated. The Qumran Texts in English*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/Leiden: Brill, 1996); G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev. edn (London: Penguin, 2004).

the Dead Sea scrolls, while several previously unknown pseudo-prophetic texts (Pseudo-Daniel, Pseudo-Moses, Pseudo-Ezekiel, etc.) have come to light, too.

Since there are separate chapters in this volume on Hellenistic Jewish biblical interpretation and scriptural interpretation in the Dead Sea scrolls, our focus here will be on the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, with only incidental reference to literature in the other categories. Some overlap is inevitable. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, however, do not include any examples of explicit interpretation of older scriptures such as we find in the *pesharim* from Qumran or in the commentaries of Philo. The closest approximations to biblical interpretation in these collections take the form of expansionistic paraphrases of the older texts, which bear some resemblance to the later midrash and Targums, and which are often referred to as 'rewritten Bible', or, preferably, 'rewritten scriptures', in modern scholarship.[9]

The phenomenon of 'rewritten scriptures'

Already within the Hebrew Bible itself we find clear cases where older texts are rewritten to reflect new ideological agendas. The most prominent examples are the book of Deuteronomy, which revises older legal traditions, especially those found in the book of the Covenant, and Chronicles, which goes over the history narrated in the books of Kings in a way that places far more emphasis on the temple cult. Both Deuteronomy and Chronicles eventually found a place in the biblical canon and were regarded as authoritative books in their own right. Several writings from the Second Temple period resemble Deuteronomy or Chronicles in their relation to antecedent texts, but did not attain canonical status in the mainline Jewish or Christian traditions. Geza Vermes has defined 'rewritten Bible' as 'a narrative that follows Scripture but includes a substantial amount of supplements and interpretative developments'.[10] The term is often applied more loosely to texts of any genre that have significant overlap with texts that we know as biblical.

9 Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, p. 10; G. Vermes, 'Biblical Midrash', p. 308; Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', pp. 89–156; Alexander, 'Retelling the Old Testament', pp. 99–121; G. J. Brooke, 'Rewritten Bible', in L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. II (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 777–81; B. Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible. Land and Covenant in Postbiblical Jewish Literature* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994); M. Segal, 'Between Bible and Rewritten Bible', in M. Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), pp. 10–28; Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*; White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*.
10 Vermes, 'Biblical Midrash', p. 326.

The designation 'rewritten Bible' is problematic in some respects.[11] It presupposes that the biblical text as we know it was already fixed and accepted as authoritative when the writing took place. This was not necessarily the case with all variant forms of the biblical text in this period. The so-called 'Reworked Pentateuch' from Qumran (4Q158, 4Q364, 4Q365, 4Q366 and 4Q367) contains a running pentateuchal text with various scribal interventions, consisting of exegetical additions and variations in the sequence of passages.[12] The text is more closely aligned with the Samaritan Pentateuch than with the masoretic text. It is arguable that such a manuscript represents not an interpretation of a text recognised as authoritative, but a variant edition. In the words of Moshe Bernstein, these texts 'stand on the unclearly marked border between biblical texts and biblical interpretation'.[13] Discussion of these Qumran texts lies outside the scope of this chapter, but they are mentioned here to remind us that the so-called 'rewritten Bible' did not always clearly presuppose the authority of a text that we know as biblical. The biblical texts themselves were shaped by a long process of scribal interventions, and some of the texts that are dubbed 'rewritten Bible' in modern scholarship may simply be part of that ongoing process. The distinction between the transmission and the interpretation of the text may not be as clear as the label 'rewritten Bible' would seem to imply.[14] Consequently, many scholars now prefer to speak of 'rewritten scriptures', on the assumption that the term 'scriptures' is less definitive than 'Bible'.[15]

Jubilees

A classic example of the phenomenon of 'rewritten scriptures' is provided by the book of Jubilees, a work that is preserved in full only in Ethiopic but whose antiquity is guaranteed by the discovery of Hebrew fragments

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11 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, pp. 7–8; M. J. Bernstein, '"Rewritten Bible". A Category That Has Outlived Its Usefulness?', *Textus* 22 (2005), 169–96; Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, pp. 3–17; White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, pp. 1–18.

12 S. White Crawford, 'Reworked Pentateuch', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. II, pp. 775–77; White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, pp. 39–59; Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, pp. 107–19; M. M. Zahn, 'The Problem of Characterizing the 4QReworked Pentateuch Manuscripts. Bible, Rewritten Bible, or None of the Above?', *DSD*, 15 (2008), 315–39.

13 M. Bernstein, 'Pentateuchal Interpretation', in P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1998), vol. I, pp. 128–59, at p. 134.

14 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, p. 8.

15 E.g. White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, pp. 6–7. See also M. M. Zahn, 'Rewritten Scriptures', in T. H. Lim and J. J. Collins (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 323–36. Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, pp. 17–21, speaks of 'strategies for extending the Scriptures'.

among the Dead Sea scrolls.[16] While the exact date is disputed, it can be safely dated to the second century BCE, probably to the middle of the century.[17] It is cited as an authoritative writing in the Damascus Document (CD 16:2–4), in the early first century BCE. It is a work of mixed genre. It is presented as a revelation, transmitted to Moses by an angel, and so might be considered an apocalypse.[18] The actual content of the book, however, is a narrative that retells the stories of Genesis and the first part of Exodus, with various elaborations.[19] The author imposes on the stories a chronological system of jubilees and provides dates accordingly.[20] So, for example, we read that 'at the end of the nineteenth jubilee, during the seventh week, in its sixth year, Adam died' (Jub. 4:29). Religious festivals are dated according to a solar calendar of 364 days, also known from the scrolls. Many of the additions to the biblical text are halakhic in nature.[21] The patriarchs are claimed to have anticipated the commandments of the Torah, especially in the celebration of festivals (e.g. first fruits in Jub. 15:1; Sukkoth in 16:20–31). Often, commentary bearing on a halakhic point is appended to a story. When Adam is made to cover his shame, we are told 'that is why it is prescribed on the heavenly tablets that all those familiar with the provisions of the law should cover their shame and not uncover themselves as the Gentiles uncover themselves' (Jub. 4:31). Other commentaries relate to the observance of the solar calendar with regard to festivals (6:17–22), the prohibition of consuming blood (7:28–33), circumcision on the eighth day (15:25–34), and prohibition of intermarriage (30:7–23) and of incest (33:10–20, 41:23–7). Sometimes the author's concerns are placed on the lips of patriarchs or matriarchs.[22] In Jub. 20, Abraham commands his sons and grandsons to practise circumcision, avoid fornication and see that no man

16 J. C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). For the Ethiopic text and English translation, see J. C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1989). For the Hebrew fragments from Qumran see J. C. VanderKam and J. T. Milik, 'Jubilees', in H. Attridge et al. (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4. Vol. VIII. Parabiblical Texts Part 1*, DJD 13 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 1–140. On the rewriting of scripture in Jubilees, see White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, pp. 60–83.

17 VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, pp. 17–22. Allowance must be made for different redactional layers within the book. See M. Segal, *The Book of Jubilees. Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology*, JSJSup 117 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 319–22; J. Kugel, 'On the Interpolations in the Book of Jubilees', *Revue de Qumrân* 24 (2009), 215–72.

18 See now T. R. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypse in the Book of Jubilees* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2012).

19 See Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, pp. 97–269.

20 J. M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven. The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees*, JSJSup 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

21 Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', p. 97.

22 J. C. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees*, CBQMS 18 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1987), pp. 30–84.

takes a wife from the women of Canaan. In chapter 22 he warns Isaac about idolatry and instructs him with regard to sacrifice. In chapter 23, Isaac exhorts Jacob to keep separate from the Gentiles and not to marry a Canaanite under any circumstance. Rebecca also warns Jacob, in chapter 25, against marrying a Canaanite. The prohibition against marrying a Canaanite was already found in the biblical text. Abraham made his servant swear that he would not get a Canaanite wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:3) and Isaac explicitly forbade Jacob to marry a Canaanite, but the prohibition is more frequent and elaborate in Jubilees.

Not all the expansions in Jubilees are halakhic. The account of Enoch and the flood is influenced by the Enochic book of the Watchers and includes an explanation of the origin of the demonic world (Jub 10:7–9).[23] The departure of Terah, father of Abraham, from Ur was precipitated by the burning of a pagan temple by Abraham and his rejection of idolatry. The satanic figure Mastema, leader of the fallen angels, has a prominent role throughout, notably in the near-sacrifice of Isaac. Mastema had to be kept bound during the exodus to prevent him from harassing the Israelites (Jub. 48). In short, the author reads into the biblical account the mythological, apocalyptic beliefs of his own world view. The expanded account of the Edomite kings in Jub. 35–8 has been taken to reflect contemporary tensions with the Idumaeans. The dominant concerns of the book, however, are calendrical and halakhic.

Jubilees is not presented, however, as a revision of Genesis and Exodus but as a revelation dictated to Moses by the angel of the presence at the command of the Lord: 'And he said to the angel of the presence, "Write for Moses the account from the beginning of creation till the time when my sanctuary shall be built among them for all eternity, and the Lord appear in the sight of all, and all know that I am the God of Israel"' (Jub. 1:27).[24] The angel takes the account from the heavenly tablets, where everything is already written. (The appeal to the heavenly tablets may be part of a secondary, redactional layer.)[25] The revelation, then, is authorised at multiple levels, by attribution to Moses, the angel and the heavenly tablets.[26] The revelation in Jubilees is clearly distinguished from 'the book of the first law',

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23 J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted. The Rewriting of Genesis 1–11 in the Book of Jubilees*, JSJSup 66 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 181–214, 338–40; Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, pp. 103–43.
24 Trans. R. H. Charles, rev. C. Rabin, in *AOT*, p. 13.
25 So Kugel, 'On the Interpolations in the Book of Jubilees'.
26 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, pp. 64–5; H. Najman, 'Interpretation as Primordial Writing. Jubilees and Its Authority Conferring Strategies', *JSJ* 30 (1999), 379–410, reprinted in H. Najman, *Past Renewals. Interpretative Authority, Renewed Revelation and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity*, JSJSup 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 39–71.

or the traditional Torah (e.g. in Jub. 6:22).[27] It is apparent then that it is not intended to replace the traditional Torah, but rather to supplement it, even if the supplement supersedes the original in some respects. It may be instructive here to remember the case of Deuteronomy, which supersedes some of the older legislation in the Torah of Moses, but does not displace it. The older legislation was not revoked and also became canonical. Hindy Najman suggests that works like Deuteronomy and Jubilees 'acquire authority through their intermingling with the well-known words of traditions whose authority is already acknowledged. Thus such works may acquire scriptural status without displacing the scriptural status of the traditions they rewrite.'[28] Jubilees in fact refers, affirmingly, to 'the book of the first law' in Jub. 6:22, with reference to the festival of Weeks, and again refers to the story of Dinah and the Shechemites, which 'I have written for you in the words of the law', in Jub. 30:12. Najman concludes, reasonably, that 'this further supports the argument that Jubilees is not intended to replace the authoritative Torah, but rather to accompany it as its authoritative interpretation and supplement, in much the way that Deuteronomy came to accompany earlier traditions'.[29] It is likely that Jubilees was accepted as true revelation and therefore authoritative by some people, including the movement described in the Damascus Document from Qumran.[30]

An even stronger claim of revelation is implied in the Temple scroll found at Qumran.[31] Unfortunately, the beginning of this work is lost but it would seem to have involved an account of the revelation at Sinai similar to that in Jubilees. The laws are presented, however, not as the words of an angel but as the direct speech of God in the first person (except for occasional lapses). The Temple scroll is an attempt to integrate the various biblical laws relating to the temple, festivals and purity laws, and contains a rewriting of the laws of Deut. 12–23, including an extensive treatment of the law of the king in Deut. 17.[32] There are, however, some undeniably important laws,

27 J. C. VanderKam, 'Moses Trumping Moses. Making the Book of Jubilees', in S. Metso, H. Najman and E. Schuller (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts* STDJ 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 25–44.
28 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, p. 46.
29 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, p. 48. Compare Alexander, 'Retelling the Old Testament', p. 100.
30 VanderKam, 'Authoritative Literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls', 399–400.
31 Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and the Shrine of the Book, 1983); F. García Martínez, 'Temple Scroll', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. II, pp. 927–33; S. White Crawford, *Temple Scroll and Related Texts* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).
32 M. O. Wise, *A Critical Study of the Temple Scroll from Qumran Cave 11* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1990); White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, pp. 84–104.

such as the prohibitions of adultery and murder, that are not mentioned at all. Larry Schiffman infers that 'the redactor did not really intend his Torah to eliminate the need for the canonical one'.[33] Unlike Jubilees, however, it does not explicitly acknowledge a prior Torah. It is presented as divine revelation. It can be understood as an authoritative, revealed interpretation of the older laws that does not negate them but explains how they should be read and interpreted, but it claims to supersede any older revelation nonetheless.

The Genesis Apocryphon

Not all rewriting of the biblical text was halakhic in character. The Aramaic Genesis apocryphon found in Qumran Cave 1 is an expansive paraphrase of the biblical text.[34] Vermes places its genre 'between the rabbinic categories of Targum and Midrash'.[35] The extant fragments correspond to Gen. 5:28–15:4, from Lamech to Abraham. There is a substantial addition concerning the birth of Noah, and the episode where Abraham passes off Sarah as his sister is greatly elaborated, with a lengthy description of her beauty, among other expansions. The apocryphon shows some concern for moral issues. Abraham's lie is justified by a dream warning of danger on account of his wife, and it is emphasised that Pharaoh could not consummate union with her. But much of this narrative seems designed for entertainment, and for the pleasure of filling in the gaps in the laconic but suggestive stories.

The Biblical Antiquities

Apart from Jubilees, the most extensive example of 'rewritten scripture' in the Pseudepigrapha is the *Book of Biblical Antiquities* (*LAB = Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*).[36] This was at one time wrongly attributed to Philo, and

33 L. H. Schiffman, 'The Theology of the Temple Scroll', *JQR* 85 (1994), pp. 109–23, at p. 110; cf. L. H. Schiffman, 'The Temple Scroll and the Halakhic Pseudepigrapha of the Second Temple Period', in E. G. Chazon and M. E. Stone (eds.), *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 121–31, at p.124.
34 J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I. A Commentary*, 2nd edn, Biblica et Orientalia 18A (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971); J. A. Fitzmyer 'Genesis Apocryphon', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. II, pp. 302–4; M. J. Bernstein, 'From the Watchers to the Flood. Story and Exegesis in the Early Columns of the Genesis Apocryphon', in E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant and R. A. Clements (eds.), *Reworking the Bible. Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran*, STDJ 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 39–63; Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, pp. 26–106; White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, pp. 105–29. Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*.
35 Vermes, 'Biblical Midrash', p. 321.
36 F. J. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo. Rewriting the Bible* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, pp. 69–94. For the Latin text see D. J. Harrington, J. Cazeaux, C. Perrot and P. M. Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon. Les antiquités bibliques*, SC 229–30 (Paris: Cerf, 1976); English translation by D. J. Harrington in *OTP*, vol. II, pp. 297–377.

consequently is often referred to as Pseudo-Philo. It survives in Latin, which was most probably translated from Greek, but the original language is thought to have been Hebrew. It is usually dated to the late first century CE. It is a selective retelling of biblical history from Adam to David, but several important episodes are ignored. It begins with extensive genealogies but ignores the stories of Adam and Eve and the sons of God that figure so prominently in other compositions. There is a brief account of the flood. Abraham is said to have been present at the building of the tower of Babylon, but to have refused to participate, and consequently to have been thrown into a fiery furnace (a play on the Hebrew for Ur/fire). Gen. 12–50 is summarised in *LAB* 8, but the story of the sacrifice of Isaac is recalled at several later points in the story (18:5, 32:2–4, 40:2). The role of Amram is expanded in the story of the birth of Moses. From there the narrative skips to the crossing of the sea. The giving of the Law is described in chapter 11, but there is little attention to the legal material of the Pentateuch. The role of Moses is treated at some length in chapters 10–19. Balaam is said to have planned the seduction of Israel at Baal Peor (18:13–14). The death of Moses is recounted in chapter 19. The account of Joshua (chapters 20–4) highlights the wisdom of the leader. A large portion of the book is devoted to the Judges (chapters 25–48). Fully four chapters are devoted to the exploits of Kenaz, known only as the father of Othniel in Jdg. 1:13. Here he replaces Othniel as the first judge. The story of Jephthah's daughter is recounted at length, and a lamentation is put on her lips. The outrage at Gibeah (Jdg. 19) comes about because of the idolatry of Micah (Jdg. 17) and the concubine deserves her fate because of infidelity to her husband with the Amalekites. Phinehas, who is distinguished by his zeal in putting an end to the apostasy at Baal Peor in the biblical account, appears here in the events at Shiloh (Jdg. 20). 1 Samuel is also paraphrased in detail (chapters 49–65). The narrative ends with the death of Saul.

The pattern of the book as a whole resembles that of Judges: sin, defeat by an enemy, deliverance by a leader. The importance of leadership is probably the most prominent theme in the book.[37] Repeatedly the existence of Israel is threatened but is assured by God's covenantal fidelity.[38] The theme is reiterated in several speeches that are inserted throughout the book. It has been suggested that the themes of danger to Israel and the need for strong

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37 Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', p.109; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Good and Bad Leaders in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*', in J. J. Collins and G. W. E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism. Profiles and Paradigms*, SBLSCS 12 (Chico, CA: SBL, 1980), pp. 49–65.
38 Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, pp. 69–94.

leadership would have been especially relevant around the time of the Jewish revolt against Rome.[39] The book also pays a remarkable amount of attention to women, most of it honorific.[40] Deborah is one of the major leaders in the book (chapters 30–3), but many other women have their roles magnified (Miriam, Tamar, the daughter of Pharaoh, Jephthah's daughter Seila, Hannah), while other female characters with no biblical basis are introduced. So Melcha, a female ancestor of Abraham, prophesies Abraham's future glory in 4:11 and the daughters of Kenaz have husbands given to them, rather than vice versa in chapter 29. Dinah, the rape victim at Shechem, is taken as wife by Job (8:8). This positive interest in female characters is exceptional in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, but there is another notable instance in the Testament of Job.[41]

Elaborations of Biblical Figures

Jubilees and the *Biblical Antiquities* are extended paraphrases of biblical texts. They include additions that are sometimes lengthy (e.g. Kenaz in the *Biblical Antiquities*) but their narratives on the whole are clearly based on a text close to the biblical text known to us. (The same might be said of much of the *Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus.) There exist, however, several other instances where figures mentioned in the Bible are developed in a way that uses the biblical text only as a jumping-off point, and the resulting character portraits go far beyond what we find in the biblical text.[42]

Enoch

The earliest example of 'rewritten scriptures' in the Pseudepigrapha is the story of the Watchers in 1 Enoch 6–16.[43] The biblical account in Gen. 6 provides a notoriously terse story of the sons of God who 'saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took wives for themselves of all that they chose' (Gen. 6:2). It goes on to note that God decided to limit the life span

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39 Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', p. 109.
40 Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, p. 258.
41 P. W. van der Horst, 'Images of Women in the Testament of Job', in M. A. Knibb and P. W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies on the Testament of Job*, SNTSMS 66 (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 93–116.
42 Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*; Stone and Bergren, *Biblical Figures*.
43 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1. A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–35; 81–108*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), pp. 165–275; L. T. Stuckenbruck, 'The Origins of Evil in Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition. The Interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4 in the Second and Third Centuries B. C. E.', in C. Auffarth and L. T. Stuckenbruck (eds.), *The Fall of the Angels*, Themes in Biblical Narrative 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 87–118.

of human beings to 120 years. It is not apparent, however, that the sons of God were thought to have committed a great sin in Genesis: the Lord is merely taking precautions against the emergence of a race of immortal, or extremely long-lived demigods. A few verses later we are told that the Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great, and decided to bring on the flood, but it is not apparent that this is due to the descent of the sons of God. In the book of the Watchers, however, the connection is made explicit. Not only does the descent of the Watchers lead to an illegitimate mingling of species, but the fallen angels impart to humanity forbidden knowledge about weapons and spells. The women give birth to giants, who proceed to fill the earth with blood and iniquity. Accordingly the archangels intervene to bring the complaint of the earth to the Lord, who intervenes to destroy the Watchers and cleanse the earth. It is apparent that the biblical text only provides a jumping-off point for this story, and it is quite possible that the book of the Watchers also drew on other sources.[44] It seems unlikely, however, that the Enochic story is older than Genesis and was actually presupposed in the biblical text, as was suggested by J. T. Milik.[45] Further elaboration of the story of the 'sons of God' can be found in the book of Giants, of which fragments were found at Qumran.[46]

The story of the Watchers shows, however, that even stories that are extrapolated from biblical texts are not strictly exegetical, but may display great imaginative freedom in creating new stories.

In the case of Enoch, this imaginative freedom often took the form of speculation about his experiences when he 'walked with *elohim*' (Gen. 5:24). This was understood to mean that he sojourned with the angels,[47] and this invited speculation that he had ascended to heaven, even before God 'took him' at the end of his life. In the book of the Watchers, he is called on to

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44 P. D. Hanson, 'Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11', *JBL* 96 (1977), 195–233; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11', *JBL* 96 (1977), pp. 383–405; J. C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, CBQMS 16 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1984), pp. 33–51.

45 J. T. Milik, *Books of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), p. 31; see also P. R. Davies, 'And Enoch Was Not, For Genesis Took Him', in C. Hempel and J. M. Lieu (eds.), *Biblical Traditions in Transmission. Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, JSJSup 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 97–107. See the comments of P. S. Alexander, 'From Son of Adam to Second God', in Stone and Bergren (eds.), *Biblical Figures*, pp. 90–1; Kvanvig, Primeval History.

46 L. T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997). On the later reception of the story of the Watchers see A. Y. Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity. The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

47 VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 31; J. C. VanderKam, *Enoch. A Man for All Generations* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. 13.

intercede for the Watchers, because of his familiarity with the angelic world (1 Enoch 12:1: 'His works were with the watchers, and with the holy ones were his days').[48] In 1 Enoch 13–14 his ascent to heaven, even to the heavenly temple, is described in detail. The intercession fails, because the Watchers had sealed their own fate, but Enoch is then given a guided tour to the ends of the earth, in which he sees various cosmological secrets, including the abodes of the dead and the place of future judgement. In the other compositions that make up the collection known as 1 Enoch, he is also reputed to have seen the tablets of destiny, and so to be able to foretell the course of history. He thus becomes the apocalyptic revealer par excellence. His 'prophecies', primarily the 'Animal Apocalypse' in 1 Enoch 85–90 and the 'Apocalypse of Weeks' in 1 Enoch 93:1–10 and 91:11–17, take the form of terse schematic overviews of the history of Israel and Judah, with an eschatological conclusion. These prophecies are analogous to the revelation in Dan. 11, where an angel reveals to Daniel all that is written in 'the book of truth'. Daniel's revelations, however, only covered the period after the Babylonian exile. Enoch, the antediluvian patriarch, could 'predict' the entire course of history from the time of the flood. One of his visions, the 'Animal Apocalypse', actually begins by recapitulating the story of Adam and Eve. These visions summarise the familiar biblical story, but do so in a schematic way that does not attend to much detail in the biblical text.

Later Enochic tradition focuses on his heavenly ascent. The Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–72), which probably date from the early first century CE, describe his visions of a figure called 'that Son of Man' who is obviously modelled on the 'one like a son of man' in Dan. 7. An epilogue to the visions in chapter 70 describes Enoch's own final ascent to heaven. A further epilogue, in chapter 71, appears to suggest that he is identified with the Son of Man.[49] A later apocalypse called 2 Enoch, which is only preserved in Slavonic, describes how he was transformed into an angelic being: 'I looked at myself, and I had become like one of his glorious ones, and there was no observable difference' (2 Enoch 22:10).[50] A still later Hebrew work, 3 Enoch or Sefer Hekalot, tells how he was enthroned in heaven as Metatron, 'the little Yahweh'.[51] All of this

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48 Trans. G. W. E. Nickelsburg and J. C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch. A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), p. 31.

49 For the scholarly debates on this issue, see G. Boccaccini (ed.), *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man. Revisiting the Book of Parables* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

50 Trans. F. I. Andersen, '2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch', in *OTP*, vol. 1, p. 138.

51 3 Enoch 4:3, 12:5. English translation by P. S. Alexander in *OTP*, vol. 1, pp. 255–302. See Alexander, 'From Son of Adam to Second God', pp. 87–122; A. Orlov, *The Enoch–Metatron Tradition*, TSAJ 107 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

speculation is based on the enigmatic biblical statements that he 'walked with elohim' and that 'elohim took him'.[52]

The Enochic writings constitute a distinctive corpus in Second Temple Judaism.[53] By focusing on the antediluvian figure of Enoch, they appeal to a revealer figure more ancient than Moses. The writers were obviously familiar with the Mosaic Torah, but it does not appear to have been their ultimate authority.[54] Because of Enoch's association with the angels, and his ultimate transformation, this literature advocates a somewhat otherworldly spirituality, in which the goal of life is ultimately to become like the angels, and the life of flesh is disparaged by contrast.

Adam and Eve

One of the most popular subjects for expansive paraphrase in Antiquity was the story of Adam and Eve. Much of the Adam literature is late and Christian.[55] The oldest examples are found in the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve* and the Greek *Apocalypse of Moses*, which are different recensions of the same work.[56] The Greek text, which is not an apocalypse in the usual sense of the word, is the shorter of the two, and is primarily an account of the death of Adam. The dying patriarch recounts the story of the fall by way of explaining his death to his children. Eve and Seth seek in vain for the oil of mercy, which is reserved for the resurrection at the end of times. Eve then provides a longer account of the fall (chapters 15–30), emphasising her responsibility. She further stresses her responsibility in her prayer on behalf of Adam (32:1–2). The angels also intercede for him. In the end, God has mercy on him. It was necessary that Adam die and return to the earth because of his sin, but he is promised a future resurrection and his soul is taken to paradise in the third heaven. The resurrection will be a general resurrection for all humanity.

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52 Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, pp. 191–2.
53 J. J. Collins, 'How Distinctive Was Enochic Judaism?', in *Megillot* 5–6 (2007), 17–34.
54 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, pp. 60–1; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Enochic Wisdom. An Alternative to the Mosaic Torah?', in J. Magness and S. Gitin (eds.), *Hesed ve-emet. Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs*, BJS 320 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), pp. 123–32. On the use of the Mosaic Torah in the Enochic corpus, see A. Bedenbender, *Der Gott der Welt tritt auf den Sinai. Entstehung, Entwicklung und Funktionsweise der frühjüdischen Apokalyptik*, ANTZ 8 (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2000), pp. 215–37.
55 M. E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, SBLEJL 3 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1992).
56 Both Greek and Latin are translated by M. D. Johnson in 'Life of Adam and Eve', *OTP*, vol. II, pp. 249–95. A translation of the Latin by L. S. A. Wells, revised by M. Whittaker, can be found in *AOT*, pp. 141–67. A synopsis of these and the Armenian, Georgian and Slavonic versions of the *Life* can be found in G. A. Anderson and M. E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, SBLEJL 5 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1994).

Approximately one half of this narrative overlaps with the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve*. The Latin work includes a lengthy account of the penitence of Adam and Eve, which was described more briefly in the Apocalypse. When they are expelled from paradise they have no food, and they perform acts of repentance as a way of appealing to God's mercy (Adam fasts and stands in the Jordan for forty days and Eve stands in the Tigris). After eighteen days, however, the devil deceives Eve and she comes out of the water. The devil also tells Adam the reason for his enmity. When Adam was created, the archangel Michael called on all the angels to worship him as the image of God. The devil refused, and for that reason was thrown out of paradise. The *Life* also includes an account of Adam's vision of God enthroned in the paradise of righteousness, which he recounts to Seth. Eve's account of the fall, however, is not paralleled in the *Life*.

The textual tradition is more complex than what is represented by the Greek and Latin versions. The Armenian and Georgian versions each contain the major additions that were unique to the Latin and Greek. It has been argued that they do not represent conflations of the Greek and Latin texts, but rather that all these versions derived from an original that seems to have been closer to the present form of the Georgian and Armenian. This prototype also appears to be reflected in a tenth-century poem in Old Irish, 'Saltair na Rann'.[57] Whether the earliest form of the legend was Jewish is not certain. It certainly enjoyed enormous popularity among Christians. While these books do not have explicit references to Christ, as many Christian apocrypha do, their emphasis on penitence is exceptional in the context of Jewish apocryphal literature. Adam and Eve perform their penitence by standing in rivers. Adam's body is washed in the Acherusian lake (*Apocalypse of Moses* 37:3). Accordingly, it has been suggested that the stories originated in baptist circles, whether Jewish or Christian.[58] Ultimate Jewish provenance has been argued on the basis of Hebraisms in the Greek text, and the presence of Jewish concerns such as the importance of the Sabbath as a sign of resurrection.[59] In view of the fluidity of the textual tradition, however, it is difficult to reconstruct a Jewish prototype with any confidence.

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57 See the discussion by G. A. Anderson, 'Adam and Eve in the "Life of Adam and Eve"', in Stone and Bergren (eds.), *Biblical Figures*, pp. 7–32, at pp. 10–12.

58 Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', p. 117.

59 *Apocalypse of Moses* 43:3; *Life* 51:2; cf. b. Sanhedrin 97a. See Vermes and Goodman, 'Biblical Midrash', pp. 758–9.

Abraham

Doubts about Jewish or Christian provenance also affect the *Testament of Abraham*.[60] This work is not a testament, in the sense of a deathbed speech, but a narrative about the death of Abraham, which includes an apocalyptic vision of a judgement scene. It exists in two Greek recensions, of which the shorter is thought to be the more original.[61] When it was time for Abraham to die, God sent the archangel Michael to fetch him, but Abraham refused to go with him and asked to see the whole inhabited world before his death.[62] His wish was granted, and Michael took him on a chariot ride. From this perch, however, Abraham beheld many people sinning, and asked God to destroy them. After a while, God ordered Michael to turn back: 'For behold, Abraham has not sinned and he has no mercy on sinners. But I made the world and I do not want to destroy any one of them' (10:14). Abraham is then shown a judgement scene, where Abel, son of Adam, sits enthroned as judge. The scene involves scales for weighing the righteous and wicked deeds of each person, an Egyptian motif. The *Testament* is usually regarded as Jewish, and dated to the late first or early second century CE, before the Egyptian diaspora went up in flames in the revolt under Trajan in 115–17 CE. Again, it was transmitted by Christians. There is little in it that is overtly Christian, but neither is there any reference to Sabbath, circumcision or Torah observance.[63] Its provenance must be considered uncertain. There also exist testaments of Isaac and of Jacob that are clearly Christian.[64]

Another Abrahamic pseudepigraphon, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, survives only in Slavonic, but is thought to have been written in Hebrew, because it seems to reflect some Semitic idioms (e.g. 1:5: 'my heart was heavy of a big stone', reflecting Hebrew *kbd mn*, heavier than).[65] If this is correct, the

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60 D. C. Allison, *Testament of Abraham*, CEJL (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), pp. 28–31; Davila, *Provenance*, pp. 199–207. Translation by E. P. Sanders in *OTP*, vol. 1, pp. 871–902; by N. Turner, in *AOT*, pp. 393–421.

61 Allison, *Testament of Abraham*, pp. 12–27.

62 On the humorous aspects of the story see J. W. Ludlow, *Abraham Meets Death. Narrative Humor in the Testament of Abraham*, JSPSup 41 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

63 Allison, *Testament of Abraham*, p. 30. Allison considers the concluding chapter (20) Christian from beginning to end.

64 Translations by W. F. Stinespring in *OTP*, vol. 1, pp. 903–18, and by K. H. Kuhn in *AOT*, pp. 441–52.

65 R. Rubinkiewicz, 'Apocalypse of Abraham', in *OTP*, vol. 1, pp. 681–705 (p. 682 on original language); A. Pennington, 'The Apocalypse of Abraham', in *AOT*, pp. 363–91. On the original language see A. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha. Toward the Original of the Apocalypse of Abraham* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2004), pp. 36–94.

work must be Jewish, and probably no later than the late first or early second century CE. There is, however, a Christian interpolation in 29:3–13, which refers to a man who is worshipped by some but beaten and insulted by others.[66] This work is in part a narrative of Abraham's rejection of idolatry, a motif we have already seen developed in Jub. 12. The second part, chapters 13–32, recounts a vision or apocalypse of Abraham. This account has a biblical jumping-off point in Gen. 15:11–12, where a deep and terrifying darkness fell on Abraham when he was offering sacrifice. The biblical text does not describe a vision, whereas the *Apocalypse* depicts a vision of the divine throne, in terms reminiscent of Ezek. 1, and includes a hymn in praise of 'El, El, El, El, Iaoel'. Iaoel is also the name of an angel, 'Iaoel of the same name' in 10:3. His negative counterpart, the satanic figure, is called Azazel. Abraham also sees humanity divided into two parties. On the right are the descendants of Abraham, while on the left are the Gentiles. There is reference to the destruction of the temple. The ending of the work is obscured by the Christian interpolation, but it involves the restoration of the chosen people and the temple cult: 'And they will live, being affirmed by the sacrifices and the gifts of justice and truth in the age of justice' (29:18).

Although both parts of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* are attached to elements in the biblical story, the focus of the author is not on the explanation of the biblical text but on the problem of evil, especially idolatry. It describes the world in dualistic terms that bear some resemblance to the doctrine of the two spirits in the Dead Sea scrolls. The destruction of the temple is punishment for the sins of some of Abraham's descendants, but the author evidently continues to trust in the eventual fulfilment of the promises.[67]

The Testaments

One of the major ways in which prominent biblical figures were made to speak to later generations was by the literary device of deathbed speech.[68] Several examples are found already in the canonical scriptures: Gen. 49 (Jacob), Deut. 33 (Moses), Josh. 23–4 (Joshua), 1 Sam. 12 (Samuel), 1 Kings 2:1–9 and 1 Chron. 28–9 (David). We have also noted the farewell speeches of Abraham, Isaac and David in Jubilees. The major example in the Pseudepigrapha is the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which purports to give the deathbed

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66 R. G. Hall, 'The "Christian Interpolation" in the Apocalypse of Abraham', *JBL* 107 (1988), pp. 107–10.

67 See further Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, pp. 225–32; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, pp. 285–8.

68 J. J. Collins, 'Testaments', in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings*, pp. 325–55.

speeches of Jacob's sons. Apart from this major composition, the only clear examples of testaments as independent works are the *Testament* (= *Assumption*) *of Moses* and the *Testament of Job*. The so-called *Testament of Solomon*, which is of uncertain provenance but is often dated as late as the third century CE, is cast as a narration by Solomon, but is a loose folktale about the building of the temple, combined with magical lore.[69]

The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are indisputably Christian in their present form, and date probably from the second century BCE.[70] There is a long-standing debate as to whether it is possible to recover Jewish testaments by excising Christian interpolations.[71] It is clear that the author(s) of the Greek *Testaments* drew on Jewish sources that originally circulated in Hebrew or Aramaic. The clearest evidence for this is provided by the Aramaic Levi apocryphon from Qumran, which retells episodes from Levi's career, including the episode at Shechem and Levi's elevation to the priesthood.[72] It also includes two lengthy instructional speeches. When Isaac learns that Levi is a priest, he instructs him in 'the law of the priesthood'. Levi gives a speech on wisdom to his sons on the occasion of Joseph's death, which includes some prediction of the future (the text is fragmentary). Neither of these speeches, however, is a deathbed speech in the manner of a testament. One manuscript from Cave 1 (1Q21) and six from Cave 4 (4Q213–14[b]) contain Aramaic parallels to *T. Levi* 8–9, 11–14. Two fragments of a manuscript from the Cairo Genizah also preserve Aramaic parallels for *T. Levi* 6–7, 8–9, 11–13, and part of the Genizah manuscript matches a long addition to the Greek *Testament of Levi* in the Mt Athos manuscript of the *Testaments* at *T. Levi* 18:2. The Mt Athos manuscript also contains an addition at *T. Levi* 2:3 that is paralleled in 4Q213[a] 1–2. There are also parallels to *T. Judah* 3–7 in Jub. 34:1–9 and in the later Midrash Wayissa ʿu. Limited parallels to the *Testament of Naphtali* can be found in 4Q215 and in a later Hebrew work, dubbed 'Testament of Naphtali' because of the parallel.

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69 D. C. Duling, 'Testament of Solomon', in *OTP*, vol. 1, pp. 935–87; M. Whittaker, 'The Testament of Solomon', in *AOT*, pp. 733–52. On the association of Solomon with magical lore, see further P. A. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King. From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition*, JSJSup 73 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

70 H. W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. A Commentary*, SVTP 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), pp. 82–3; R. A. Kugler, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 31–8.

71 J. Becker, *Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Testamente der Zwölf Patriarchen*, AGJU 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1970); H. Dixon Slingerland, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. A Critical History of Research*, SBLMS 21 (Missoula, MT: SBL, 1977); Vermes and Goodman, 'Biblical Midrash', pp. 767–81.

72 J. C. Greenfield, M. E. Stone and E. Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document. Edition, Translation, Commentary*, SVTP 19 (Leiden: Brill, 2004); H. Drawnel, *An Aramaic Wisdom Text from Qumran. A New Interpretation of the Levi Document*, JSJSup 86 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

None of the Hebrew or Aramaic parallels, however, are in the form of a testament, and it now appears unlikely that the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* ever existed in a Semitic language.[73]

The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* display a consistent pattern which involves three basic elements: (i) a historical retrospective about the patriarch's life (the *Testament of Asher* is the only exception); (ii) ethical exhortation; and (iii) prediction of the future. These predictions often display the so-called 'Sin–Exile–Return' pattern which is typical of the Deuteronomistic History. The narrative sections typically recount some episode from the patriarch's life to illustrate some vice or virtue, which is then the subject of the hortatory section. So for example in *T. Reuben*, the story of Reuben's intercourse with Bilhah (Gen. 35:22) serves as the point of departure for an exhortation against fornication. In *T. Simeon*, Simeon's envy of Joseph becomes the basis for the exhortation. In *T. Issachar*, the simplicity of the patriarch becomes a topic of positive exhortation. *T. Judah* interweaves the story of Judah's military exploits and that of his fornication. *T. Joseph* contains two well-developed stories. The first concerns Joseph's chastity in the face of the attempt of the Egyptian woman to seduce him. The second tells how Joseph's self-effacing love restrained him from bringing shame on others, especially the brothers who sold him into slavery. *T. Levi* differs from the other testaments in so far as the narrative does not exemplify a virtue or vice but establishes the priesthood of Levi. In *T. Asher*, the narrative is replaced by a discourse on the two ways. The future predictions attach special importance to Levi and Judah. They also predict the coming of a messiah who is associated with both of these patriarchs. Inevitably, this brings to mind the expectation of two messiahs, of Aaron and Israel, in the Dead Sea scrolls, and suggests that the *Testaments* were at this point influenced by Jewish traditions related to the scrolls.[74] It should also be noted that the *Testaments* refer frequently to Beliar (cf. Belial in the scrolls), who stands in binary opposition to the angel of peace, and *T. Judah* 20:1 speaks of two spirits, of truth and deceit, that lie in wait for humanity (cf. 1QS 3–4).

While the parallels with the Dead Sea scrolls and the overlap with the Aramaic Levi document suggest that some of the source material of the *Testaments* originated in a Semitic-speaking area, it is now widely agreed that Greek

73 Kugler, *Testaments*, pp. 28–31.
74 A. Hultgård, *L'eschatologie des Testaments des douze patriarches*, 2 vols. (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1977, 1982); A. Hultgård, 'The Ideal "Levite," the Davidic Messiah, and the Saviour Priest in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs', in Collins and Nickelsburg (eds.), *Ideal Figures*, pp. 93–100.

was the original language, and the ethics of the *Testaments* are broadly typical of what we find in the Hellenistic diaspora.[75] But the kind of virtues and vices presented in the *Testaments* are also broadly typical of popular Hellenistic philosophy, which likewise was inherited by early Christianity. It is difficult in such literature to draw a clear line between what is Christian and what derives from Hellenistic Judaism. The same is true for the extended novella, *Joseph and Aseneth*, which is usually and plausibly assigned to Hellenistic Judaism,[76] but which became popular in Christian circles, and whose possible Christian composition is sometimes defended.[77] The novella is primarily concerned with the problem posed by Joseph's marriage to an Egyptian woman, a concern quite typical of Judaism, but much less central to Christianity. Even more difficult is the *Testament of Job*, which is also usually assigned to Egyptian Judaism (Job is called king of Egypt in 28:7),[78] but unlike *Joseph and Aseneth* has no distinctive concerns that point either to Jewish or to Christian provenance.[79]

There is at least one extant testament whose Jewish origin is not in doubt and which was most probably written in either Hebrew or Aramaic.[80] This is the work variously known as the *Testament* or *Assumption of Moses*, which survives in a single fragmentary Latin manuscript.[81] It is a rewriting of the last words and departure of Moses in Deut. 31–4.[82] The first chapter contains the announcement of Moses' forthcoming death, the commissioning of Joshua as his successor, and instructions to preserve the books he is handing on. Then it presents a lengthy revelation of Israel's history in chapters 2–9, followed by a passage that projects the theophany of the divine warrior, which introduces the blessing of Moses in Deut. 33, into the eschatological future. The predictions in chapter 8 seem to reflect the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, and so the *Testament* has been dated to that era.[83] The predictions in chapter 6,

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75 Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, pp. 179–83.

76 J. J. Collins, 'Joseph and Aseneth. Jewish or Christian?', *JSP* 14 (2005), 97–112, reprinted in J. J. Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture*, JSJSup 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 112–27.

77 R. S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph. A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and His Egyptian Wife Reconsidered* (Oxford University Press, 1998); Davila, *Provenance*, pp. 190–4.

78 R. P. Spittler, 'Testament of Job', in *OTP*, vol. i, pp. 829–68; R. Thornhill, 'The Testament of Job', in *AOT*, pp. 617–48.

79 See Davila, *Provenance*, pp. 195–9.   80 Davila, *Provenance*, pp. 149–54.

81 J. Priest, 'Testament of Moses', in *OTP*, vol. i, pp. 919–34; R. H. Charles, 'The Assumption of Moses', rev. J. P. M. Sweet, in *AOT*, pp. 601–6; J. Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses. A Critical Edition with Commentary*, SVTP 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

82 D. J. Harrington, 'Interpreting Israel's History. The Testament of Moses as a Rewriting of Deut 31–34', in G. W. E. Nickelsburg (ed.), *Studies on the Testament of Moses*, SBLSCS 4 (Cambridge, MA: SBL, 1973), pp. 59–68; Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, pp. 55–68; N. J. Hofmann, *Die Assumptio Mosis. Studien zur Rezeption massgültiger Überlieferung*, JSJSup 67 (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

83 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, p. 76.

however, allude to the reign of Herod the Great. Either a document from Maccabean times was interpolated to update it around the turn of the era, or the text was composed around that time and used the events of the Maccabean period typologically to describe the eschatological era.[84]

This text has been variously identified as the *Assumption of Moses* or as the *Testament of Moses*. (Both names are known from ancient Christian lists.) Regardless of the identification, it is appropriately classified as a testament, since it represents the farewell speech of Moses. (The first few lines are missing, as is the conclusion, which may have described his death and burial.) It seeks to demonstrate a theology of history, in two cycles. The first cycle ends with the destruction of Jerusalem, which is surprisingly blamed on the conduct of the northern tribes. Then 'one of those set over them' (usually identified as Daniel, but possibly Ezra) intercedes for them, and the restoration follows. The post-exilic period culminates in another period of wrath and persecution. This time a man named Taxo resolves, with his seven sons, to fast for three days and go into a cave, and die rather than transgress the commandments: 'for if we do this and die, our blood will be avenged before the Lord'. This resolution evokes the words of Deut. 32:43: 'For he will avenge the blood of his children, and take vengeance on his adversaries.'[85] Taxo, it would seem, was hoping to trigger divine vengeance by his voluntary death. His conduct is reminiscent of the martyrs who were killed on the Sabbath in the wilderness according to 1 Macc. 2:29–38.

The theology of the *Testament* is well described as 'covenantal nomism'. Salvation comes through membership of the Jewish people, and requires observance of the commandments. This theology is maintained even in the face of persecution. Taxo's prayer in chapter 10 affirms that Israel will be exalted above the stars, which is probably a hope for resurrection (cf. Dan. 12:3).

The *Testament of Moses*, then, is a vehicle for exhortation, just as surely as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Unlike the Greek *Testaments*, however, it exhorts indirectly, by the theological description of history. There are no discourses on virtues, or direct hortatory speeches. History is presented in the guise of prophecy rather than as explicit recollection. It shares with the *Testaments*, however, the eschatological horizon as one of the factors that shape ethical behaviour in the present.

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84 See the debate on this issue in Nickelsburg, *Studies on the Testament of Moses*.
85 J. Licht, 'Taxo, or the Apocalyptic Doctrine of Vengeance', *JJS* 12 (1961), pp. 95–103.

Prophetic Figures

Expansionistic narratives were not only associated with figures in the Pentateuch. The Syriac apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch), from the end of the first century CE, reports a vision of the angels hiding the temple vessels before the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Bar. 6). A more elaborate form of this legend is found in the Paraleipomena Jeremiou, also known as 4 Baruch.[86] There Jeremiah is told to hide the vessels. Jeremiah is then taken to Babylon with the exiles. Baruch remains in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Another figure in the story, Abimelech, sleeps through the destruction, but awakens after sixty-six years. Baruch then writes to Jeremiah to tell him to prepare the people for their return by excluding Gentiles from their community. The tradition that Jeremiah had hidden some of the temple equipment (the tent, the ark, the altar of incense) is found already in 2 Macc. 2:7.[87] The language of the Paralipomena appears to depend on that of 2 Baruch at a number of points, and so it was presumably written somewhat later.[88] Nickelsburg has noted that, if the destruction is taken typologically to refer to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, the sixty-six years of Abimelech's sleep would point to 136 CE, just after the crushing of the Bar Kokhba revolt, and would perhaps suggest a hope for another restoration.[89] The Paralipomena are certainly Christian in their present form, as they end with a prophecy of Christ, but the substance of the book has many parallels in Jewish tradition,[90] and there may well have been an original Jewish composition.

The *Martyrdom* and *Ascension of Isaiah*

The *Ascension of Isaiah* is a Christian apocalypse that dates from the second century CE.[91] It falls naturally into two parts, a narrative about the death of

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86 S. E. Robinson, '4 Baruch', in *OTP* vol. II, pp. 413–25; R. Thornhill, 'The Paraleipomena of Jeremiah', in *AOT*, pp. 813–33; J. Herzer, *4 Baruch (Paraleipomena Jeremiou)*, SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World 22 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2005).

87 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Narrative Traditions in the Paralipomena of Jeremiah and 2 Baruch', *CBQ* 35 (1973), pp. 60–8.

88 Herzer, *4 Baruch*, pp. xvi–xxiii.

89 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times', in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings*, pp. 72–5.

90 Cf. also Pesiqta Rabbati 26; Herzer, *4 Baruch*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

91 E. Norelli, *Ascensio Isaiae. Commentarius*, Corpus Christianorum. Series Apocryphorum 8, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995); M. A. Knibb, 'Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah', in *OTP*, vol. II, pp. 143–76; J. Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One. The Christology, Social Setting and Theological Context of the Ascension of Isaiah*, JSPSup 18 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); J. Knight, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); R. H. Charles, 'The Ascension of Isaiah', rev. J. M. T. Barton, in *AOT*, pp. 775–812.

Isaiah by being sawn asunder at the command of Manasseh, in chapters 1–5, and the vision, or ascent, of Isaiah in chapters 6–11. The vision is clearly Christian, and attempts to reconstruct an underlying Jewish work have been refuted.[92] Much of the scholarship on the *Ascension*, however, has regarded the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* as a Jewish work, which was admittedly interpolated with a Christian prophecy (sometimes called the *Testament of Hezekiah*) in 3:13–4:22.[93] This view has been called in question by a number of scholars in recent years, and the text is increasingly regarded as entirely a Christian composition, which used sources that cannot now be separated from the extant text.[94]

The narrative begins by telling how Hezekiah, in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, summoned his son Manasseh to instruct him. Isaiah, who was present, prophesied that Manasseh would ignore Hezekiah's instruction and have Isaiah killed, at the prompting of Beliar. The remainder of the narrative describes how the prophecy came to pass. Isaiah and some others flee from Manasseh and hide in the desert, but are discovered by Belchira, a false prophet from Samaria. Isaiah is then arrested and put to death. The vision of Isaiah in the second half of the book is set in the twentieth year of Hezekiah, and describes his ascent through seven heavens. Since the vision is reported after the death of the prophet, there would seem to be a literary seam here.[95] Even if both parts of the *Ascension* are Christian, it is unlikely that the work was composed all at once. The persecution and martyrdom of the prophet had obvious relevance for Christians in the second century CE.[96] The legend has no exegetical basis, but the possibility that Isaiah had lived into Manasseh's reign was intriguing and raised the question of what might have happened to him.

Legends about twenty-three prophets are collected in the *Lives of the Prophets*, which survives in Greek and in several versions.[97] The prophets in question are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, Amos, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Nathan, Ahijah, Joad (the unnamed 'man of God' in 1 Kings 13), Azariah, Elijah, Elisha and Zechariah, son of Jehoiada. The position of Daniel in this sequence

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92 R. G. Hall, 'Isaiah's Ascent to See the Beloved. An Ancient Jewish Source for the Ascension of Isaiah?', *JBL* 113 (1994), pp. 463–84.

93 Knibb, 'Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah', p. 143.

94 M. Pesce, 'Presupposti per l'utilizzazione storica dell' Ascensione di Isaia. Formazione e tradizione del testo; genere leterario; cosmologia angelica', in M. Pesce (ed.), *Isaia, il Diletto e la Chiesa* (Brescia: Paideia, 1983); Norelli, *Ascensio Isaiae*, vol. ii, p. 49; Knight, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, p. 26.

95 Norelli, *Ascensio Isaiae*, vol. ii, p. 49, suggests that chapters 6–11 constituted an older text.

96 Knight, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, p. 65.

97 D. R. A. Hare, 'The Lives of the Prophets', in *OTP* vol. ii, pp. 379–99; A. M. Schwemer, *Studien zu den frühjüdischen Prophetenlegenden Vitae Prophetarum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995–6).

reflects the order of the LXX, and this is also true of the order of the Minor Prophets. Many scholars have argued that this is a Jewish work of the first century CE.[98] There is no mention of the fall of Jerusalem. The interest in the graves of the prophets has been taken to suggest an origin in the land of Israel. Josephus tells us that Herod the Great erected an impressive monument at the tomb of David (*Jewish Antiquities* 16.7.1 [182]) and in the Gospels Jesus berates the scribes and Pharisees for building the tombs of the prophets (Matt. 23:29; Luke 11:47–8). David Satran, however, has made a strong argument that the religious practices reflected in this work, such as fasting for purposes of asceticism in the chapter on Daniel, reflect the spirituality of Byzantine Christianity, and the interest in the prophets accords with the Christian cult of saints and holy men.[99] Some Christian influence on the text is undeniable: Jeremiah, for example, is said to prophesy about a child born from a virgin.[100] This prophecy was apparently associated with Jeremiah rather than Isaiah because Jeremiah went to Egypt. His prophecy is said to be the reason for the Hellenistic Egyptian cult of Isis giving birth.

The anecdotes about the prophets in this work sometimes have a basis in the biblical texts (Daniel abstained from the king's food and fasted in preparation for revelation). More often, they are free invention. Dust from the grave of Jeremiah is said to cure snakebite. Amos was tortured by Amaziah, and killed by his son with a club. The chapter on Habakkuk recounts the legend that he took food to Daniel in Babylon, which is found in more detail in the apocryphal story of Bel and the Dragon.

There also exists an *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*, of which fragments are preserved by the church fathers.[101] The most extensive of these included a parable of a blind man and a lame man, who acted together and were judged together, signifying the union of soul and body.[102] This story has rabbinic parallels. It is apparently associated with Ezekiel because it pertains to resurrection and judgement. The earliest of the Greek fragments of the Ezekiel apocryphon (a call to repentance) is found in 1 Clement, and this requires a date in the first

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98 C. C. Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets*, SBLMS 1 (Philadelphia, PA: SBL, 1946). So also Hare and Schwemer in n. 97.

99 D. Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine. Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

100 Vermes and Goodman, 'Biblical Midrash', p. 784.

101 M. E. Stone, B. G. Wright and D. Satran (eds.), *The Apocryphal Ezekiel*, SBLEJL 18 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2000); J. R. Mueller, *The Five Fragments of the Apocryphon of Ezekiel. A Critical Study*, JSPSup 5 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

102 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.70.5–17; Stone, Wright and Satran, *The Apocryphal Ezekiel*, pp. 9–19.

century CE for the work.[103] Because of its fragmentary preservation, little more can be said about date and provenance. There are pseudo-Ezekiel texts from Qumran which provide expansionistic paraphrases of some passages from the biblical prophet,[104] but it is not apparent that these derive from the same work as the Greek fragments.

Not all apocryphal stories relating to biblical figures were necessarily based on the biblical text at all. The additions to Daniel include the stories of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon.[105] Daniel's role in the Susanna story is inspired by his name, which means 'God is my judge', but bears no relation to his persona in the Hebrew Bible. Bel and the Dragon casts Daniel as a courtier of King Cyrus and includes a variant of the story of Daniel in the lions' den (Dan. 6), but it may have drawn this motif from oral tradition rather than from the canonical book. The pseudo-prophetic texts in the name of Daniel found at Qumran bear a general similarity to the biblical book in so far as Daniel predicts the course of history with an eschatological finale, but they do not reflect the canonical predictions in their details.[106]

Other Genres

The focus of this review has been on narrative expansions of the biblical texts. It is not possible here to trace all the haggadic lore associated with biblical figures in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.[107] Moreover, the extensive related literature in the Dead Sea scrolls and in the surviving literature of Hellenistic Judaism is only noted incidentally here.

By way of conclusion, I would like to point to some other ways in which biblical figures were appropriated in the post-biblical literature.

Several lent their names to revelatory texts that had little if any basis in the canonical scriptures. So Ezra and Baruch became apocalyptic visionaries

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103 Stone, Wright and Satran, *The Apocryphal Ezekiel*, pp. 19–21.
104 D. Dimant (ed.), *Qumran Cave 4. vol. xxi: Parabiblical Texts, Part iv, Pseudo-Prophetic Texts*, DJD 30 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), pp. 7–88.
105 J. J. Collins, *Daniel. A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), pp. 405–39.
106 J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, '243–245. 4Qpseudo-Daniel^{a-c} ar', in G. Brooke et al. (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4 vol. xvii: Parabiblical Texts, Part iii*, DJD 22 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), pp. 95–164. There is an extensive apocryphal Daniel literature in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: L. DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, SVTP 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2005).
107 Much of this material can be found in Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*. See also Stone and Bergren, *Biblical Figures*.

(4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, 3 Baruch),[108] as did Zephaniah,[109] and lesser known figures such as Sedrach.[110] A prophetic text in the name of Elijah was popular in Egypt in the Christian era.[111] The production of pseudepigraphic revelations proliferated down to the Middle Ages.

Other texts were associated with particular figures because of their genre, most obviously Psalms with David, and Wisdom (but also Psalms) with Solomon.

Finally, authors of wisdom texts, which had traditionally shown little interest in the distinctive history of Israel, also found ways to retell the biblical story. Ben Sira included in his book a lengthy 'Praise of the Fathers', from Adam to Simon the High Priest (but excluding Ezra!), emphasising their accomplishments on behalf of their people (Sir. 44–50).[112] The Wisdom of Solomon devotes the second half of the book (chapters 10–19) to a thinly veiled summary of the biblical history down to the exodus, as a paradigmatic example of God's dealings with the just and the wicked.[113]

In all of this, the limited corpus of authoritative writings that we know as the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament provided the literary context within which literary and religious imaginations flourished for centuries. Often the biblical texts seem only to have served as jumping off points, or to have provided gaps in familiar stories that gave space for invention. Nonetheless, the later authors continued to hang their new stories on biblical pegs, and thereby constructed a tradition with a sense of continuity.

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108 Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, pp. 194–225; 248–51. On the evolution of the figure of Ezra, see M. E. Stone, 'The Metamorphosis of Ezra. Jewish Apocalypse and Medieval Vision', *JTS* 33 (1982), 1–18; R. A. Kraft, '"Ezra" Materials in Judaism and Christianity', *ANRW* II. 19.1 (1979), 119–36. On Baruch see J. E. Wright, *Baruch ben Neriah. From Biblical Scribe to Apocalyptic Seer* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003); J. E. Wright, 'Baruch. His Evolution from Scribe to Apocalyptic Seer', in Stone and Bergren (eds.), *Biblical Figures*, pp. 264–89.
109 O. S. Wintermute, 'Apocalypse of Zephaniah', in *OTP* vol. I, pp. 497–515; K. H. Kuhn, 'The Apocalypse of Zephaniah and an Anonymous Apocalypse', in *AOT*, pp. 915–25.
110 S. Agourides, 'Apocalypse of Sedrach', in *OTP*, vol. I, pp. 605–13; R. J. H. Shutt, 'The Apocalypse of Sedrach', in *AOT*, pp. 953–66.
111 O. S. Wintermute, 'Apocalypse of Elijah', in *OTP*, vol. I, pp. 721–53; K. H. Kuhn, 'The Apocalypse of Elijah', in *AOT*, pp. 753–73.
112 B. L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic. Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers* (University of Chicago Press, 1986).
113 B. L. Mack, 'Imitatio Mosis. Patterns of Cosmology and Soteriology in the Hellenistic Synagogue', *Studia Philonica* I (1972), pp. 27–55.

From inner-biblical interpretation to rabbinic exegesis

GÜNTER STEMBERGER

The interpretation of biblical texts began long before the Bible or its individual books received their final redaction. As a matter of fact, interpretation actively contributed to their development and growth. This fundamental role of inner-biblical interpretation was recognised long ago. Already in 1832, Leopold Zunz considered the books of Chronicles as the result of the interpretation of the books of Samuel and Kings.[1] Abraham Geiger went even further and emphasised the central role that rewriting and interpretation played in the formation of the Bible.[2] Subsequent research unfolded the role of interpretation in the development of biblical tradition in an ever more systematic and comprehensive way.[3] The formerly assumed clear opposition between the closed text and its interpretation thus disappeared to a great extent; interpretation had an essential part in the growth and final shape of the Bible.

The reinterpretation of earlier texts is nearly ubiquitous in the Hebrew Bible and not limited to particular materials. It is to be found in legal texts as well as in historical or prophetic writings and other texts as well. Outstanding as reinterpretation of earlier biblical laws is the reuse of the book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:19–23:33) in Deut. 12–26. To give just one example, Exod. 23:4 commands: 'When you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you shall bring it back.' Deut. 22:1–3 takes this up, but limits the command to the animal of a fellow Israelite: 'You shall not watch your neighbour's ox or sheep straying away and ignore them; you shall take them back to their owner.' It adds that if the owner resides far away or is unknown to the finder, he has to care for the animal in his own house until the owner claims it, and then generalises: 'You shall do the same with a neighbour's

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1 Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge*, pp. 36–38.
2 A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel* (Breslau: J. Hainauer, 1857), pp. 72–73.
3 See the magisterial synthesis offered by Fishbane in *Biblical Interpretation*. The results of the book are summarised in M. Fishbane, 'Inner-Biblical Exegesis', in Saebø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible*, pp. 33–48.

donkey; you shall do the same with a neighbour's garment; and you shall do the same with anything else that your neighbour loses and you find. You may not withhold your help.'

The same concern for comprehensiveness is to be found in other legal reinterpretations, too. An interesting case is Lev. 4 in comparison with Num. 15. Leviticus speaks of sin offerings if somebody has sinned unintentionally. Numbers extends this law to all possible infringements of the laws given by the Lord to Moses or those which he will give in the future: 'But if you unintentionally fail to observe all these commandments that the Lord has spoken to Moses – everything that the Lord has commanded you by Moses, from the day the Lord gave commandment and thereafter, throughout your generations', including not only Israelites, but also 'the aliens residing among them' (15:22–6). The anonymous interpreter explicitly distinguishes his interpretation from what God has commanded Moses: all laws of the Torah, whatever their origin, are included. The revelation of divine commandments is not limited to Mt Sinai, but may occur at any time, 'throughout your generations'.[4]

Earlier laws have been clarified and made more stringent not only within the Torah, but also in prophetic texts. Thus the Sabbath law of Deut. 5:12–14 is expanded in Jer. 17:21–2:

> Thus says the Lord: For the sake of your lives, take care that you do not bear a burden on the sabbath day or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the sabbath or do any work, but keep the sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors.

The prophet claims for his extension of the law the same divine authority as for the original law. The closing remark 'as I commanded your ancestors' declares the prophet's own interpretation as a quotation of the divine law. The prophet claims that his actualising interpretation is God's word revealed to him. Revelation continues in the inspired interpretation.

A final legal example concerns the removal of a seeming contradiction within the Torah. Exod. 12:9 clearly commands regarding the paschal lamb: 'Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water [*mevushal ba-mayim*], but roasted over the fire', whereas in Deut. 16:7 we read: 'You shall cook it [*u-vishalta*]', traditionally understood as 'You shall roast it.' In the context of the description of the Passover celebrated by King Josiah in Jerusalem, 2 Chron. 35:13 harmonises the two versions and clarifies the ambiguous expression: 'They

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4 For details see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 190–4.

roasted the passover lamb with fire [*wa-yevashlu ha-pesach ba-esh*] according to the ordinance.'

Prophetical texts always needed reinterpretation and actualisation. Later texts explicitly take up earlier ones and confirm them. A fine example is Ezra 38:17: 'Thus says the Lord God: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them?' It clearly refers back to Jer. 6:22: 'Thus says the Lord: See, a people is coming from the land of the north, a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth.' More problematic were prophetical announcements which were not fulfilled, at least not in their obvious understanding. The best-known example is the interpretation of the seventy years of Jer. 25:11–12 in Dan. 9:2: 'I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah, must be fulfilled for the devastation of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.' Only after long prayers and confession of sins, Daniel is given the right understanding by the angel Gabriel: 'So consider the word and understand the vision: Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place' (9:23-24). Not years, but weeks of years were meant.

Such clear cases of reinterpretation call the attention of recent research, but even more so do the use of biblical language and biblical ideas by later authors, allusions to earlier texts and traditional phrases which dominate many prophetic texts but which are frequent in other biblical genres as well, for instance in the Psalms and in sapiential texts. This lively discussion makes it clear how much the literary growth of the biblical books has always been determined by the knowledge of a great deal of earlier texts and how their language was considered an authoritative reservoir on which later biblical writers could draw.[5]

5 See, among other recent publications: L. Eslinger, 'Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion. The Question of Category', *VT* 42 (1992), 47–58; M. Fishbane, 'Inner-Biblical Interpretation and the Development of Tradition', in M. Oeming, K. Schmid and M. Welker (eds.), *Das Alte Testament und die Kultur der Moderne. Beiträge des Symposiums . . . anlässlich des 100. Geburtstags Gerhard von Rads* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), pp. 25–35; M. A. Lyons, 'Marking Innerbiblical Allusion in the Book of Ezekiel', *Bib* 88 (2007), 245–50; R. Nurmela, *The Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken. Inner-Biblical Allusions in Second and Third Isaiah* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006); J. M. Leonard, 'Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusion. Psalm 78 as a Test Case', *JBL* 127 (2008), 241–65; D. Rom-Shiloni, 'Facing Destruction and Exile: Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Jeremiah and Ezekiel', *ZAW* 117 (2005), 189–205; J. Schaper, 'Rereading the Law. Inner-Biblical Exegesis of Divine Oracles in Ezechiel 44 and Isaiah 56', in B. M. Levinson and E. Otto (eds.), *Recht und Ethik im Alten Testament* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), pp. 124–44.

Biblical and parabiblical texts discovered in Qumran made it clear that the stabilisation of the biblical text took much longer than had originally been assumed.[6] A certain fluidity of the biblical text, be it sometimes only in minor details, continued until the last decades of the Second Temple period. The phenomenon of inner-biblical interpretation thus can be observed until close to the beginnings of the rabbinic period. This holds especially true if we are prepared to accept the rabbinic chain of tradition, as outlined in tractate Avot, which claims Simon the Just and the pairs following him as the forerunners of the rabbis. In this case the scholarly activity of the scribes and exegetes which led up to the rabbis would have begun before the book of Daniel was redacted and would have accompanied the final stages of the consolidation of the biblical text.

It would certainly oversimplify the history if we were to assume an unbroken continuity between inner-biblical and rabbinic interpretation. Rabbinic exegesis obviously builds on a much larger and more varied tradition of interpretation. The exegetical traditions visible in the literature of the Second Temple period, in apocalypses and other writings commonly called 'pseudepigrapha', in many texts from Qumran, but also in Philo and Josephus, testify to an ongoing serious study of the biblical texts and their interpretations.[7] Many of the methods and attitudes behind these writings were certainly common to the Jewish world of their time, and many individual traditions within these texts reappear in later rabbinic texts. Differences and continuities between the use of the Bible in Qumran and in rabbinic texts have been much discussed in recent times, regarding parallel or contrasting exegetical traditions as well as the hermeneutical approach.[8] There are many interpretative traditions common to Josephus and rabbinic midrash[9], even more so between the Pseudo-Philonic *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* (*LAB*) and rabbinic texts;[10] many of them have been pointed out in recent

6 See Ulrich and Campbell in the present volume, pp. 83–104 and 242–66.
7 See Collins, Campbell and Horbury in the present volume, pp. 165–89, 242–66 and 289–320.
8 See, for example, P. Mandel, 'Midrashic Exegesis and its Precedents in the Dead Sea Scrolls', *DSD* 8 (2001), 149–168; A. Yadin, '4QMMT, Rabbi Ishmael, and the Origins of Legal Midrash', *DSD* 10 (2003), 130–49; S. D. Fraade, A. Shemesh and R. A. Clements, (eds.), *Rabbinic Perspectives. Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).
9 Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*.
10 Just a few examples: *LAB* 9:10 writes of a prophetic dream-vision in which Miriam sees that the as yet unborn Moses will save God's people and be its leader; in Mekhilta Shirata 10 Miriam prophetically tells her father: 'You are going to produce a son who will arise and save Israel from the power of Egypt'; the deliberations of the Israelites at the Red Sea as to what they should do in the face of the approaching Egyptians (*LAB* 10:3) have a close parallel in Mekhilta Beshallah 3; the three things that God gave to his people on account of three persons – the well of water for Miriam, the pillar of cloud for Aaron and the manna for Moses – and took away from them after

commentaries,[11] but a systematic study is still urgently needed. It is difficult to say how much this is due to a common body of exegetical traditions and the knowledge of divergent interpretations among other groups in Judaism or to what could be developed independently when working with the biblical text.[12] While much work has been done on the history of individual exegetical traditions, the history of exegetical approaches and methods and lines of continuity and change between the Second Temple period and after 70 is still considerably less explored.[13] Much remains to be done.

Whatever the continuity of rabbinic exegesis with earlier traditions, there is an essential difference which cannot be overestimated. In the latter stages of the Second Temple period the biblical text became more and more stable; there was also a growing consensus around what belonged to the Bible and what did not. But only the rabbis insisted on an absolutely fixed and unchangeable biblical text – in practice and not only in theory, as was the case with Josephus – and on a clearly defined biblical canon (despite some uncertainties on its fringes), at least in practice while the term or perhaps even the concept did not exist. This is essential for rabbinic exegesis.

Bible in Mishnah and Tosefta

Mishnah Yadaim discusses which books render the hands unclean. In m. Yadaim 3:5 we read:

> All the Holy Scriptures render the hands unclean. The Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes render the hands unclean. R. Judah says: The Song of Songs renders the hands unclean, but about Ecclesiastes there is dissension. R. Jose says: Ecclesiastes does not render the hands unclean, and about the Song of Songs there is dissension . . . R. Simeon b. Azzai said: I have heard a tradition from the seventy-two elders on the day when they made R. Eleazar b. Azariah head of the college [of Sages] that the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes render the hands unclean. R. Akiba said: God forbid! – no man in Israel ever disputed about the Song of Songs [that he should say] that it does not render the hands

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these three died (*LAB* 20:8) has a nearly literal parallel in Tosefta Sotah 11:8. These examples could be multiplied.

11 See H. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber antiquitatum biblicarum. With Latin Text and English Translation*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

12 A pioneering work in the field was Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*. It has been criticised for its sometime too facile assumption of exegetical continuity and its use of the targumic tradition as mediating between the Second Temple and the rabbinic world. In spite of the methodical advances in the last fifty years, this still remains an important contribution.

13 Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions* is an important contribution. Its conclusions suffer to some extent from a too facile acceptance of attributions for the dating of rabbinic texts.

unclean, for all the ages are not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies.[14]

This discussion does not directly deal with the question of the biblical canon: only books which are written in Hebrew and on parchment and fulfil certain other conditions render the hands unclean, are holy. The same text written on a wooden tablet or in another alphabet does not; it cannot be used in the liturgy. But all books which, if written correctly, render the hands unclean, must belong to what later was defined as the biblical canon.[15] Only some texts of the Hagiographa are still discussed by the rabbis in Yavneh, but in practice the canon of the Hebrew Bible as we know it is already taken for granted. Also, the text has already been fixed, down to the smallest details of orthography, as is clear from the statement that the minimum amount of text which renders the hands unclean is eighty-five letters, corresponding to the length of the shortest textual unit, Num. 10:35f.

These two facts – a closed canon of biblical books and an absolutely fixed text of these books – are the basis of the rabbinic approach to the Bible.

The Mishnah as the founding document of rabbinic Judaism, redacted about 220 CE under the sponsorship of Judah ha-Nasi, has no uniform relationship with the Bible, as is clearly stated in m. Ḥag. 1:8:

> [The rules about] release from vows hover in the air and have naught to support them; the rules about the Sabbath, Festal-offerings, and Sacrilege are as mountains hanging by a hair, for [teaching of] Scripture [thereon] is scanty and the rules many; the [rules about] cases [concerning property] and the [Temple-]Service, and the rules about what is clean and unclean and the forbidden degrees, they have that which supports them, and it is they that are the essentials of the Law.[16]

Parts of the mishnaic law are not at all or only loosely connected with the Torah; others have some explicit basis in the Torah, but vastly expand and systematise it in a way which could never be expected on the basis of the biblical text; still other parts paraphrase and develop biblical law. As Jacob M. Ephrati understands the text, it was polemical against the attempt of the rabbis at Yavneh to teach *halakhah* systematically; what constitutes biblical teaching needs no systematic reorganisation.[17] But the redactors of the

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14 H. Danby, *The Mishnah. Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 781–2.
15 See Barton in the present volume, pp. 145–64.   16 Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 212.
17 J. M. Ephrati, 'On the Literary Sources of the Mishnah' [in Hebrew], *Bar-Ilan* 11 (1973), 49–68.

Mishnah, who included it in their text, understood it positively as a simple declaration of the relationship of *halakhah* to scripture.

It remains a fact that the Mishnah only rarely explicitly quotes from scripture; a number of such quotations have been added only in the course of transmission of the text. The Mishnah clearly does not want to look like a commentary on scripture; it does not continue the old practice of inner-biblical interpretation and does not claim early origins for its *halakhot* in direct continuation of the biblical law. As Jacob Neusner states it,

> Scripture plays little role in the Mishnaic system. The Mishnah rarely cites a verse of Scripture, refers to Scripture as an entity, links its own ideas to those of Scripture, or lays claim to originate in what Scripture has said, even by indirect or remote allusion to a Scriptural verse of teaching. So, superficially, the Mishnah is totally indifferent to Scripture. That impression, moreover, is reinforced by the traits of the language of the Mishnah. The framers of Mishnaic discourse never attempt to imitate the language of Scripture . . . The very redactional structure of Scripture, found so serviceable by the writer of the Temple scroll, is of no interest whatever to the organizers of the Mishnah and its tractates, except in a few cases (Yoma, Pesahim).[18]

The Mishnah does not want to appear as a prolongation or interpretation of scripture; it is not a commentary on the Torah, but is itself part of the Torah, as tractate Avot claims: 'Moses received Torah from Sinai' (m. Avot 1:1) – not simply *the* Torah, but Torah in its broader meaning, including the oral Torah of the Mishnah which also goes back to Sinai. Thus there is no need for legitimation in the written Torah.

But this mishnaic independence of scripture is only part of the picture. The Mishnah is thematically organised and does not follow the order of the biblical text, and its style and language is not biblical. But nevertheless it frequently intersects with the Torah; many of its *halakhot* silently presuppose knowledge of the Torah and cannot be understood without it. Shaye Cohen can even write: 'Like God in the world, the Torah in the Mishnah is Omnipresent yet Invisible (or, to be a little more accurate, almost Omnipresent and usually invisible).'[19] As already said, direct quotations are not frequent if measured by the length of the document, but there are a considerable number of them. Many of them occur at the end of a chapter or a tractate where they might

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18 Neusner, *Judaism*, p. 217. See also J. Neusner, 'The Mishnah and Scripture', in his, *The Mishnah. Religious Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 1–156; J. Neusner, *Is Scripture the Origin of the Halakhah?* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).
19 S. J. D. Cohen, 'Judaean Legal Tradition and Halakhah of the Mishnah', in Fonrobert and Jaffee (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 121–143, at p. 125.

have been added only later on; many are concentrated in tractate Sotah, which is much less halakhic than other tractates of the Mishnah. There are chapters which topically coincide with a biblical text and where biblical quotations come in quite naturally, as for example in m. Yevamot 12, which describes the rite of the *halitzah* in accord with Deut. 25:7-10. But more frequently the choice of a specific biblical text depends on the decision of the redactor of a mishnaic textual unit. Even where the laws regarding the Sabbath or the celebration of festivals seem to have an obvious biblical basis, it depends on the author which potentially relevant biblical texts are used; his choice is normally already determined by his interpretation of the text. Alexander Samely states it clearly:

> The fact that in the Mishnah the explication of Scripture is embedded in a thematically arranged discourse (not in a discourse whose topic is the text of Scripture) is of profound importance in reconstructing the hermeneutic choices. It imparts a thematic orientation on nearly all Scripture use, and this directly accounts for a number of features often considered typical of rabbinic hermeneutics in general. In *positioning* a biblical quotation within the Mishnaic discourse, the author-editors of the Mishnah have to decide on the topic to which it is relevant – which is often, as we shall see, the fundamental hermeneutic decision to take.[20]

A number of hermeneutic approaches to the biblical text in the Mishnah are due to this secondary place of scripture in it. The strong segmentation of a biblical text, cutting it down into small units which are no longer bound to their context, creates a wide range of possibilities as to the use of such small segments of biblical text: 'The Mishnah, in surrounding the segment with different co-text, can thus appoint a fresh topic, reference, or meaning for the biblical words.'[21] In extreme cases, this may lead to the use of biblical expressions as 'colours' with which to paint one's own painting, to 'writing with scripture' and not on scripture.[22] But in spite of this special aspect of the use of scripture in the Mishnah (as later in many talmudic texts), many aspects of the mishnaic hermeneutics of the Bible are similar to or the same as in the Midrash.

The Tosefta, normally considered a 'supplement' to the Mishnah – although parts of it may be earlier – has the same structure and topical outline, but is double the size of the Mishnah. It frequently supplies the biblical prooftexts

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20 Samely, *Rabbinic Interpretation*, p. 19.
21 Samely, *Rabbinic Interpretation*, p. 30. The whole volume is fundamental for the understanding of the use of the Bible in the Mishnah.
22 See Neusner and Green, *Writing with Scripture*.

missing in the parallel Mishnah, but in general it follows the same approach to the Torah.

Halakhic midrashim

Parallel to the redaction of the Mishnah and the Tosefta, the early Palestinian rabbis devoted themselves to the interpretation of the Torah, more exactly of the books of Exodus to Deuteronomy. The biblical foundation of the *halakhah* was the primary purpose of these midrashim.[23] Since the book of Genesis contains little material of explicitly halakhic interest, it was omitted from this series of early rabbinic commentaries on the Bible. The rabbis quoted in these midrashim, their language, and above all their close proximity to the Mishnah and the Tosefta allows us to date them roughly somewhere in the third century, although a more precise dating of their different stages of redaction is much more complicated and has to be differentiated for each book. These midrashim as we have them contain many explicit quotations of the Mishnah and close parallels to the Tosefta. Thus they must be later, although early stages of redaction most probably antedate these works or occurred at the same time, in many cases they even come from the same rabbis.

For each of the four books of the Torah mentioned above, one halakhic midrash has survived in full, but several such midrashim must have existed, as is evident from medieval quotations and midrashic anthologies, most importantly the Yalqut Shim'oni (thirteenth century, Europe) and the Midrash ha-Gadol (thirteenth or fourteenth century, Yemen). The latter became known in Europe only in the late nineteenth century; together with fragments from the Cairo Genizah, discovered at about the same period, it became the basis for the recovery of at least parts of these lost midrashim. Thus we are now in possession of two midrashim each for the books of Exodus and Numbers; for the book of Deuteronomy, the remnants of even a third midrash were recently discovered by Menahem Kahana.[24]

David Hoffmann postulated that these midrashim derived from two schools of interpretation, the school of Aqiva and that of his contemporary Ishmael (early second century CE).[25] To Ishmael is attributed the principle, 'The Torah speaks in human language' (Sifre Numbers §112); the biblical text thus has to be interpreted in the same way as any human writing. R. Aqiva, on the other

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23 An excellent up-to-date survey is offered by Kahana, 'The Halakhic Midrashim', pp. 3–105.
24 M. I. Kahana, *Sifre Zuta on Deuteronomy. Citations from a New Tannaitic Midrash* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002).
25 D. Hoffmann, *Zur Einleitung in die halachischen Midraschim* (Berlin: M. Driesner, 1887).

hand, is said to have propagated the hermeneutical exploitation of the Bible's stylistic peculiarities and of every linguistic detail not absolutely necessary for the information conveyed by the text, considering it as an encoded message. Hoffmann's criteria for assigning each midrash to a school are the names of the cited teachers and anonymous sentences attributed in the Talmudim to the school of Ishmael, the technical terminology and differences in exegetical method. Hoffmann assigned the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael on Exodus, Sifre Numbers and the fragmentary Midrash Tannaim on Deuteronomy, reconstructed by him, to the school of R. Ishmael; Sifra on Leviticus and Sifre Deuteronomy, as well as the fragmentary midrashim Mekhilta de-R. Shim'on ben Yohai on Exodus and Sifre Zutta on Numbers, belong in his opinion to the school of Aqiva.

The pioneering work of Hoffmann still provides the basic structure of our approach to the halakhic midrashim; but much of it has come under criticism and has been refined in the past decades. Exegetical differences between Ishmael and Aqiva cannot be verified, nor can their foundation of schools of interpretation. Mekhilta and Sifre Numbers, which are assumed to belong to the school of R. Ishmael, use only two of the thirteen rules (*middot*) attributed to R. Ishmael; this list of rules is thus hardly characteristic of those midrashim. The two groups of halakhic midrashim favour the traditions of R. Aqiva or R. Ishmael or their students, but both include traditions from the other side as well. The haggadic material is common to both groups of midrashim. Their most essential difference is the technical school terminology.[26]

Among the halakhic midrashim, Sifra (Aramaic: 'the book') on Leviticus is the only midrash which covers the whole biblical book from beginning to end, since its content is almost completely of a legal nature. The only narrative text in the book, Lev. 8:1–10:7, dealing with the priestly consecration of Aaron and his sons and their inaugural service, was commented upon in an originally independent work, the Mekhilta de-Milluim, which only later became part of Sifra; this was also the case with the commentary on Lev. 18:6–23 and 20:9–21 (laws dealing with forbidden sexual relations), the Mekhilta de-Arayot,

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26 This does not rule out that part of this terminology has hermeneutical relevance. Yadin, in *Scripture as Logos* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), studies the terminology used in the Mekhilta and Sifre Numbers regarding the Bible and shows that they systematically distinguish between *Torah* (*amrah torah*, *dibberah torah*, etc.) and *ha-katuv* (*maggid ha-katuv*, *ba ha-katuv lelammedkha*, etc.): 'Scripture itself – qua HA-KATUV – engages in and thus justifies precisely this type of interpretation . . . Scripture must become its own interpreter, it must become midrash' (p. 33). How much this idea is specific to these midrashim still has to be studied (*dibberah torah*, for example, occurs only in the Mekhilta de-R. Shim'on ben Yohai, never in the Mekhilta de R. Ishmael).

originally a small separate work. Sifra is thus not a unitary work but composed of diverse materials.

The basic form of the midrash was a simple commentary on the biblical text. As a rule, this text is anonymous. It analyses the meaning of words and the halakhic relevance of a biblical verse, referring to comparable biblical texts and continuously asking what a biblical expression includes or excludes in order to define what exactly the biblical text demands.

This text was supplemented by a syllogistic commentary which uses a sequence of questions and answers in order to test the logical possibilities and inner coherence of an interpretation. It frequently speaks in the first person singular and directly addresses the reader in the second person, thus developing a dialogue between the midrashist and his reader. This commentary, with its long and convoluted sequences of logical possibilities and their refutation or specification by means of the final appeal to a biblical text, is the specific hallmark of Sifra, and to a lesser extent of the other halakhic midrashim. A third literary stratum of the text consists of numerous parallels with the Mishnah and the Tosefta, frequently introduced as direct quotations.

Jacob Neusner explained the coexistence of these quite distinct strata in Sifra as part of a thorough critique of the Mishnah and its system of logical classification of reality. Sifra demonstrates the biblical foundations of much of Mishnaic law and at the same time offers an exercise in the possibilities and limitations of logical analysis of the biblical text. Not logic, but only a close study of the biblical text leads to valid results.[27] Neusner offers a unified understanding of the three characteristic literary structures of Sifra, which is attractive because of its simplicity. It is, however, possible to explain the three literary structures of the text as three historical strata – a simple commentary on the biblical text which was later supplemented by the syllogistic sections and finally enriched by many quotations from the Mishnah. If we understand it this way, Sifra was never intended as a polemic against an apparently unbiblical Mishnah. On the contrary: the quotations from the Mishnah were added in order to demonstrate that the Mishnah is not to be seen as an unbiblical systematisation of the *halakhah*, but is fully based on the midrash and in full agreement with it. Thus Sifra so frequently first offers a close reading of the biblical text and then attaches a text of the Mishnah, introduced by the formula: 'On the basis [of this verse] they said'. According to this reading, the biblical foundation of the Mishnah was always there; Sifra only made it explicit.

27 Neusner, *Uniting the Dual Torah*.

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The other halakhic midrashim also have a certain amount of dialectic passages and quotations from the Mishnah, but to a much lesser extent than Sifra; in Sifre Zutta we do not even find a single clear quotation from the Mishnah. Since the books of Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy contain a large amount of narrative materials, the midrashim on them cannot be purely halakhic. The *halakhah* remains the primary interest; they therefore do not start with the beginnings of the biblical books, but centre on the legal sections. Sifre Numbers thus begins with Num. 5:1, the first legal portion of the book, and ends at 31:24; of the following chapters only 35:9–34 (the cities of asylum) receives a commentary. Longer narrative units like Num. 13–14 (the story of the spies and the reaction of Israel at hearing their report) or 16–17 (the revolt of Korah, Dathan and Abiram) are completely omitted, but in the portions that are treated the narrative parts are included. We thus find a large amount of *haggadah*. Sifre Deuteronomy comments on Deut. 1, the historical prologue of the book, then continues with 3:23–29, Moses' vision of the promised land, and 6:4–9, the *Shema Israel*. But the legal core of the book, Deut. 12–26, stands at the centre: it alone receives a running commentary. Of the later chapters, only 31:14–32:34 (the end of Moses' life and his final song) is commented upon; the midrash thus receives a long haggadic conclusion.[28]

The Mekhilta of R. Ishmael also concentrates on the legal parts of the book of Exodus, commenting on Exod. 12:1–23:19, 31:12–17 and 35:1–3 (i.e. the central part from the Pesah celebration before leaving Egypt up to the end of the legal section of the book); the isolated later passages deal with the Sabbath. Thus the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt, Moses' call and his dealings with Pharaoh are completely omitted. Parts of Exod. 25–30 are dealt with elsewhere – the construction of the sanctuary is commented upon in the Baraita de-Melekhet ha-Mishkan;[29] the consecration of the priests is the object of the Mekhilta de-Milluim which, as already mentioned, has been included in Sifra because of the parallel to this section in Lev. 8. The embarrassing scene of the golden calf (Exod. 32) was thus also avoided.

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28 D. Börner-Klein has published a detailed history of the redaction of Sifre Numbers (neglecting, however, to differentiate the parts which clearly do not belong to the main text of the 'school of Aqiva'): *Der Midrasch Sifre zu Numeri. Übersetzt und erklärt. Teil II: Zur Redaktionsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1997). The literary development of Sifre Deuteronomy has not yet been analysed in greater detail; but we have a fine study of its exegetical approach: S. D. Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary. Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).
29 R. S. Kirschner, *Baraita DeMelekhet ha-Mishkan. A Critical Edition with Introduction and Translation* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992).

But even so the greater part of the Mekhilta is still haggadic and thematically wide-ranging; Jacob Neusner has qualified it as Judaism's first scriptural encyclopaedia.[30]

The Mekhilta belongs to the 'school of R. Ishmael', but the exegetical methods and approaches to be found in it are not at all limited to interpreting the text as written in human language (i.e. to literal exegesis). Allegorical and typological interpretation is very common, as are interpretations based on methods normally connected with the name of R. Aqiva. As to the date of the midrash, the traditional assumption of a late Tannaitic or third century origin has been challenged by Ben Zion Wacholder, who claims that the Mekhilta was written in the eighth century in Egypt (or elsewhere in North Africa) and is a pseudepigraphic work.[31] This position has been rejected with good arguments in favour of the traditional date; but it remains that the Mekhilta does not quite fit the picture of the other halakhic midrashim and in many details presents positions for which it is by far the earliest witness; this has to be explained and requires further study.

As to the halakhic midrashim reconstructed on the basis of fragments from the Genizah and quotations in later collections, it is much more difficult to date them and to describe their hermeneutic positions. They all seem to be younger than the full midrashim on the same biblical books, the only exception being Sifre Zutta on Numbers, which not only has no clear parallels with Mishnah and Tosefta, but which for other reasons too stands alone and might be a very early text, perhaps contemporaneous with the Mishnah.

Talmudim and haggadic midrashim

Following the line of the Tosefta, which already tended to supplement mishnaic *halakhot* with biblical proof texts, both Talmudim understand it as part of their task in commenting on the Mishnah to show that the laws of the Mishnah are based on the Bible. Jacob Neusner writes of the Palestinian Talmud:

> The Talmud's sages . . . constantly cite verses of Scripture when reading statements of the Mishnah. These they read in their own way. References to specific verses of Scripture are as uncommon in the Mishnah as they are routine in the Talmud. For the framers of the Talmud, certainty for the Mishnah's rules

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30 J. Neusner, *Mekhilta according to Rabbi Ishmael. An Introduction to Judaism's First Scriptural Encyclopaedia* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988).
31 B. Z. Wacholder, 'The date of the Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael', *HUCA* 39 (1968), 117–44.

depended upon adducing scriptural proof texts. The entire system . . . thus is seen to rest upon the written revelation of God to Moses at Sinai, and on that alone.[32]

The same can be said of the Babylonian Talmud. The main difference between the two Talmudim in this regard is that, apart from connecting mishnaic rules with the Torah, the Yerushalmi contains only little midrashic material, most of it very brief, because in Palestine midrashic writings were cultivated as an independent literary genre. But in Babylonia, where the Talmud turned out to become the only repository of all kinds of traditions, more or less extensive midrashim were also integrated into its framework. The Bavli contains longer and continuous midrashim whose *Sitz im Leben* is not the exegesis of the Mishnah but the interpretation of scripture as such. In these cases we may assume fully formulated, mostly written units of tradition, which the redactors of the Bavli received as completed texts and incorporated into the framework of Mishnah interpretation. While some of them build on earlier Palestinian traditions, there are extensive units clearly composed in Babylonia and characterised by Babylonian interests. The most important examples are the midrash on the book of Esther in b. Megillah 10a–17b and that on Exodus 1–2 and other biblical texts in b. Sotah 9b–14a.[33] The hermeneutic approach to biblical texts in the Talmudim is not uniform, but in general conforms to what is known from the halakhic midrashim where these or related materials are quoted, or from the later midrash tradition.

The independent midrashic writings are all of Palestinian origin, except some very late texts. The early period concentrated, as already stated, on the legal aspects of Exodus to Deuteronomy; other biblical books and other aspects of the same books were certainly also studied in this period, but only from the fifth century onwards do we find a series of new midrashim. They cover the whole Pentateuch and the five *megillot* (Lamentations, Canticles, Ruth and Esther receive their midrashim in the fifth to sixth centuries; the midrash on Qoheleth was authored much later, in the ninth century). There are no midrashim on the prophetic books (in the Jewish understanding of the word, i.e. including Joshua, Judges, the books of Samuel and Kings) or on

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32 J. Neusner, *Judaism in Society. The Evidence of the Yerushalmi* (Chicago University Press, 1983), p. 79.

33 D. Börner-Klein, *Eine babylonische Auslegung der Ester-Geschichte* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1991); E. Segal, *The Babylonian Esther Midrash. A Critical Commentary*, 3 vols. (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1994); G. Stemberger, 'Midrasch in Babylonien. Am Beispiel von Sota 9b-14a', *Henoch* 10 (1988) 183–203; D. Kraemer, 'Scripture Commentary in the Babylonian Talmud. Primary or Secondary Phenomenon', *AJSR* 14 (1989), 1–15.

the Hagiographa, apart from the *megillot*, Proverbs and Psalms – but these two midrashim on Proverbs and Psalms are again very late.

We distinguish between exegetical and homiletical midrashim. The exegetical midrash expounds the biblical text verse by verse and often word by word and deals with all kinds of problems of the text, including questions of language or the correct reading; it frequently includes alternative interpretations. All halakhic midrashim belong to this group, as do many of the later midrashic works. The homiletical midrash is based on the weekly Torah readings (*seder* or, in Babylonian usage, *parashah*) or the readings for the festivals of the year; it normally deals only with the first two or three verses of the weekly reading. It tries to connect them with some main expressions or ideas of the prophetic reading (*haftarah*) of the day, which normally is also exploited in the conclusion of the sermon with its eschatological message. Verses from the Hagiographa, mainly Psalms or Proverbs, are used in the introduction of the sermon, the *petiḥah* ('opening'), leading up to the beginning of the Torah reading. Thus a homiletic midrash is much more selective regarding the texts it interprets, but on the other hand includes many texts from other parts of the Bible. Its principal objective is edification.

Our homiletic midrashim do not reproduce actual synagogue sermons; sometimes they may be literary reworkings and abridgements of such sermons, combining a variety of possible motifs; in most cases they were probably developed directly in the schools and served only later for the preparation of sermons. It is nearly impossible to reconstruct the actual preaching practice in the Late Antique synagogues on the basis of the midrashim we have.[34]

Some literary features of the homiletic midrash were taken over into exegetical midrashim as well, most prominently the *petiḥah*, which frequently serves as an introduction to a midrash and its single chapters. The distinction between exegetical and homiletic midrashim is thus not as clear-cut as might be expected.

The selection of books which receive a midrash depends to some extent on which books are used in the synagogue. This is first of all the Torah, which is read completely as *lectio continua* – although interrupted for certain festivals and Sabbaths – within three and a half to four years in Palestine, within a single year in Babylonia. The second reading is from the prophets, but only in selected portions which thematically should fit the Torah reading. Only

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34 G. Stemberger, 'The Derashah in Rabbinic Times', in A. Deeg, W. Homolka, H.-G. Schöttler (eds.), *Preaching in Judaism and Christianity. Encounters and Developments* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), pp. 7–21.

on certain days of the year, mainly on Sabbaths around the ninth of Av, the prophetic reading takes the lead and is also the text on which the sermon is based. This explains the absence of midrashim on the Prophets. As to the *megillot*, it is frequently claimed that already at an early time they were used as synagogue readings. Esther has certainly been read on Purim since the mishnaic period, but not necessarily as part of a synagogue service. Likewise, Lamentations was studied (on the ninth of Av) already at an early point in the history of rabbinic Judaism, but its reading in the synagogue is attested only much later. The same holds true for the other *megillot* – in the Middle Ages they still did not have their fixed place in the synagogue.[35] Thus the existence of midrashim on the *megillot* is only partly explained by their position in the liturgy.

The most important early exegetical midrash is Genesis Rabbah (Bereshit Rabbah), which has many parallels in the Palestinian Talmud and can be dated to roughly the same period, the early fifth century. It covers the whole book of Genesis, but is most extensive on its first chapters; eighteen of the hundred chapters of the midrash are dedicated to an explanation of the creation account in Genesis 1–2, interpreting it in the light of other biblical passages, beginning with Prov. 8:30–1. It offers detailed explanations of single words and phrases, but is most concerned with the right understanding of creation by God alone, without any assisting forces, and out of nothing. The midrash is careful to refute other opinions in this regard (e.g. Greek or Gnostic ideas popular in its time). It incorporates much mythic material, for instance with regard to primordial man, created as an androgynous being and filling the entire world. It also gives full attention to the lives of the patriarchs, creatively filling in the gaps in the biblical stories and turning them into a coherent whole, including the motivations of the acting persons (thus, for example, Gen. 22:1, which introduces the sacrifice of Isaac 'After these things / words', is explored: which events told before or which words spoken by one of its protagonists lead up to this astonishing story?). The biblical narrative is continuously read in the light of later events in biblical history, always looking for early signs of what comes afterwards. The whole biblical and later Jewish history is regarded as a unity, much of which is based on what is told in the book of Genesis. A typological reading predominates, although frequently hidden behind the storytelling which embellishes so much of the biblical account. The book of Genesis is read in order to understand man's fate and Israel's history and existence in the time of the rabbinic interpreter.

35 G. Stemberger, 'Die Megillot als Festlesungen der jüdischen Liturgie', *JBTh* 18 (2003), 261–76.

Lamentations Rabbah offers a close reading of its biblical book, dealing with questions of sin and punishment, God's continuing election of Israel even in exile, the assurance that God does not leave Israel alone but suffers with his people and will be redeemed with it, thus keeping Israel's hope alive. The midrash refers not only to the destructions of the first and the second temple, but to all tragedies in Israel's history up to the Bar Kokhba revolt and the years of persecution following it; stories about these negative historical events abound, frequently reducing them to the anecdotal level. A special feature of the midrash is the occurrence of many entertaining narratives, underlining the superiority of Israel's wisdom over that of Athens; these rather folkloristic texts intend to assure Israel that even as a defeated people it still has the Torah as the highest source of wisdom and thus can remain full of confidence.[36]

A third example of an exegetical midrash is Song of Songs Rabbah. The acceptance of the Song of Songs as a biblical book was due to its allegorical reading from the very beginnings. The rabbis knew that it was used as a collection of profane love songs; R. Aqiva is quoted as saying: 'He who warbles the Song of Songs in the banquet-halls and makes it into a kind of love-song has no portion in the world to come' (t. Sanhedrin 12:10). The rabbis see in the text the story of God's relationship with his people (Song of Songs Rabbah 1:11):

> R. Yudan and R. Levi in the name of R. Yohanan: In every passage in this scroll in which you find the words, 'King Solomon', the intent is actually King Solomon. And whenever the text says, 'the king,' it means the Holy One, blessed be He.
>
> And rabbis say, Wherever you find 'King Solomon,' the reference is to the King who is the master of peace. When it speaks of 'the king' it refers to the Community of Israel.[37]

Normally the bridegroom refers to God, the bride to Israel. For the midrash, the history of God's unique love for Israel is prefigured in this biblical text; some authors would therefore prefer to call this interpretation not simply allegorical, but rather typological. The predominant motif is Israel's redemption from Egypt and the covenant at Mt Sinai (already m. Ta'anit 4:8 refers Song

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36 G. Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life. Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature* (Stanford University Press, 2000).
37 Translation from J. Neusner, *The Components of the Rabbinic Documents. From the Whole to the Parts. Part* v: *Song of Songs Rabbah*, part I (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), p. 23.

3:11 to the revelation of the Torah and the building of the temple), but the midrash also sees in the text the further history of Israel, the Babylonian exile and the return to the land of Israel, the suppression of the chosen people under the four empires, most prominently under Rome, and the promise of the final redemption, a hope which cannot be extinguished by the many crises in the love story between God and Israel. Because of this historical understanding of the Song of Songs it was from the beginning read in connection with the Exodus story and thus used as an intertext for its interpretation at Pesah.

The Song of Songs is the most prominent example of the allegorical interpretation of the Bible in rabbinic Judaism, but by no means the only one. The genealogies in the books of Chronicles were a permanent challenge to the rabbis who claimed that every biblical text had a religious meaning. In order to find such a meaning even in long sequences of names without any wider context, they resorted to an allegorical reading, using a kind of popular etymology in order to see in all these names Moses and a few other central figures of the Bible, their moral qualities and their attitudes to the Torah; the high number of names without further information is thus exploited for a clearer profile of the leading characters and thus for a stronger coherence of biblical history, as can be seen in the following example:

> When R. Shimon ben Pazi began to expound Chronicles, he said as follows: All your words are one, and we know how to explain them:
>
> 'And his Jewish wife bore Yered, father of Gedor, and Heber, father of Sokho, and Yequtiel, father of Zenoah. And these are the sons of Bityah, daughter of Pharaoh whom Mered married' (1 Chron. 1:14).
>
> Why was she called 'Jewish'? Because she rejected idolatry, as is written, 'and Pharaoh's daughter went down to wash on [the shore of] the Nile' (Exod. 2: 5). And said R. Yohanan: Because she went down to wash [i.e. to purify] herself from the abominations of her father's house . . .
>
> 'Yered' is Moses; and why was he called Yered? Because Manna came down (*yarad*) for Israel in his days; 'Gedor,' because he fenced in (*gadar*) the breaches of Israel; 'Heber,' because he caused Israel to draw near (*hibber*) to their father in heaven; 'Sokho,' because it was made for Israel like a tabernacle (*sukkah*); 'Yequtiel,' because Israel hoped in God (*qavu yisra'el la-'el*) in his days; 'Zenoah,' because he disregarded (*hizniah*) the sins of Israel (b. Megillah 13a).[38]

38 J. Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud. A Translation and Commentary*, 22 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), vol. VII, pp. 62–3.

The text goes on in this style and several other rabbinic passages proceed in the same way. Allegorical interpretation may extract religious meaning from texts which on the surface are absolutely devoid of it.

The earliest homiletic midrash is Leviticus Rabbah (fifth century), but it is not a typical example of the genre. Its thirty-seven chapters have the characteristic structure of *petiḥah*, body of the sermon and eschatological conclusion; they all take their point of departure in a verse of Leviticus. The midrash has five chapters in common with the Pesiqta deRav Kahana; most probably they were taken from there, although other authors see it the other way round, at least for some of these chapters, or even claim that both midrashim were composed by the same author. Only part of the chapters fit any known lectionary cycle; others seem to have been composed outside this liturgical frame. What is striking in the work is the comparative neglect of the book of Leviticus – about 80 per cent of Leviticus is not dealt with at all. Other biblical texts are sometimes much more important – and not only the prophetic reading of the same day, which might be expected; in chapter 5, for example, there are verses from the book of Job, which was never read in the liturgy. Among the many parallels from earlier rabbinic literature, Sifra as the halakhic midrash on the same book plays no important role; the interests of the two midrashim are too different. As Burton Visotzky has shown, 'LR (Leviticus Rabbah) is simply a collection of aggadic midrashim on selected clusters of Leviticus verses which serve as magnets for traditional materials or as quasi-encyclopedic topic headings.'[39] Leviticus Rabbah is a miscellany of rabbinic tradition, only externally structured as a homiletic midrash.

Pesiqta deRav Kahana is a homiletic midrash for the readings of the festivals and the special Sabbaths – four Sabbaths after Ḥanukkah, three before and seven after the ninth of Av and two Sabbaths after the New Year (for these twelve Sabbaths around the ninth of Av and after the New Year the prophetic reading is the sermon text). The title Pesiqta derives from *pisqa* 'section, pericope', and designates a collection of homiletic readings of these pericopes; it is used for the annual festival cycle, not for the normal Sabbath readings. Why this Pesiqta is named after Rav Kahana (which of several?) remains unclear; the specification distinguishes it from the much later Pesiqta Rabbati, a larger collection of homilies for the festivals of the year. The midrash constitutes the first piece of evidence for the cycle of special Sabbaths around the ninth of Av, which may have been introduced only in the fifth century. Through this cycle of special Sabbaths, a great number of prophetic texts (mainly from

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39 Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*.

Isaiah) receive a midrashic reading of their own, and not just as sidelights on the dominant text of the Torah. As is to be expected from a collection of biblical sermons the homiletic and edifying reading of the text is central, not technical exegesis. There is a certain coherence throughout the whole collection. Jacob Neusner wants to go a step further and to discover a deeper unity of the whole:

> What makes Pesiqta deRab Kahana's revision of the lectionary encounter powerful and persuasive ought not to be missed. It is its emphasis upon the correspondence of the cycle of nature with the exemplary moments of Israel's existence, the whole abstracted from linear history. The dedication and celebration in the Temple, loss of the Temple, atonement and renewal and restoration correspond to nature's cycle. Then, after the season of desiccation and death, the renewal signified by the winter rains, comes the climax of Passover-Pentecost. Then the sequence concludes with the advent of the summer's drought, followed by the renewal once more.[40]

In order to achieve this reading, Neusner has to take Ḥanukkah as the beginning of the cycle; but there is a strong possibility that it started with the New Year. It is problematic to impose such an overarching unity on a midrashic collection like this one, but it is always worth the effort to try to find out what it is, beyond the annual cycle and the common homiletic style, that holds the work together.

The homiletic midrash on the whole Pentateuch as read in the 'triennial' reading cycle is the Midrash Tanḥuma. It exists in two textual recensions, the standard edition known mainly from Sephardic manuscripts and the version edited by Solomon Buber on the basis of Ashkenazic manuscripts. As a matter of fact, these are only the main text groups; the Tanḥuma midrashim were popular collections of sermons easily adapted to regional predilections, adding alternative readings or replacing one text with another; the texts as such show clear signs of oral performance, resulting in many small differences of style while maintaining the same basic structure. Large parts of the Midrash Rabbah on the Torah also belong to the Tanḥuma tradition. Characteristic of this type of homiletic midrash is the halakhic instruction at the beginning of each unit, introduced by the phrase 'May our master teach us' (*Yelammedenu Rabbenu*) or similar introductions. The main body of the sermons is edifying and popular; as is the rule of the genre, the ending of each unit is based on the prophetic reading of the day and offers a positive outlook to the future messianic

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40 J. Neusner, 'Pesiqta deRab Kahana, Theology of', in Neusner and Avery-Peck (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Midrash*, pp. 663–79, at p. 678.

redemption. The popularity of the genre over centuries makes a clear dating of these works impossible; they developed between the fifth and the eighth centuries, with some changes and additions put in even later. The Tanḥuma midrashim did much to make the midrashic traditions popular.

A number of the later midrashic works collect earlier traditions, arranging them in the order of certain biblical books. Such a collector mentality already characterises the midrashim on Qoheleth and Proverbs, but is most prominent in the midrash on Psalms. Another tendency is the retelling of the biblical stories, imitating biblical Hebrew and filling in many details felt to be missing in the biblical text. A good example of this type of midrashic story is the 'Life of Moses' (*Divre ha-yamim shel Moshe*) which contains many miraculous details about Moses' childhood at Pharaoh's court or during his sojourn in Midian in Jethro's house. These stories do not only instruct their readers or listeners, they have to entertain them and to keep them away from non-Jewish popular literature. An earlier example of rewriting the biblical text, still much more refrained and connected to the classical tradition, is the Pirqe deRabbi Eliezer (late eighth or early ninth century), so called because the work is introduced by two chapters containing the story of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and his conversion to the study of the Torah. The midrash, written in a simple Hebrew style, soon became highly popular. It tells the biblical story from the creation to the punishment of Miriam for her criticism of Moses in Num. 12. Here the midrash breaks off, but it was certainly intended to cover the whole Torah. The text takes up many earlier midrashic traditions, but also much material known only from writings of the Second Temple period or texts which have clear parallels in Islamic tradition.

The midrashic tradition remained popular well into the high Middle Ages; much of it was collected and arranged in the order of the whole Bible in the Yalqut or of the five books of the Torah in the Midrash ha-Gadol. There also existed other midrashic anthologies. Many midrashic traditions were taken up by the great medieval commentators of the Bible, most prominently Rashi (1040–1105), although already in his time the approach to the biblical text changed, away from the midrashic mode to a more literal interpretation.

Targumim

The mode of midrash was not the only one in which the Bible was received, interpreted, made known and popularised in the rabbinic period. The translation of the readings from the Torah and the Prophets in the synagogue service was an equally important factor. The Mishnah already regulates the Aramaic

translation (Targum) of the biblical readings: 'He that reads in the Law . . . may not read to the interpreter more than one verse, or in the Prophets, three verses . . . They may leave out verses in the Prophets, but not in the Law. How much may they leave out? Only so much that he leaves no time for the interpreter to make a pause' (m. Megillah 4:4).[41] Obviously the translation of the Torah was expected to be more exact, although in reality no Targum was expected to be a literal rendition of the text; it always contained a certain amount of interpretation and therefore had to be clearly distinguished from the written Torah. The translator was not allowed to use a written text of the Targum[42] or to stand so close to the lectern that people might believe that he read his translation from the scroll. Despite these precautions, however, typical listeners in the synagogue who hardly knew enough biblical Hebrew would not really know how much of the Aramaic rendition went beyond the original text; the Aramaic was the only text they understood and was thus, to them, equivalent to the Torah. The interpretation was hidden in the text; only longer additions could be detected because of their length when compared with the biblical reading.

Although the rabbis tried to rule on basic aspects of the practice of Targum in the synagogue, the targumic tradition was not primarily or even exclusively a rabbinic enterprise. The predominance of the rabbis in the synagogue was the result of a long development; for most of the rabbinic period there were, in the great majority of synagogues, no rabbis to translate the biblical readings or to supervise the translation. Other people, perhaps mainly priests, were responsible for the Targumim or participated in their creation. In the course of time, however, the Targumim assimilated a great amount of rabbinic traditions; they were also frequently quoted in Talmud and Midrash; thus both worlds became increasingly close to each other. Common to most Targumim is the avoidance of anthropomorphisms when speaking of God; such passages are usually paraphrased.

There are three complete Targumim on the Torah. Furthermore, there is the Fragmentary Targum, which consists of mostly haggadic excerpts from a complete Targum (or several similar complete Targumim?) that has not survived in its entirety. The best-known among them is Targum Onqelos, attributed in Babylonian tradition to the proselyte Onqelos, the nephew of Emperor Titus (b. Megillah 3a); this transforms an earlier Palestinian tradition

41 Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 206.
42 See y. Meg. 4.1:74d: when R. Samuel bar Isaac saw a Bible teacher in the synagogue 'who recited the Targum from a book. He said to him: You are forbidden to do that. Things which were spoken orally are (to be transmitted) orally, written ones in written form'.

which speaks of Aquila, the Greek translator of the Bible (y. Megillah 1:9, 71c). This Targum became the official Targum in Babylonia where it was constantly quoted as 'our Targum' or 'we translate' (*metargeminan*). Its origin seems to have been in Palestine whence it was brought to Babylonia and revised; its Aramaic is Babylonian, but still has traces of Palestinian Aramaic. It is the most literal translation among the Targumim, although it also contains a certain amount of additional material.

The Targum Yerushalmi was erroneously attributed to Yonathan (ben Uzziel, a disciple of Hillel), to whom the Targum to the Prophets is credited (b. Megillah 3a); it is therefore called Pseudo-Yonathan. It also translates parts of the Torah quite literally, but its greater part is much more expansive and contains a vast amount of haggadic traditions, which to a large extent are found in the rabbinic literature as well; conspicuous are the many traditions in Pseudo-Yonathan which are paralleled in Pirqe deRabbi Eliezer. This Targum has obviously grown over the centuries, with many additions inserted into its text rather late.

Targum Neofiti was rediscovered in the early 1950s; it had been incorrectly catalogued as Onqelos. It is named after the Casa dei Neofiti in Rome whence the manuscript, dated 1504 in the colophon and the unique textual witness, was later transferred to the Vatican Library. Although to some extent a rather literal translation, many parts of the Torah are greatly expanded with material mostly known from the rabbinic tradition. Much of it is also found in the Targum Yerushalmi, but there are also many independent traditions; in general, Neofiti is less expansive than Pseudo-Yonathan.[43]

The Targum of the Prophets, ascribed to Yonathan, also developed over centuries and cannot be regarded as a unity. The Babylonian Talmud attributes a number of its translations to R. Joseph bar Hiyya (fourth century). On this basis, and supported by other arguments, Bruce Chilton argued for two stages of redaction of Targum Isaiah, a Tannaitic one (up to the Bar Kokhba revolt, 132–5 CE) and an Amoraic one of the fourth century. This position was later applied to other parts of the Targum of the Prophets as well, but also allowing for intermediate stages and assuming the completion of the whole work in the fifth century.[44]

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43 For a general overview see Levine, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible*; A. Shinan, *The Biblical Story as Reflected in Its Aramaic Translations* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Hakkibutz Hameuchad, 1993); D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara (eds.), *The Aramaic Bible. Targums in Their Historical Context* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994); Glessmer, *Einleitung*.
44 B. D. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel. The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983); B. D. Chilton, 'Targum Jonathan to the Prophets', in Neusner and Avery-Peck (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Midrash*, pp. 889–927.

There also existed Targumim to the Hagiographa (t. Shab 13 [14]:2 mentions a Targum of Job) although there was no liturgical use for them, at least not in the rabbinic period.[45] They are all comparatively late. Of special interest among them are the Targumim to the five *megillot* which are midrashim rather than translations; especially the Targumim to Qoheleth and the Song of Songs and above all the Targum Sheni to Esther are very expansive.

The dating of the Targumim or the traditions contained in them is frequently based on non-rabbinic *halakhah* which is claimed to be pre-rabbinic, or on religious ideas which were received in Christianity as well. Linguistic criteria – the Aramaic of the Targumim is thought to be early – are additional arguments to date their core to the first or second century in Palestine (this was claimed, for example, by Alejandro Díez-Macho for Targum Neofiti). Thus at least some Targumic traditions are claimed to be contemporary with the New Testament and useful for the study of the origins of Christianity. Obviously late materials in a Targum, such as the names of Fatima and Aisha as the two wives of Ishmael (Pseudo-Yonathan on Gen. 21:21), or modernisations of geographical terms in the Bible are then considered as late insertions into a pre-existing text.

All these arguments are not really conclusive. It is obvious that Targumim are not stable texts, but are easily updated not only by inserting single terms into them, but also by supplementing them with longer additional passages. This may have been an ongoing process, making it difficult to separate clearly distinguishable redactional layers. Above all scholars have become much more aware in recent decades of the many varieties and substreams that existed in rabbinic Judaism, which never was monolithic. Not every halakhic statement not in agreement with the *halakhah* of the Mishnah is necessarily pre-rabbinic, nor need ideas with parallels in Christian thought be pre-Christian and thus very early. We still do not have fully reliable criteria for dating Targumim. The clearly late elements in a Targum cannot be explained away as late glosses and insertions into an otherwise much earlier pre-existent text; we have to work our way back from the existing text forms to see how much of them must be early and how early that material might be. There is no shortcut to connect the Targumic texts from Qumran with the rabbinic Targumim; parallels with texts from the period of the Second Temple are no proof for an unbroken Targumic tradition going back to the time before 70. As we have them, the Targumim are certainly part of the rabbinic literature.

45 For an up-to-date overview see J. Ribera-Florit, 'Hagiographa, Targums to ', in Neusner and Avery-Peck (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Midrash*, pp. 148–73.

Rabbinic hermeneutics

In interpreting the Bible, the rabbis followed certain rules. Three groups of rules of interpretation (*middot*) have been transmitted: seven rules attributed to Hillel, thirteen rules connected with the name of R. Ishmael and thirty-two rules in the name of R. Eliezer ben Yose ha-Gelili. The first group of rules contains the argument from the lesser to the greater, the argument by analogy, the generalisation of a scriptural statement on the basis of one or two texts, the qualification of the general by the particular and vice versa, and the argument from the context. All these rules are very general and not specifically Jewish, but are rather close to the hermeneutical principles of Hellenistic rhetoric and Roman legal interpretation. The second set of rules is essentially just an expanded version of Hillel's middot. The third set is much more detailed and contains new approaches, such as inclusion and exclusion – the interpretation of certain words in the text as adding something to what is said explicitly or as restricting the explicit saying. Well known in this group of rules are the *gematria*, the calculation of the numerical value of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the *notarikon*, which divides one word into two or more, or where each letter of a word is understood as the initial letter of another word. Many of these rules are commonly applied in rabbinic exegesis from its very beginnings, sometimes quoting the rule, more frequently implicitly. The collection of these rules into groups is secondary, as is the attribution to particular early rabbis, which has no historical basis.

But it would be mistaken to limit rabbinic hermeneutics to such groups of rules. Much more important are certain presuppositions about the biblical text underlying its rabbinic interpretation. We have already mentioned the two basic approaches connected with the names of Ishmael and Aqiva, one taking the biblical text as formulated in normal human language whereas the other sees it as a highly encoded text in which every single linguistic detail has a special meaning and must be used to extract the message of the text. In rabbinic interpretation of scriptural verses we find many examples of both approaches; but they are not to be divided into two schools opposed to each other; most midrashim and rabbis (or, to be more exact, interpretations attributed to specific rabbis) combine both of them, preferring one approach or the other, depending on the particular biblical text.

Two general ideas underlie practically all rabbinic understanding of the Bible: (i) the Bible is a perfect text and (ii) it is written in a perfect language.

The perfect text, as understood by the rabbis, is a text which has not one single, clear meaning – as many would expect of a modern text – but a multitude of meanings:

> Said R. Yohanan: What is the meaning of this verse of Scripture: 'The Lord gives the word, they who publish the good news are a great host' (Ps. 68:12)? Every act of speech that came forth from the mouth of the Almighty was divided into seventy languages.
>
> A Tannaite statement of the household of R. Ishmael: 'And like a hammer that breaks the rock into pieces' (Jer. 23:29) – just as a hammer yields ever so many sparks, so every word that came forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, was divided into seventy languages (b. Shabbat 88b).[46]

A closely parallel text, b. Sanhedrin 34a, adds: 'One verse of Scripture may yield a number of arguments, but one argument cannot derive from a number of verses of Scripture.' A later text connects this idea with the interpretation of dreams:

> 'For a dream comes with a multitude of meaning' (Eccl. 5:2: *be-rov 'inyan*). This yields an argument from the lesser to the greater: The contents of a dream do not bring high nor bring down; nevertheless, a single dream may have many meanings. How much more so the much weightier words of the Tora so that a single verse yields many meanings.[47]

The idea that the Torah must have a multitude of meanings is based on its understanding as the unique revelation of God's will for all people and for all time. Whatever changes will occur in history, in social conditions and personal circumstances, these unlimited possibilities must be provided for in the limited text. The Bible need not be accommodated to later conditions and circumstances – everything is already in it and need only be discovered: 'Turn it and turn it, for all is in it' (m. Avot 5:25).

Another aspect connected with the perfection of the text of the Torah is the absence of contradictions and repetitions in it. Wherever biblical texts seem to contradict each other or to repeat what has already been said, one has to find a solution, normally by applying such texts to different circumstances or by understanding a prohibition on one occasion as an admonishment, on another as the indication of the punishment that follows its transgression.

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46 Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud*, vol. ii, p. 385.
47 M. Margulies (ed.), *Midrash ha-Gadol on the Pentateuch. Genesis* (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1967), p. 39.

Essential for a perfect revelatory text is also the religious relevance of all parts of it. The rabbis thus had to find reasons why such long narrative sections precede the laws in the Torah, which were considered to form its centre (Philo had already had to face the same problem, and it was again discussed in the Middle Ages). Even more urgent was the problem, referred to above, of the correct understanding of long genealogies. It belongs to the high art of the interpreter to find even in such lists a more profound religious message.

This perfect text is written in a perfect language. Hebrew is the language of heaven, the language of creation; it pre-exists all created beings and is timeless. The rabbis knew, of course, that biblical Hebrew was different from rabbinic Hebrew; but they were convinced that all historical changes of the language were foreseen from the outset and are part of the multiple meaning of the biblical text. To give just one example: the verbal system of biblical Hebrew distinguishes mainly between completed and incompleted states; a clear distinction of past, present and future was introduced only much later, under Aramaic and perhaps also Greek influence. The rabbis knew how to integrate both possibilities in their reading of the Torah, as may be seen from their interpretation of Exod. 15:1: 'Then Moses and the Israelites sang [*yashir*] this song to the Lord.' In the biblical context the verb clearly indicates an action of the past, but in rabbinic Hebrew the form expresses a future action. For the rabbis both readings are correct: as Moses sang this song with the Israelites after the crossing of the sea, so he will sing it again at the end of history. The text may thus be used as an argument for the resurrection of the dead.

Many other aspects of rabbinic interpretation follow from this understanding of the Hebrew language. Since originally the text contained no signs separating clauses or sentences and was frequently even written in *scriptio continua*, it was up to the interpreter to construe the syntax of many passages, to read one word as two or to propose any reading that was technically possible. The text was to be exploited to the extreme in order to extract its multiple meanings. All these new possibilities of interpretation did not do away with the normal, traditional reading of the text in the synagogue and its meaning; they only added new layers of understanding to the plain meaning. Not only was the language as such of heavenly origin, but so too were the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, since God himself had written the first tables of the Law – 'the writing was the writing of God' (Exod. 32:16). Therefore the similarity of certain letters in the alphabet and their consequent confusion could also be understood as foreseen by God, an additional possibility and not a mistake.

This understanding of biblical revelation emphasises not only the contents of the biblical books, but their linguistic encoding and even their outward shape. Thus it becomes clear that in the eyes of the rabbis no translation of the text can ever be an equivalent substitute for the original Hebrew text. Many rabbinic interpretations are possible only on the basis of the Hebrew text and lose much of their meaning once they are translated into any other language. 'When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion' (Ps. 114:1–2). The liberation from Egypt brings Israel into the promised land, but much more importantly into God's language: only the gift of this language makes Israel God's people; the language is a quintessential part of redemption and thus the only valid and permanent access to God's word.

The Aramaic Targums

C. T. R. HAYWARD

The Aramaic term 'targum' is a noun arising from the Semitic verbal stem *trgm*: in rabbinic parlance, it means both 'translation' and 'interpretation' or 'explanation'.[1] It is the word commonly used to designate those Aramaic versions of books of the Hebrew Bible which have been transmitted from ancient times alongside classical writings of the Jewish sages such as the Mishnah, the two Talmuds and the Midrash Rabbah. There are Targums for all the books of the Hebrew Bible except Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah; some books, indeed, have more than one Targum, which most likely indicates the popularity of the medium.[2] As a rule, all these Targums translate each word of their Hebrew base text, following the sequence of that base text, into Aramaic: the few exceptions to this practice will be noted as we proceed. Along with their Aramaic translation, the several Targums incorporate exegetical material. Some Targums accomplish this in a sparing, even terse manner; others, however, may introduce expansive interpretations of the Hebrew base text into their translations. Whether the added exegesis is brief or expansive, the Targums appear to expect their hearers or readers to have some knowledge of the Hebrew base text underlying their translation: indeed, in some instances, they are liable to cite the Hebrew text of particular biblical verses without providing an accompanying translation into Aramaic.[3] They are unusual

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1 For discussion of the term 'targum' and its philology, see Le Déaut, *Introduction à la littérature targumique*, pp. 19–20; Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 51–2; Alexander, 'Targum, Targumim', pp. 320–1. It is possibly of Hittite origin: see C. Rabin, 'Hittite Words in Hebrew', *Orientalia* 32 (1963), 113–39, at p. 134.

2 The books of Daniel and Ezra include extended passages written in Aramaic; and Nehemiah is in any event closely associated with Ezra: Targums for these books, therefore, might have been considered unnecessary. For the Pentateuch, however, three complete and several fragmentary Targums are extant; there are certainly two, possibly three, Targums of the scroll of Esther; several verses of the book of Job are translated into Aramaic more than once; and there may have been a Palestinian Targum of the prophetical books as well as the Babylonian Targum of Jonathan which has come down to us.

3 Thus some Targums of Gen. 30:22 provide an extended interpretation of the verse which includes proof texts from Deut. 28:12 quoted in Hebrew by the Fragmentary Targum in Paris

among the ancient Bible versions, therefore, in appearing to expect or assume on the part of their hearers or readers some degree of knowledge of the Hebrew which gives rise to their translation. Furthermore, the manuscripts which transmit the Targums most commonly (though not invariably) either preface each translated biblical verse with a Hebrew lemma consisting of the opening words of that verse; or they supply the entire Hebrew verse along with the corresponding Targum.[4] This complexity is reflected in the different kinds of Targum known to us. It is obviously impossible in a short chapter of this kind to offer a full account of these complexities, but a brief description of the extant Targums will therefore be in order to help us to proceed further.

The extant Aramaic Targums

The Pentateuch has three complete Targums.[5] First, Targum Onqelos (= TO) holds an unique position: the Babylonian sages speak of it as 'our Targum', and citations of Targums of the books of Moses which occur in the Babylonian Talmud are almost always identical with the wording of TO.[6] Most significantly, this Targum incorporates *halakhah* which agrees with the Babylonian sages' interpretation of particular legal decisions of the Mishnah. In its present form, therefore, TO comes to us from Babylon: its language, too, betrays some east Aramaic elements familiar to us from Babylonian Aramaic. Its citation in the Babylonian Talmud indicates that it existed by the time of the latter's redaction, which almost certainly took place before the middle of

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MS 110 (= FTP); from Psalm 145:16 given in Hebrew by the same Targum and the Fragmentary Targum in Vatican MS 440 (= FTV); and from Ezek. 37:12 reproduced in Hebrew by both these Fragmentary Targums. Targum Sheni of Esther includes more than sixty proof texts quoted in Hebrew.

4 As examples of these two procedures we may cite on the one hand MS Targum Neofiti 1 of the Pentateuch, which more or less systematically sets the opening words of each Hebrew verse immediately in front of its Aramaic translation, and on the other MS Sassoon 282 of Targum Sheni of Esther, which provides each single verse in Hebrew followed immediately by its Targum.

5 For the manuscript witnesses to the extant Targumim, and for valuable critical comments on the printed editions of the Targumim, see L. Díez Merino, 'Targum Manuscripts and Printed Editions', in D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara (eds.), *The Aramaic Bible. Targums in Their Historical Context* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 51–91. Occasionally single verses of Targum may be lacking in the manuscripts; but these omissions are generally the result of scribal error: see, for example, the list of omissions in Pseudo-Jonathan given by E. C. Clarke et al., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1984), pp. xiii–xiv.

6 The rabbis speak of TO as 'our Targum' at b. Qidd. 49a; see also b. Meg. 3a. Alexander, 'Targum, Targumim', p. 321 notes some seventeen citations of TO in the Babli, often introduced (e.g. at b. Sanh. 106b) by the expression 'as we translate'. See also P. V. M. Flesher, 'The Targumim', in J. Neusner (ed.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity. Part 1: The Literary and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 45.

the seventh century CE.[7] At this point, however, that complexity which is an ever-present feature of targumic studies makes its presence felt; for Onqelos is the name of a man who, according to b. Meg. 3a, had converted to Judaism and had translated the books of Moses into Aramaic 'from the mouth of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua', two *Palestinian* sages of the second century CE.[8] In addition, although the language of TO certainly displays elements of east Aramaic, it nonetheless closely resembles the Aramaic of texts discovered among the Dead Sea scrolls – so closely, indeed, that many scholars have concluded that the substance of TO originated in the land of Israel.[9] A western origin for TO is also supported by the Targum's incorporation of exegetical material, often in abbreviated form, which is known to us from Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch, whose features we shall describe presently.[10] These and other considerations have led to the conclusion that an initial form of this Targum (often called Proto-Onqelos) was produced in the West and was taken to Babylonia, where it received its final redaction in the rabbinic academies to become the TO known to us. The linguistic evidence for this account of TO's origins and provenance, however, has been seriously challenged, and is still a matter for debate.[11] But some exegetical elements of TO may support it, since there are indications that TO, and other Targums of the Pentateuch, owe many of their interpretative traditions to a common Targum which originated in the

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7 This date is by no means certain; many are arguing for an earlier redaction, while a few doubt whether the Bavli was ever finally redacted until the age of printing. For a judicious discussion, see Richard Kalmin, 'The Formation and Character of the Babylonian Talmud', in S. T. Katz (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Vol. IV: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 840–76, at pp. 842–43. It should be noted that TO is never quoted by Palestinian Jewish sources before the Islamic period.

8 This tradition, however, is problematic, since yer. Meg. 1.9.71c reports that one Aqilas made a translation (*trgm*) of the Torah: many scholars have taken this note to refer not to an Aramaic Targum, but to the Greek version made by Aquila in the second century CE. For an account of scholarly debate on this matter, see B. Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Genesis Translated with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 6 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), pp. 4–6.

9 The evidence relating the Aramaic of TO and that of the Qumran Genesis Apocryphon in particular was first assessed by E. Y. Kutscher, 'The Language of the Genesis Apocryphon. A Preliminary Study', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 4 (1958), 1–35, and most subsequent students of the Targum have accepted his conclusions.

10 For the Palestinian character of exegetical material in TO, see particularly J. Bowker, 'Haggadah in the Targum Onkelos', *JSS* 12 (1967), 51–65; G. Vermes, 'Haggadah in the Onkelos Targum', *JSS* 8 (1963), 159–69, reprinted in his *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 127–38.

11 See E. M. Cook, 'A New Perspective on the Language of Onqelos and Jonathan', in D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara (eds.), *The Aramaic Bible. Targums in Their Historical Context*, JSOT Supp. Series 166 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 142–56; and, from a different perspective, C. Müller-Kessler, 'The Earliest Evidence for Targum Onqelos from Babylonia and the Question of its Dialect and Origins', *JAB* 3 (2001), 181–98.

land of Israel.[12] Whatever its origins, however, TO, of which more than thirty manuscripts are known, generally imports interpretative additions into its translational framework sparingly: the main exception to this practice occurs when the Targum has to deal with Hebrew poetry, which can elicit expansive additions from the translator. Having been adopted as the 'official' Targum by the rabbinic academies in Babylonia, its influence gradually increased and spread, until it largely displaced the Palestinian Targum, to which we now turn.

The Targum contained in MS Neophyti 1 (=TN) was identified as a Palestinian Targum of the Pentateuch only in 1956, having previously been incorrectly catalogued in the Vatican Library as Targum Onqelos: it had been written for the humanist scholar Giles of Viterbo, and its colophon gives the date of its completion as 5264/1504. It is composed in a type of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic very similar to the language of the Jerusalem Talmud. The manuscript offers a Targum of the whole Pentateuch, apart from around thirty verses omitted by scribal error or erased by a Christian censor; it is characterised also by many marginal and interlinear glosses, written in at least ten different scribal hands.[13] TN generally offers a close translation of the Hebrew, into which it blends its sometimes quite lengthy exegesis: the separation of the exegetical from the purely translational elements of this Targum requires detailed knowledge of the original Hebrew text. Natan ben Yehiel of Rome (1035–1106 CE) in his 'Arukh quotes passages which can be identified as belonging to TN. The Targum must, therefore, have been in existence in his day, though it may have been subjected to further editing thereafter.[14] The presence in TN of certain halakhic rulings which *contradict* the Mishnah has sometimes prompted the view that this Targum must, as a consequence, be pre-mishnaic in date.[15] These rulings, however, may be accounted for if the Targum started life as a document for private study only, and it should

12 So S. Kaufman, 'Dating the Language of the Palestinian Targums and Their Use in the Study of First Century CE Texts', in Beattie and McNamara (eds.), *The Aramaic Bible*, p. 118–41, at p. 129; and see also the arguments of P. V. M. Flesher, 'Is *Targum Onkelos* a Palestinian Targum?', *JSP* 19 (1999), 35–79.

13 The discovery of TN was the work of Alejandro Díez Macho, who also produced the *editio princeps* under the general title *MS Neophyti 1*. On the history of this manuscript, see M. McNamara, 'The Colophon to Codex Neofiti I', *JSP* 19 (1999), 147–57. On the glosses, see S. Lund and J. Foster, *Variant Versions of Targumic Traditions within Codex Neofiti 1* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

14 For the evidence of the 'Arukh, see S. Speier, 'The Relationship between the 'Arukh and Targum Neofiti I', *Leshonenu* 31 (1966–7), 23–32, 189–98; 34 (1969–70), 172–9.

15 See A. Díez Macho, 'The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum. Its Antiquity and Relationship with the Other Targums', *VT* Supplements 7 (Leiden: Brill, 1960), pp. 222–45.

also be recalled that, until the fourth century CE, the rabbis remained a small group whose influence was probably quite restricted.[16] Somewhat contradictorily, TN appears to *abide by* mishnaic rules which prohibit the translation of certain verses into Aramaic.[17] In similar vein, it also shares interpretations of the Hebrew text which are known to us from the Talmuds and the classical midrashim. This state of affairs suggests that TN's foundations might well be older than its present form, which seems to have been acquired over a period of time. Given our present state of knowledge, a date for those foundations in the fourth century seems not unreasonable.[18]

Finally, the Targum commonly called Pseudo-Jonathan (= PJ) incorporates much interpretation, some very expansive, and is almost twice as long as the Hebrew Pentateuch. The first printed edition of this Targum called it *Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel to the Torah*, but this designation was almost certainly a mistake arising from a misinterpretation of the abbreviated designation of the manuscript as TY, which was meant to represent *Targum Yerushalmi*.[19] Apart from this edition, there is only one other witness to PJ, the sixteenth century British Library MS Add 27031. PJ's translational elements are presented in language often identical to that of TO; its interpretative expansions, however, sometimes parallel those found in TN, the Fragmentary Targums and other rabbinic writings, and employ the sort of Aramaic associated with the Palestinian Targums. On other occasions, it incorporates exegetical material not known from other rabbinic sources, generally using late Jewish literary Aramaic for the purpose. In its final form, this Targum dates from the Islamic period: famously, it refers to one of Mohammad's wives and a daughter in its interpretation of Gen. 21:21. The language of the Targum, however, suggests a complex, layered development of the text over a period of time; accordingly, some scholars have argued for the presence in it of information dating from pre-Christian times,[20] and its regular adoption of interpretations which the

16 See Hayim Lapin, 'The Origins and Development of the Rabbinic Movement in the Land of Israel', in Katz (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*. Vol. IV, pp. 206–29.

17 See P. S. Alexander, 'The Rabbinic Lists of Forbidden Targumim', *JJS* 27 (1976), 177–91.

18 Space forbids a full discussion here, but for a clear survey of items to be considered in the dating of TN, see Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 75–81.

19 The *editio princeps* was prepared by Asher Forins from a manuscript belonging to the Foa family of Reggio, published at Venice in 1591 by Juan Bragadin; the manuscript is now lost. The Targum is sometimes called Targum Yerushalmi I to differentiate it from the Fragmentary Targums (see below, p. 223), which are often labelled Targum Yerushalmi II.

20 For example, PJ of Deut. 33:11 may preserve a reference to John Hyrcanus I dating from Hasmonaean times: see M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), pp. 112–17; R. Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque*. vol. IV: *Deutéronome* (Paris: Cerf, 1980), p. 289; and literature there cited.

rabbinic authorities explicitly reject strongly suggests that significant elements in it originated before the time of the Talmud.[21] Its close relationship to TO, while it remains a matter for debate, may still speak for the relative antiquity of parts of this Targum.[22]

Besides these three complete Targums, we possess incomplete Aramaic versions of parts of the Pentateuch which may conveniently be described under three headings. First, we have the Fragmentary Targums (= FT) proper, which comprise some five groups of manuscripts. Although not descending from a common archetype, these manuscripts have enough content in common to mark them out as a distinct type of Palestinian Targum composed in west Aramaic.[23] They share a common exegetical approach to the Hebrew text, and in type and volume of interpretative material seem to occupy a position midway between TN, with its moderate use of interpretative additions, and PJ, with its sometimes extensive paraphrases. The FT cover only selected verses of the Pentateuch, a selection not, it would seem, made at random. The composition of the FT is best explained as a concerted attempt to preserve important exegesis of the Palestinian Targum, as TO became increasingly adopted as the official Targum in the land of Israel. Second, the Cairo Genizah revealed seven fragmentary copies of pentateuchal Targum: these are certainly Palestinian Targumim, but do not exactly coincide with the other Targumim described here nor, indeed, with each other. The manuscripts date from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries CE, and are written in Palestinian Jewish Aramaic.[24] Finally, there are targumic Toseftot (additions), sometimes found in the margins or texts of TO manuscripts, or at the end of biblical books, or in separate collections. These are composed in a mixture of TO-type and Palestinian Targum-type language. They are very difficult to date, but their frequent transmission alongside TO suggests that, like the FT, they may be concerned to preserve elements of the Palestinian Targum in the face of TO's growing status and influence.

The number and variety of Aramaic versions of the Pentateuch graphically illustrates the importance of the books of Moses in relation to other parts of scripture. For the Prophets, however, only one complete Targum is extant, although some students believe that another Targum might once have been

21 See McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum*, pp. 45–56, 134–8.
22 For further discussion, see G. J. Kuiper, *The Pseudo-Jonathan Targum and Its Relationship to Targum Onkelos* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1972).
23 See M. L. Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch according to Their Extant Sources*, 2 vols. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), vol. i, pp. 12–42.
24 See M. L. Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1986).

available.[25] The complete Targum is traditionally ascribed to Jonathan b. Uzziel (b. Meg 3a), and is consequently referred to as Targum Jonathan (= TJ) of the Prophets.[26] This Targum is often quoted in the Babylonian Talmud, not under its familiar designation, but as representing the translation of Rab Joseph b. Hiyya, head of the Pumbeditha academy (d. 333 CE); the Talmud, furthermore, accords it authority in some halakhic discussions.[27] Its language and history are usually understood to be broadly similar to those of TO, in that the Targum most likely originated in the land of Israel, and was taken up and given its final, official form in the Babylonian academies. This general account of TJ's origins, however, is subject to the same qualifications as those recorded earlier in discussion of TO.[28] Given the much greater extent of poetic material present in the Hebrew text underlying this Targum, TJ incorporates lengthier and more detailed interpretative additions than TO, very many of which correspond to exegesis known from other rabbinic sources. The possibility that there was once a Palestinian Targum of the Prophets may be supported by the presence of Toseftot in manuscripts of TJ, most notably in Codex Reuchlinianus, which preserves some eighty additions, often lengthy. Frequently they are designated as Targum Yerushalmi or Tosefta of the land of Israel. Like the targumic Toseftot to the Pentateuch, they might have been assembled to preserve parts of a Palestinian Targum of the Prophets as TJ's influence and authority increasingly sidelined the latter.[29]

There are no 'official' Targums of the Writings; indeed, b. Meg. 3a records a tradition that a heavenly voice prevented Jonathan b. Uzziel from translating them into Aramaic. Nonetheless such Targums do exist: the Aramaic in which they are written suggests a Palestinian provenance for them, but in the case of at least one of these Targums a Babylonian origin may need to be considered.[30] They vary considerably. On the one hand, the Targum

25 The balance of probability, however, inclines to the view that no such complete Targum existed: see the critical survey of scholarly opinion in Gordon, *Studies*, pp. 34–8, 96–107.
26 On the identity of Jonathan b. Uzziel and traditions about the authorship of this Targum, see further Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 90–1.
27 For details, see Alexander, 'Targum, Targumim', pp. 324–5. Its authority is also confirmed by its quotation on a Jewish magic bowl from Nippur: see S. A. Kaufman, 'A Unique Magic Bowl from Nippur', *JNES* 32–3 (1973–4), 170–4, and discussion in C. T. R. Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, The Aramaic Bible 12 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), p. 11.
28 See above, pp. 219–21.
29 See, however, the critique offered in Gordon, *Studies*, which fails to find substantial evidence for a complete Palestinian Targum of the Prophets.
30 This is the Second Targum (Targum Sheni) of Esther: Masskehet Soferim 13:6 cites Est. 3:1 in this Targum as a translation of Rab Joseph of Pumbeditha. Taradach, *Le Midrash*, p. 102 notes that Rashi never cites a Targum of the Writings, though R. Natan b. Yehiel does so frequently in his 'Arukh.

of Proverbs is almost entirely translational, without added interpretation: its close similarity to the Syriac Peshitta version of the same book has been much studied.[31] Targum Chronicles, too, is largely translational, while including some exegetical paraphrase.[32] On the other hand, manuscripts of the Targum of Job, and to a more limited degree the Targum of Psalms, can offer two (or sometimes more) different Targums for individual verses.[33] The Targums of the five *megillot* (Ruth, Song of Songs, Qoheleth, Lamentations and Esther, associated in the synagogue service with the liturgical observances of Shavu'oth, Pesah, Sukkoth, the ninth of Av and Purim respectively) further illustrate this state of affairs. Thus Targums of Ruth and Lamentations are somewhat restrained in the extent of their added interpretations, whereas the Targum of Qoheleth introduces a considerable amount of exegesis.[34] In the Targum of Song of Songs, the underlying Hebrew text is in places more or less dissolved into the targumic paraphrase;[35] and Esther has two, or perhaps three, separate Targums, the second of which includes lengthy interpretations only loosely related to the original Hebrew text.[36]

This necessarily brief sketch of the extant Targumim in some measure illustrates their variety and their complexity; their wide distribution and their different concerns, both translational and interpretative; and their relationship to the growing reality of rabbinic authority.[37] We must now turn to

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31 For an excellent survey of scholarly opinions on this Targum, see Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 118–24.

32 See Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 124–8.

33 Recent study of these two Targums has been greatly facilitated and significantly advanced by the impressive work of David M. Stec: see in particular his *The Text of the Targum of Job. An Introduction and Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), and *The Targum of Psalms Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 16 (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

34 For Targum Ruth, see particularly the work of D. R. G. Beattie: the results of his research over many years on this Targum are set out in D. R. G. Beattie and J. S. McIvor, *The Targum of Ruth and the Targum of Chronicles. Translated with Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 19 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993). For the Targums of Lamentations and Qoheleth, see Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 138–47.

35 See P. S. Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 17A (London: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 30–1.

36 The existence of a third Targum of Esther is debated: see the detailed discussion in Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 147–56. On Aramaic Esther, see B. Grossfeld, *The Two Targums of Esther. Translated, with Apparatus and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 18 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991); and B. Ego, *Targum Scheni zu Esther. Übersetzung, Kommentar und theologische Deutung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

37 For additional information, detailed analysis and wide-ranging discussion of items touched on in this section, Flesher and Chilton's volume, *The Targums*, will provide a much needed up-to-date account and critical assessment: I am most grateful to Professor Flesher for providing me with a pre-publication copy of this book. See also Alexander, 'Targum, Targumim', and Taradach, *Le Midrash*, pp. 49–160, which supplement the standard work of Le Déaut, *Introduction à la littérature targumique*. This last was originally published in 1966, at the time of writing is the only dedicated introduction to all the Targumim, and was reprinted in 1988. Much valuable

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a consideration of what they hold in common; and this will entail as a priority a description of their translation technique and generic exegetical concerns.

Targumic translation and exegesis: common concerns

All the Targumim in their different ways seek to give what they consider to be the *precise meaning* of the Hebrew text they translate. For the translators, the Hebrew Bible conveys the living words of the only God: it is a flawless unity, a perfect expression of the divine will and purpose for the whole creation, and an eternal gift to God's people of Israel, who seek to live according to its teachings. If human readers and hearers of the Bible discover within it contradictions, obscurities or inconsequential passages, these discoveries must be merely apparent: such things must be construed as signals to the reader to search beyond the surface of the text, and to discern in those difficulties a fuller sense which conforms to the teaching of scripture as a whole. This project of making precise the meaning of the Hebrew is central to targumic endeavour, and manifests itself in many different ways: we are able in this short space to bring forward only a selection of them. Targumic concern for precision is clearly seen in attempts to eliminate apparent contradictions. An example of this procedure may be found in the story of Judah and Tamar, where the latter has behaved as a prostitute and is condemned to death by burning (Gen. 38:24). Such a penalty is reserved in the Torah for daughters of priests (Lev. 21:9), but in the time of the patriarchs the regular priesthood of Aaron had not been established. Why, then, was Tamar to be executed by burning? PJ of Gen. 38:6 resolves what might otherwise seem to be a report contradicting information given elsewhere in the Bible: Tamar was in fact the daughter of Shem, who is frequently identified in rabbinic tradition as Melchizedek, priest of God Most High (see Gen. 14:18–21). In this way, the unity of scripture and its consistency are preserved. [38] We may also note how tradition not recorded

information on each individual Targum is now also to be found in the introductory sections to the volumes of *The Aramaic Bible* published under the editorial supervision of Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher and Martin McNamara.

38 Shem, the son of Noah, often appears in rabbinic texts as a priest: on this, and on his identification with Melchizedek, see Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, pp. 284–5, 289–91; C. T. R. Hayward, 'Shem, Melchizedek and Concern with Christianity in the Pentateuchal Targumim', in M. J. Cathcart and M. Maher (eds.), *Targumic and Cognate Studies*, JSOT Supp. Series 230 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 67–80.

in the Bible enables the Targum to overcome the difficulty, by supplying information which would otherwise be unavailable.

A concern for the consistency of scripture is again evident in all the extant Targumim (TO, TN and PJ) of the opening words of Gen. 2:7, this time with a distinct theological intent. The Hebrew of this verse informs us that the Lord God *fashioned* or *formed* the first man from dust – the Hebrew verb here is that used to describe the action of a potter moulding clay – whereas scripture has earlier informed us that God *created* the man (Gen. 1:27). The Targumim of Gen. 2:7 insist that God *created* the man, thereby not only attesting to the unity and consistency of scripture by insisting that, in this particular verse, *fashioned* really means *created*, but also signalling that direct comparison of the Almighty with a common potter is not present in scripture at this point.[39]

What, however, is the reader to deduce from scripture's own efforts at consistency? *Repetition* is a well known feature of biblical style, and the Targumists can exploit it to draw out the deeper meaning of the text, often in a sophisticated and learned way. Thus the story of the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22:1–19) twice states of Abraham and Isaac that 'the two of them walked together' (Gen. 22:6, 8). Why was it not sufficient for scripture to say this just once? The Targumists ask this question of themselves, and find the answer in the words of scripture which stand between the two statements, namely Isaac's demand to know where the lamb for the sacrifice is, and Abraham's reply (Gen. 22:8). According to the Bible, Abraham told Isaac: 'The Lord will see for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering.' TO represents Abraham's words in a way which suggests that a special lamb has already been reserved for this purpose, though its identity is not yet apparent to Isaac: 'Before the Lord a lamb has been revealed for the burnt offering.' The Palestinian Targumim avoid TO's ambiguity. Here is TN: 'From before the Lord a lamb has been prepared for the burnt offering; but if not, you are the lamb of the burnt offering.' Both Targumim indicate, the one obliquely, the other explicitly, that Isaac might be the sacrificial lamb: Isaac's acceptance of Abraham's words is signalled by the text's repetition of 'the two of them walked together'.

In attributing significance to the repeated clause 'the two of them walked together', the Targumim have resorted to another procedure characteristic of their method of translation and exegesis: they have exploited an

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39 The Targumim may here be engaged in tacit polemic with Gnostics and others who despised the God of Israel as a mere artisan: on their treatment of this verse, see V. Aptowitzer, 'Zur Erklärung einiger merkwürdiger Agadoth über die Schöpfung des Menschen', in J. Fischer, A. Freimann and J. Guttmann (eds.), *Festkrift I Anledning af Professor David Simonsens 70-aarige Fødelsdag* (Copenhagen: Hertz's Bogtrykkeri, 1923), pp. 112–28, at pp. 112, 121–2.

ambiguity in the Hebrew of Gen. 22:8. Abraham's reply to Isaac's question may be understood either as meaning: 'The Lord will see for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, O my son'; or as declaring: 'The Lord will see for Himself. The lamb for the burnt offering is my son.' They have opted for the latter understanding, according to which Isaac is alerted to the situation, and implicitly agrees to it, the evidence being that he continued to walk 'together' with his father. The care with which they have expounded the Hebrew does not end here, for the Palestinian Targumim of Gen. 22:6, 8 add the information that Abraham and Isaac walked together 'with a perfect heart'. This same phrase (which is not common in the Targumim) is also introduced by the Palestinian Targums in their rendering of Exod. 19:8, where they present Israel standing at Mt Sinai before receiving the Torah, and consenting to the Lord's commandments 'with a perfect heart'.[40] This aspect of targumic interpretation has been described by Michael Klein as 'associative' or 'complementary' translation:[41] it is a common targumic procedure, and underlines the translators' understanding of the Hebrew Bible as a unity. The actions of Abraham and Isaac, they suggest, must be understood as demonstrating the obedience which Israel promised to the Lord at Sinai and, by the same token, those same actions should be understood as an example of total dedication to the Torah's demands.

A pervasive feature of targumic exegesis is manifested in the translators' concern to minimise criticism of Israel and the great characters mentioned in the Bible. This is most clearly illustrated, perhaps, in the Targum of Jeremiah, a prophet who is hardly sparing in his harsh judgements. The Aramaic version of this book goes out of its way to indicate that it is only the *wicked* in Israel who will be punished by the Almighty (e.g. Targum Jer. 2:12, 5:3, 32:18); God's Word will never abhor Israel (31:37); and even the sufferings which God will bring on wicked Israel will be exercised in *clement* judgement (10:24, 30:11, 46:28). Similarly, a great figure like Isaac cannot be portrayed as a moral weakling: when his wife Rebekah suggests to their son Jacob that he prepare *two* goat kids as a meal for Isaac (Gen. 27:9), this must not be taken to indicate that Isaac was a glutton. PJ explains how this event took place at Passover, and that one goat was to serve as the paschal victim, the other for the festival offerings.[42] The reputations of Israel's heroes are thus carefully guarded: Moses, who

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40 The words are an addition to the underlying Hebrew base text, as they are in Gen. 22:6, 8, and are found at TN and FTV Exod. 19:8; TN marginal gloss Exod. 24:3.
41 See Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts*, vol. 1, p. xxxi; summarising M. L. Klein, 'Associative and Complementary Translation in the Targumim', *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982), 134*–40*.
42 PJ stands in line with the regulations laid down in m. Pes. 6:3; b. Pes. 69b–70a.

killed an Egyptian for abusing an Israelite, had acted rightly, says a marginal gloss of TN to Exod. 2:12, because the spirit of prophecy enabled him to discern that no righteous individual would ever descend from that man.[43]

In view of what we have just said, it comes as little surprise to learn that the Targumim occasionally translate in such a way that they reverse the obvious meaning of the Hebrew text. Michael Klein has named this procedure 'converse translation', and it is designed not only to eliminate contradictions from the scriptural text, but also to make that text conform to the norms of later times.[44] According to Jer. 14:9, the prophet had compared the Almighty with a powerful man who cannot save. The Targum omits the negative, and translates: 'You, O mighty One, are able to redeem!' In this way, God's honour and reputation are preserved. The technique of converse translation may also involve the resolution of rhetorical questions, and can lead to a restructuring of the underlying Hebrew text. At Jer. 23:23, the Hebrew text presents the Almighty as asking: 'Am I a God near at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off?' In Targum this becomes a theological statement, God announcing in first person direct speech that he created the world from the beginning, and is to renew it in the future for the righteous.

The two examples of converse translation given above both refer to God, whose honour and majesty elicit from the translators the deepest respect and reverence.[45] The divine name and all divine titles are correspondingly treated with the utmost care. The four Hebrew consonants of the proper name are not represented in the manuscripts of Targumim, but by some conventional device which will not mislead the reader into uttering the name with its vowels. In the Hebrew Bible, the Lord may be said to perform human actions, such as seeing or hearing: the Targumim are well known for seeking to soften such anthropomorphic expressions, declaring instead that matters are 'revealed before the Lord'. When in the Hebrew Bible the text speaks of God's hand or arm, the Targumim will prefer to talk of his might or power. Divine activity described in the Hebrew by means of the active voice may often be turned by the Targumim into passive expressions, according to which such-and-such a deed was performed 'before the Lord', or decisions promulgated 'from before the Lord'. While there can be little doubt that the

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43 See also PJ, FTP, and FTV of this verse; a similar understanding is conveyed in b. Ned. 64b; Exod. Rab. 1:29.

44 See M. L. Klein, 'Converse Translation. A Targumic Technique', *Biblica* 57 (1976), 515–37.

45 For an example of converse translation with regard to a human being, see Jer. 20:17, where the prophet curses the person who announced his birth to his father 'because he did not kill me from the womb'. In the Targum, Jeremiah says of this person: 'would that he had not said concerning me that I should have died from the womb'.

Targumim prefer to 'tone down' many of the Bible's anthropomorphisms, they do not remove them all, and sometimes create some of their own. Any account of the Targums' 'anti-anthropomorphisms' should take into account two further factors: first, that expressions insisting that things are performed or said 'before the Lord', or stated in the passive rather than the active voice, are associated in the Bible with the stylised language of the Persian court, as a glance at Ezra 4:18, 12–13 will show. The Targumists thereby constantly remind their hearers or readers that God is *king*. Second, in speaking (for example) of God's power rather than his arm, the Targumists are both exercising their concern to give a precise meaning to the Hebrew, and operating consistently their policy of turning 'poetic' expressions into prosaic fact, and of treating the Hebrew Bible as an extended narrative whose meaning they strive to convey.

The numerous divine titles for which the Aramaic translators are famous may also be understood as means which enable the translators to express more precisely what the scriptural text might mean. Expressions like *Shekhina*; Glory; Lord of the World; He who Sees, but is not Seen; and many more such can be construed as further defining the mode and quality of God's presence and activity with Israel, with individuals and in the world; in the mouths of human speakers, these titles may feature in prayer, supplication, lamentation or description of God's dealings with humanity. Most of these titles are used in other rabbinic texts; one, however, is peculiar to the Targumim. The *Memra* ('word, utterance') of the Lord, used normally in conjunction with the divine name, appears as a specialised targumic term which has been much discussed, and appears designed to associate the proper name of God with his speech and his merciful presence with Israel. The great number and variety of these titles clearly indicates the translators' desire to demonstrate to their addressees that God is even now involved in all aspects of their lives: he is both King of the Universe, and the Merciful One who rescues the poor from destitution and oppression. There is, that is to say, a certain homiletic aspect to the Targumists' employment of divine titles, which is related to the question of the place of the Aramaic translations in the life of the Jewish people.

Finally, it must be noted that the Targumim are capable of presenting more than one interpretation of individual Hebrew words and expressions. A striking example of this procedure is found in the Targum of Judges 5:2, where three explanations of the verse are engendered by interpretation of the Hebrew root *pr'*, which is used in the first two words of the verse. This root is first taken to signify 'abandon restraint', and leads to discussion of Israel's rebellion against the Torah. It is then understood in the light of post-biblical Hebrew as meaning 'repay', and made to refer to the punishment of

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the shattering of Sisera and his army. Finally, the Targumist explained it as meaning 'let loose', especially of the hair, in such a way as to suggest a head uncovered, a sign of freedom, which is then applied to the public teaching of the Torah by the sages in a time of danger.[46] These explanations are not formally separated from one another in any way, but appear on the surface of the text as one, seamless interpretation and translation. Occasionally, multiple interpretations may be distinguished from each other, as in the case of Targum Sheni Est. 2:7 which explains Esther's name 'Hadassah': first, we are told that 'Hadassah' means 'myrtle', and that her name, like the myrtle, gives off the fragrance of good deeds. The Targum then notes that she was called this name in the Hebrew language, and asks why this was so. This leads to an interpretation of Hadassah as referring to the righteous, who are compared to the myrtle by Isaiah, the appropriate verse of his prophecy (55:13) being cited.[47]

Most often, however, there is no indication that a double or triple interpretation of some part of the Hebrew is being presented, and it is only a knowledge of the underlying Hebrew text which will reveal its presence in the Targum. Such is the case, for example, at Gen. 3:22, when God declares after the disobedience of the first human beings: 'Behold, the man has become like one *mimmennû*' to know good and evil. The Hebrew word transliterated may mean 'of us', and this, indeed, is the usual translation offered by English Bibles. But it may equally mean 'of/from him(self)'. The Palestinian Targumim explore both possibilities, as TN of the verse demonstrates with its rendering of God's words: 'The first man whom I have created is alone on earth as I am alone on the heavens on high.' So far the Targum has taken *mimmennû* as meaning 'of us', and the similarity between God and the first man is spelled out in a manner which avoids theological difficulties. TN, however, continues with the divine speech: 'Many peoples are to arise *from him*, and *from him* will arise one people who will know to distinguish between good and evil.'[48] Here the second sense of *mimmennû* is exploited: from him will arise descendants in the future. But *mimmennû* might also be construed as meaning 'of himself', and that was precisely how TO understood it, giving not a double, but a single, interpretation of it to yield: 'Behold, Adam was alone in the world of himself to know good and evil.' In other words, Adam was alone in creation in having of himself the ability and freedom to know

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46 See W. Smelik, *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 392–6.
47 See Grossfeld, *The Two Targums of Esther*, p. 135.
48 Translation of TN by M. McNamara, in A. Díez Macho (ed.), *Neophyti 1 Tomo I Genesis* (Madrid and Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968), p. 505.

good and evil. According to Gen. Rab. 21:5, this interpretation of *mimmennû* was that proposed by R. Akiba, although the midrash does not refer to TO. Mention of R. Akiba, however, leads us to a final, but most important, aspect of targumic exegesis.

Where the *halakhah* is at issue, the Targumim almost invariably offer single interpretations of the underlying Hebrew text. This is particularly so in the case of TO, which has close affinities with the school of Rabbi Akiba and the halakhic rulings ascribed to him by the classical rabbinic sources.[49] These affinities, however, are precisely to be explained historically. There is no doubting that TO's *halakhah* agrees again and again with that attributed in the halakhic midrashim to R. Akiba and his disciples; nor is there any doubt that in those cases where TO explicitly declares halakhic positions it agrees with the received opinions of the sages of the Babylonian Talmud. The Palestinian Targum, as we have noted, sometimes relays halakhic rulings which contradict those of the rabbis, though they do not do so by engaging in direct debate with the decisions of the sages. This last point must be considered further, since it leads inevitably to discussion of the literary genre of the Targumim.

The genre of the Targumim

Many of the characteristic practices of targumic interpretation of the Hebrew Bible are displayed also by the classical midrashim, and by exegesis of scriptural verses in the two Talmuds. The exegetical *methods* adopted by the Targumim and by other classical rabbinic texts are thus similar in many respects; and the Targumim can, and often do, incorporate into their translations interpretations which bear striking resemblances to interpretations preserved in other rabbinic texts. As an example of such incorporation we might note the 'Midrash of the Four Keys', four matters over which God alone has control, namely life, the grave, food and rain. This lengthy midrash is found at Gen. 30:22 in TN, FTP and FTV, and at Deut. 28:12 in PJ; and a form of it is known also from Gen. Rab. 73:4 and b. Sanh. 113a, although in these sources only three keys are mentioned. Some relationship between the targumic version of the 'four keys' and that in other rabbinic texts is evident; but care is needed in delineating the exact extent to which those texts actually overlap with the Targumim. Indeed, many so-called 'parallels' between targumic interpretations and exegetical material found in other rabbinic texts may turn out, on close examination, to be less solid than might appear to be the case at first

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49 See Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, pp. 15–18.

sight. On this macro-level, therefore, the relationship between Targum and midrash always requires careful qualification. When it comes to the details of genre, however, there are clear differences distinguishing Targum from midrash.

The first of these is obvious, but decisive. Targum necessarily involves the translation of a Hebrew base text into another language: midrash does not. To this we may add that Targum provides translation into Aramaic of the complete underlying Hebrew base text, each word and verse being treated in the sequence of the original Hebrew. The few exceptions to this pervasive characteristic of Targum do not substantially affect this observation: the most paraphrastic Targumim, like Targum Canticles and Targum Sheni of Esther, make strenuous efforts to translate every word of the Hebrew into Aramaic, even if occasionally they rearrange the sequence of the Hebrew words in their explanations. Midrash, by way of contrast, may isolate one or two Hebrew words, or segments of verses, for comment; it may then omit altogether to treat large portions of text which follow those words or segments selected, before turning attention to another verse or part-verse of the text being interpreted.

A second difference is equally obvious. Targum never cites rabbinic authorities by name, whereas midrashic texts do so as a matter of course, often in disputes, which can appear as small literary forms and feature prominently in the text. Associated with such disputes in midrash is the Hebrew formula *davar 'aher*, 'another interpretation': this formula is not found either in Hebrew or in equivalent translation in the Targumim. As we have seen, Targum, like midrash, provides multiple interpretations of particular items or verses; but it does not normally signal their presence with any standard introductory form of words. Finally, midrash goes about its business by singling out a particular lemma which it deems significant and to which it immediately adds comment, whereas Targum continues to reflect the form of the underlying Hebrew text as a whole, if necessary giving coherence and direction to it by introducing narrative information. Thus the poetic passages of the Pentateuch are treated by the Targumim as if they were prose, their Hebrew poetic form entirely disappearing in the Targum. A similar procedure is discernible in Targum Canticles, whose poetry is interpreted in prose, with reference to mini-narratives of Israel's history, and in the Targum of Psalms, where narrative is brought to the fore.

In light of the above remarks, it would be proper to ask whether Targum might properly be categorised as 'rewritten Bible' or 'rewritten scripture'. The definition of these terms, and the question of whether they might refer

to a genre or to a process of interpretation, are currently matters of debate; but there is some agreement that they can be used to describe the exegetical procedures of writings like Jubilees, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, and Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*.[50] Like the Targumim, all these writings are based on biblical books whose content they amplify. They fill gaps in the biblical narrative; they represent the heroes of Israel's past in the best possible light; they 'modernise' topographical terms; and they strive to eliminate contradictions and explain obscurities in the original text. Between such writings and the Targumim, however, there are crucial differences. First, rewritten scripture texts can, and frequently do, omit altogether portions of their underlying exemplar: Jubilees, for example, 'rewrites' Gen. 32 without any reference to Jacob's struggle with the mysterious being at the Wadi Jabbok, and reduces the account of Joseph's disclosing his identity to his brothers to a few terse lines (Jub. 43:14–16; contrast Gen. 45:1–7). Such a procedure is not possible for Targum, which must treat of each Hebrew word in its original sequence. Second, the process of rewriting scripture often includes significant rearrangement of the scriptural text such that its narrative sequence is disrupted. *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, for example, reports the events at the sacrifice of Isaac on three separate occasions, none of which corresponds to the placement of this episode in the original scriptural narrative. Targum may well allude to and discuss biblical events out of their proper sequence in the Hebrew Bible; but that process *never* entails the Targums' omission of those same events at the point of their occurrence in the scriptural text. Finally, we have seen how Targum is concerned to represent every word of its underlying Hebrew base text. Rewritten scripture may sometimes do the same thing, but most often it does not: even when relaying what the Hebrew Bible tells us, it may do so in words of its own choosing, rather than those employed by the original. Even a Targum as expansive as PJ never adopts the latter procedure: the original Hebrew words, translated into Aramaic, are present in the Targum's text, and provide the basis for such extra information as the Targum deems fit for inclusion.[51]

Might it, then, be appropriate to define the Targumim as translations? It is undeniable that translation occupies centre stage in these texts; but translation alone does not, and cannot, account for the kind of texts which this chapter has sought to describe. This is true even for those Targums like TO and TJ of

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50 For an excellent description and analysis of this debate, see D. A. Machiela, 'Once More, with Feeling. Rewritten Scripture in Ancient Judaism – A Review of Recent Developments', *JJS* 61 (2010), pp. 308–20.

51 This is graphically illustrated by Samely, *The Interpretation of Speech*, pp. 160–2.

the Prophets, which at first blush seem to be for the most part 'translational'. Careful scrutiny reveals their subtlety, an example of which we have seen in TO's rendering of the start of Gen. 2:7, 'And the Lord God created', rather than providing a close rendering of the base text, which has 'and the Lord God formed'.[52] The incorporation of extra information in addition to translation is also part of the 'stuff' of Targum, as we have seen; this information is provided in answer to tacit questions being asked of, or problems being addressed in, the scriptural verses under consideration, and marks out the resulting Targum as a kind of paraphrase of the underlying base text. Accordingly, Samely has offered a generic description of Targum as 'an Aramaic narrative paraphrase of the biblical text in exegetical dependence on its wording'.[53] This definition holds good for the vast majority of the Targumim; and it holds good in large part also for texts like Targum Canticles and Targum Sheni of Esther. These two quite late Targums in places push the targumic genre to its very limits, Targum Canticles in places 'dissolving' the underlying Hebrew into its paraphrase, and Targum Sheni prefacing the Targum with a lengthy section (Tg. Sheni Est. 1:1–9) of thematic discourse involving some lemmatic commentary. But even in these Targumim the pervasive narrative paraphrase is to the fore.

Social setting and addressees

To whom were the Aramaic Targumim addressed? The earliest rabbinic references to the Targum include the famous, anonymous ruling recorded in m. Meg. 4:4, that the person reading from the Torah may not read to the *meturgeman* more than one verse, while the person reading from the Prophets may read three verses to the *meturgeman*, unless the prophetic reading is from three separate paragraphs, in which case the reader must read the verses one by one. Much is presupposed by the wording of these instructions. First, the translation of Torah and Prophets into Aramaic is taken for granted: its form and content are not explained, nor is any reason for the translation provided. Second, the translation takes place as part of the regular synagogue readings: the Targum's setting in the formal procedures of the synagogue is taken for granted as a known custom. Finally, we are not in this Mishnah given any details about the character or text of the Targum. It is not, for example, made plain that Targum in the synagogue was relayed without the use of a written text, an important detail we learn from other sources: it was delivered orally,

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52 See above, p. 227 for discussion of this verse in TO.
53 Samely, *The Interpretation of Speech*, p. 180.

so that the congregation should not confuse the Hebrew, read from a scroll, and the Targum, which most emphatically was not.[54] The regulations of m. Meg. 4:4, therefore, are unlikely to apply to written texts of Targum. Some further details are in part addressed, however, by m. Meg. 4:10, an anonymous ruling which is worth quoting in full:

> The story of Reuben is read out, but not interpreted; the story of Tamar is read out and interpreted. The first story of the calf is read out and interpreted, and the second is read out but not interpreted. The Blessing of the Priests and the story of David and Amnon are read out but not interpreted.

As Philip Alexander has remarked, this ruling almost certainly indicates that there were times and places in which all these scriptural sections were indeed being translated into Aramaic, a state of affairs which the Mishnah attempts to some degree to control and bring into order in the name of rabbinic authority.[55] In this tractate of the Mishnah, the Targum appears to have its principal home in the synagogue: the Targumim themselves also suggest as much, with their use of apostrophes such as 'O my people, the house of Israel', and references to the Jewish people as a *knishta*', 'synagogue' or 'assembly'.[56] Its purpose in synagogue is educational and homiletic: Targum is addressed to all, from those whose knowledge of biblical Hebrew is limited or non-existent and who require an Aramaic translation to have a full understanding of the scriptural readings, to those who are learned, yet might still benefit from a reminder of the commonly accepted meaning of the scriptures.[57] The Mishnah strongly implies that Targum was not, or once upon a time had not been, a medium over which the rabbis had much control; but its value as a mode of instruction seems not to be in question. As we shall see presently, there is evidence to suggest that Targum originated in pre-rabbinic times, and

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54 On the oral delivery of Targum, see *Tanhuma Vayyera'* 6; Pesiqta Rabbati 14ab.
55 See Alexander, 'The Rabbinic Lists of Forbidden Targumim', especially 187–9.
56 See Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 20–1, 147–51 (for Targum's association with synagogue probably from the first century CE).
57 Knowledge and use of the Hebrew language continued in the land of Israel long after the destruction of the temple: for the development and growth of mishnaic Hebrew, for example, see now M. Bar-Asher, 'Mishnaic Hebrew. An Introductory Survey', in Katz (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. IV, pp. 369–403. But the language of biblical Hebrew presented peculiar idioms, grammatical constructions and vocabulary which speakers of later forms of Hebrew would have found unfamiliar; and Targum's place in the elucidation of such items for even the well educated Jew should not be underestimated. See further below, pp. 237–8, and S. D. Fraade, 'Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum, and Multilingualism in the Jewish Galilee of the Third–Sixth Centuries', in L. I. Levine (ed.), *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (New York and Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1992), pp. 253–85.

that it was one of a number of already existing institutions which the sages accepted and attempted over the years to influence.[58]

Targum also finds its place and addressees in the study house.[59] A second rabbinic text, Sifre Deut. 161, mentions Targum as part of a course of formal study. This midrash expounds Deut. 17:19, part of the 'law of the king', who is required to possess a copy of the book of the Torah in such a way that it be with him and that he may read it all the days of his life, and learn to revere the Lord. The Sifre comments:

> *So that he may learn to revere the Lord his God*: this teaches that reverence leads to Scripture [*miqra'*]; Scripture leads to Targum; Targum leads to Mishnah; Mishnah leads to Talmud; Talmud leads to deeds; and deeds lead to fear (of Heaven).

Here Targum appears as part of a structured curriculum, standing between scripture and Mishnah; both TO and TJ, it will be recalled, are not merely recognised by the sages, but have a role to play in halakhic discussion and decision.[60] It has a significant role in the study house and academy; and by positioning it between scripture and Mishnah, the Sifre may offer the implication that, just as Talmud requires Mishnah as the essential foundation of its discussion, so study of the Mishnah may require an antecedent knowledge of the Targum. Whether or not that is so, the adoption of TO and TJ by the Babylonian academies witnesses to the honoured place of Targum as addressing scholars and students in the academies and study houses. Having a setting in synagogue as well, Targum affords opportunities for the transmission of the sages' decisions and teachings to a broad constituency.

Targum, like the scriptures which it translates, is addressed to the individual as well as to the community, to the private student, the one who 'meditates on the Torah of the Lord day and night'. If, as seems most likely, Targum originated outside the world of the rabbis and had wide popular appeal, its place in private study, and the incorporation of private, non-rabbinic interpretations into certain forms of Targum, is comprehensible. Furthermore, the widely held view that the Targums 'officially' approved by the sages in Babylonia (TO and TJ of the Prophets) were taken to the west and, over a

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58 See the discussion in Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 442–51 on both the synagogue and the Targum as institutions whose origins lay outside the sphere of the rabbis, and which the latter attempted over the course of time to regulate and influence.

59 For further discussion, see A. D. York, 'The Targum in the Synagogue and in the School', *JSJ* 10 (1979), 74–86.

60 Alexander, 'Targum, Targumim', cites b. Ber. 28b; b. MQ 28b; b. Meg. 3a; b. Sanh. 94b as texts which view TJon of the Prophets as having authority in certain halakhic discussions.

period of time, established themselves in the land of Israel, thereby displacing the Palestinian Targums in their various forms, strongly suggests that private individuals or groups took it upon themselves to preserve the Palestinian Targum in its various forms. At this distance of time we cannot tell what their motives may have been; but it would appear that interested individuals would have played a central role in the transmission of a Targum such as PJ, which is far too expansive for regular use in the synagogue service, and which frequently contradicts the received opinions of the rabbis. The variety of texts which come to us as Targum, therefore, is very likely to be reflected in the variety of addressees and settings in which those texts were used.

Finally, attention should be drawn to a likely function of Targum which unites the private and public settings described earlier. Given their close relationship to the Hebrew texts underlying them, the Aramaic translations could be used to provide instruction on the intricacies of biblical Hebrew.[61] This is not difficult to demonstrate in the case of TO and TJon of the Prophets, which for extended sections of text offer close translations of their Hebrew *Vorlagen*. To learn the details of biblical Hebrew with the help of such Targumim would be practicable, and would account for the enduring use of this medium within the academies.

The dates of the Targumim

Like much ancient traditional literature, the Targumim are layered compositions, including information from different sources and times; the date of the final redaction or compilation of a Targum text or manuscript, therefore, is not necessarily the same as the date of the various kinds of information it contains. TO and TJ, for example, in their final forms are products of the Babylonian academies, and are cited by the Babylonian Talmud; but much of the information they convey originated in the land of Israel, some of it at a time when the temple stood, or not long after its destruction. The pioneering work of Renée Bloch and Geza Vermes guides us here: the dates of individual halakhic rulings, *haggadot*, and exegetical and interpretative items as they were included in the several Targumim can be determined with some accuracy if they can be compared and contrasted with similar items of information found elsewhere in Jewish writings which can be dated with a reasonable degree of

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61 See P. S. Alexander, 'How Did the Rabbis Learn Hebrew?', in W. Horbury (ed.), *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), pp. 71–89.

certainty.[62] Critical and judicious use of the guidelines suggested by Bloch and Vermes has enabled students of Targum to suggest dates for individual traditions in Targum: some of these may cohere with traditions attested as early as the later Second Temple period, while others clearly belong in the company of debates and discussions not attested before the time of the Babylonian Talmud. The dating of each item, therefore, must proceed on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes the Targumic tendency to 'modernise' biblical place names, to introduce the names of non-biblical places, to refer to known historical events, or to make use of Greek and Latin loanwords may offer a general indication of the period in which a particular Targum reached its final form; but this information, too, must always be used cautiously.[63] The form of Aramaic employed by a particular Targum may sometimes assist in discussion of dating; but arguments for date based on language are often controversial, given the divergence of scholarly opinion on the precise development of Aramaic dialects after the destruction of the temple.[64]

The manuscripts in which the Targumim have been preserved can mostly, of course, be dated with some accuracy, and these, along with quotations from the Targumim in other datable writings, provide a benchmark for determining a time by which a particular Targum is likely to have been in existence. The Cairo Genizah has yielded manuscripts of pentateuchal Targum, for example, which range in date between the eighth and fourteenth centuries CE; and the commentaries of Rashi (1040–1105 CE) and scholarly works like the 'Arukh of R. Natan b. Yehiel (1035–1106 CE) often provide quotations from Targum which antedate any extant manuscript. With such evidence as is currently available, we give here a dating of the several Targumim which is not uncommonly adopted as a rule of thumb. The origin of TO may be ascribed to the first or early second century CE, with final redaction in Babylonia in early Talmudic

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62 For Bloch's considered views on this, see her article 'Midrash', in L. Pirot, A. Robert and H. Cazelles (eds.), *Supplément au dictionnaire de la Bible*, vol. v (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1957), cols. 1263–80; and the remarks of Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, pp. 1–10. The process identified by Bloch and Vermes remains central to attempts to date items within the written Targumim, and has been further nuanced: see, for example, A. D. York, 'The Dating of Targumic Literature', *JSJ* 5 (1974), 49–62. For a critique of this approach, see S. A. Kaufman, 'On Methodology in the Study of the Targums and Their Chronology', *JSNT* 23 (1985), 117–24.

63 M. McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1. Genesis Translated, with Apparatus and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible 1A (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), pp. 16–23 offers examples of such evidence, and how it might be used to date elements within the Targum.

64 For a more optimistic assessment of the use of language in the dating of Targum, see Kaufman, 'Dating the Language of the Palestinian Targums'. On Aramaic dialects and the Targumim, see especially Cook, 'A New Perspective', and Müller-Kessler, 'The Earliest Evidence'. These two essays strongly suggest that, in our present state of knowledge, linguistic evidence must be used with a certain reserve in the dating of the Targumim.

times, probably no later than the fifth century CE; TJ of the Prophets may be dated similarly. TN is probably to be dated to the early fourth century CE, while in its present form PJ very likely dates from the early seventh century CE (although the bulk of it could well have been in existence by the late fourth century). The FT of Pentateuch seem to belong to a time somewhere between TN and PJ, while the targumic Toseftot, given their character, are virtually impossible to date. Targums of the Writings present severe difficulties for attempts to date them; probably all of them should be ascribed to a period later than the sixth century CE. Rarely do they provide us with sufficient information for more specific dating. Our present state of knowledge is summarised conveniently in the introductions to the various Targumim provided in the English translation of the Targum edited by Martin McNamara.[65]

Up to this point, we have naturally been concerned with written Targumim whose texts we possess. The rabbinic sages, however, trace the origins of Targum to the days of Ezra, when the great assembly described in Neh. 8 gathered to hear the words of the Torah declaimed. We hear that the readers proclaimed the words from the Torah scroll, and that they did so *mᵉphorash* (Neh. 8:8), which the sages took to indicate the accompanying Targum.[66] In the minds of the sages, this Targum would no doubt have been oral in character, following the rules which they had laid down for its public use in the synagogue. There is, however, clear evidence that Aramaic translations of at least parts of the Bible were known in the days of the Second Temple: the Qumran caves have yielded small fragments of an Aramaic translation of Leviticus, and more substantial portions of an Aramaic version of Job.[67] Whether these Aramaic texts are to be understood as 'Targum' of the kinds we have described here, however, is uncertain. The fragments of Aramaic Leviticus are too small to allow judgement on this matter. The fragments of Aramaic Job, on the other hand, have been carefully scrutinised by David

65 See Cathcart, Maher and McNamara (eds.), *The Aramaic Bible*.
66 See b. Meg. 3a; b. Ned. 37b; Gen. Rab. 36:8; jer.Meg. 4.1.74d. For modern explanations of this word, see H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, Word Biblical Commentary 16 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), pp. 278–9, 290–1.
67 The Leviticus fragments are designated 4QTgLev = 4Q16, and cover Lev. 16:12–15, 18–21: they are dated to the second century BCE. The Job fragments are designated 4QTgJob = 4Q157, covering Job 3:5–9, 4:16–5:4; and 11QTgJob = 11Q10, covering Job 17:14–42:11. It is worthy of note that the earliest Aramaic Bible translations known to us are renderings of biblical passages whose language is either technical or full of difficulties. For the text of the Leviticus fragments and of the Aramaic Job of 4Q157, see J. T. Milik's edition in R. de Vaux and J. T. Milik (eds.), *Qumran Grotte 4.II (4Q128–4Q157)*, DJD 6 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), pp. 86–9, 90. For the Job fragments from Cave 11, see F. García Martínez, E. J. C. Tigchelaar and A. S. van der Woude, *Qumran Cave 11.II. 11Q2–18, 11Q20–31*, DJD 23 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 79–180.

Shepherd, who concludes that they represent a translation of a kind similar to that represented by the Syriac Peshitta version rather than a Targum with exegetical interest.[68] Within this Peshitta-like translation, however, Sally Gold has brought to our attention a number of verses in this text where it seems probable that the translator of the Qumran Job has been influenced by biblical texts from outside the book of Job to help with the interpretation of the latter, and to create what amounts to a sophisticated exegesis of particular verses and part-verses.[69] The Qumran Aramaic Job, therefore, may represent an early, non-rabbinic written Targum. Whether or not this is so, the Qumran materials indubitably witness to the production of translations of at least some biblical texts in Second Temple times, and tend to confirm the rabbinic perception of such translation as an institution of long standing. But the journey from the Aramaic translations found at Qumran to the Targumim which have been transmitted to us affords no straightforward path; and this chapter has been able to describe only some of the highways and byways it involves.

68 D. Shepherd, *Targum and Translation. A Reconsideration of the Qumran Aramaic Version of Job*, Studia Semitica Neerlandica 45 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004).

69 S. Gold, 'Targum or Translation. New Light on the Character of Qumran Job (11Q10) from a Synoptic Approach', *The Journal for the Aramaic Bible* 3 (2001), 101–20; S. Gold, 'Making Sense of Job 37:13. Translation Strategies in 11Q10, Peshitta, and the Rabbinic Targum', in A. Rapoport-Albert and G. Greenberg (eds.), *Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Texts. Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman*, JSOT Supp. Series 333 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 282–302.

Scriptural interpretation at Qumran

JONATHAN G. CAMPBELL

Introduction

The Qumran Dead Sea scrolls constitute a collection of Jewish manuscripts recovered from eleven caves near an ancient settlement called Khirbet Qumran on the north-western shore of the Dead Sea.[1] Discovered between 1947 and 1956, and originating from what scholars call the late Second Temple period of Judaism (*c.* 250 BCE–70 CE), it contains over 900 manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.[2] The vast majority are literary texts of a religious nature, although most have only survived in a considerably damaged state.[3]

Given its size, it is helpful to subdivide the Qumran collection to aid understanding. One way of doing so that views the manuscripts within their late Second Temple context is to propose a threefold division:[4] (i) the widely circulating scriptures that those at Qumran, like other late Second Temple Jews, assumed had an origin in ancient Israel and Judah; (ii) other pious works which make no such claims to antiquity and, lacking signs of a Qumran origin, were also probably circulating widely; and (iii) the so-called sectarian Qumran Dead Sea scrolls. As we shall see, the first of these categories included books from the later rabbinic Bible (e.g. Genesis, Isaiah), as well as other texts believed to stem from ancient Israel and Judah (e.g. Jubilees, Tobit). The second category, in addition to a long-known composition like the second-century BCE Ben Sira, included writings previously unknown to scholars such

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1 For further detail, see Campbell, *Deciphering*, pp. 1–21.
2 Tov, *The Texts from the Judaean Desert*, pp. 27–89, provides a complete list.
3 On the handful of non-literary texts, see initially Campbell, *Deciphering*, p. 97.
4 For alternatives, see Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, pp. 8–9; and D. Dimant, 'The Qumran Manuscripts. Content and Significance', in D. Dimant and L. H. Schiffman (eds.), *Time to Prepare a Way in the Wilderness*, STDJ 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 23–58.

as 4QSapiential Work (4Q185) and 4QLegal Texts A–B (4Q251, 264a).[5] The third included other previously unknown works normally dubbed 'sectarian' because their distinct vocabulary[6] and ideology[7] show that they were produced by those responsible for the collection as a whole (e.g. 4QMMT[a–f] (4Q394–9), Community Rule (1QS, 4QS[a–j] (4Q255–64), 5QS (5Q11)).[8]

The release of previously unavailable Cave 4 manuscripts in 1991 has added considerably to the literature belonging to each of these categories.[9] But it is sometimes difficult to determine to which of them a given composition belongs. In particular, scholars are no longer as confident as they once were in determining exactly which writings were penned at Qumran (or within a broader parent movement) rather than inherited from the wider world of late Second Temple Judaism. For example, the Temple scroll (4QT (4Q524), 11QT[a–c] (11Q19–21)), generally assumed to be sectarian when first published because of legal emphases shared with obviously sectarian works like the Damascus Document, is now often understood not to be so in view of its lack of sectarian nomenclature. Similarly, the more recently available 4QCalendrical Documents A–I (4Q320–30) share the calendrical preoccupation of sectarian texts, such as 4QWords of the Heavenly Lights[a–c] (4Q504–6), yet lack the distinctive vocabulary. It is likely that neither was composed at Qumran, therefore, although certainty is impossible.[10]

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5 Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, p. 7, explains the sigla designating Qumran manuscripts.
6 Prominent examples include 'the many' (הרבים), 'interpretation' (פשר), 'Master' (משכיל), 'Overseer' (מבקר), 'Messiah of Aaron' (משיח אהרון), 'Sons of Light' (בני אור), 'Sons of Zadok' (בני צדוק), 'the Man of Scoffing' (איש הלצון), 'the Teacher of Righteousness' (מורה הצדק) and 'the community' (היחד).
7 Ideological emphases include preoccupation with the temple, its priesthood and purity; interpretation of Mosaic law generally stricter than that in contemporary sources; observance of a correct religious calendar; and a sectarian focus upon eschatological matters. All are evident to a degree, for example, in 4QMMT[a–f] (4Q394–9); see further Campbell, *Deciphering*, pp. 105–9, and J. J. Collins and R. A. Kugler (eds.), *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).
8 The Damascus Document alone among sectarian texts was known beforehand: it was discovered in Cairo in 1896 in two versions called CD (C = Cairo, D = Damascus) before subsequently being found at Qumran (4QD[a–h] (4Q266–73), 5QD (5Q12), 6QD (6Q15)).
9 C. Martone, 'Publication', in L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 2000), vol. II, pp. 721–3, provides a brief publication history.
10 On the Temple scroll, see S. White Crawford, *The Temple Scrolls and Related Texts*, CQS 2 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); on calendrical writings, see J. C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Measuring Time* (London: Routledge, 1998). On determining whether manuscripts are sectarian, see Dimant, 'Qumran Manuscripts', and C. A. Newsom, '"Sectually Explicit" Literature from Qumran', in W. H. Propp et al. (eds.), *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, BJS 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 167–187; on the complexities of making such identifications, see P. R. Davies, 'Sects from Texts. On the Problems of Doing a

One point that is clear, however, is how important such a large Jewish literary corpus from the late Second Temple period is for historians. Its contents have transformed scholarly understanding of the books later forming the rabbinic Bible, as well as writings like Jubilees and Tobit;[11] the discovery of previously unknown similar works (e.g. 4QApocryphon of Joshua[a–b] (4Q378–9), 4QPseudo-Daniel[a–c] (4Q243-5)) is also significant, as we shall discover. The Qumran Dead Sea scrolls have further cast much indirect light on many aspects of late Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.[12] Most significantly, they constitute direct evidence for understanding those who owned the collection. Although scholarly debate continues, especially since the 1991 releases, there remains widespread agreement that the community (or communities) possessing the manuscripts found in the caves used the Khirbet Qumran site in the late Second Temple period and was (were) connected in some way with the Essenes described by Philo, Josephus and Pliny.[13]

The interpretation of scripture in sectarian manuscripts is central to understanding the Qumran community in its late Second Temple context. To that question we may now turn, first by considering more fully the scriptures employed at Qumran.

Scripture at Qumran

Although some details may have been distinctive, as we shall see, there is nothing to suggest Qumran scripture was essentially different from that of other late Second Temple Jews. Hence, we shall consider two key theories

Sociology of the Qumran Literature', in J. G. Campbell et al. (eds.), *New Directions in Qumran Studies*, LSTS 52 (London: Continuum, 2005), pp. 111–133.

11 See especially Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, and Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd edn.

12 Detailed discussion can be found *inter alia* in G. Brin and B. Nitsan (eds.), יובל לחקר מגילות ים המלח (*Fifty Years of Dead Sea Scrolls Research. Studies in Memory of Jacob Licht*) (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsevi, 2001); M. Fieger et al. (eds.), *Qumran – Die Schriftrollen vom Toten Meer. Vorträge des St Galler Qumran-Symposiums vom 2/3 Juli 1999*, NTOA 47 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2001); P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years. A Comprehensive Assessment*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1998–9); J. Gascoigne et al. (eds.), *Journal of Religious History (Dead Sea Scrolls Special Issue)* 26 (2002); R. A. Kugler and E. M. Schuller (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Fifty. Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Literature Qumran Section Meetings* (Atlanta, CA, Scholars Press, 1999); and L. H. Schiffman et al. (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/Shrine of the Book, 2000).

13 See Campbell, *Deciphering*, pp. 46–110. It may be best to speak of 'communities', for there was certainly development over time, as well as diversity at any given point in time, among both those at Qumran and those belonging to a broader parent movement of which Qumran was a part (or from which it seceded).

regarding the nature of late Second Temple scripture in general before returning to Qumran scripture in particular.[14]

Until recently, most scholars held to a consensus which, notwithstanding disagreements on individual points, is found in Schürer et al., Beckwith, and Grabbe among others.[15] It posits that the late Second Temple scriptures were identical with or very close to the rabbinic Bible of the Common Era containing the Torah (Law), *Nevi'im* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings); they did not include books from the later collections known as the Apocrypha (e.g. Tobit) and Pseudepigrapha (e.g. Jubilees). The Torah reached its final shape in Persian times (537–333 BCE), while the Prophets had attained their canonical form by the second century BCE. The Writings were finalised either in the course of the late Second Temple period or afterwards by the early rabbinic movement. In favour of this reconstruction is the fact that Daniel, compiled in the mid-second century BCE, was placed in the *Ketuvim* of the rabbinic Bible rather than in the *Nevi'im*, implying that the latter was already complete but the former still open. Furthermore, a number of late Second Temple exegetical writings appear to refer to scripture in ways reflecting a complete or all-but-complete tripartite canon. Thus, we find three similar phrases, including 'the Law and the Prophets and the others' (ΤΟΥ ΝΟΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΛΛΩΝ), in the prologue to Ecclesiasticus from the 130s BCE.[16] We read of 'the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms' (ΤΩ ΝΟΜΩ ΜΩΥΣΕΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΑΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΨΑΛΜΟΙΣ) in Luke 24:44, where the third element could designate either an already finalised Ketuvim headed by the Psalms or a still-fluid third category represented by them. Further confirmation appears in the fragmentary Qumran work released in 1991 known as 4MMT[a–f]. In section C of the editors' composite text (lines 9–11a), this second-century BCE composition reads:[17]

14 Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets*, pp. 1–70, contains a more detailed survey of scholarly views.
15 See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. II, pp. 314–21; Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*; Schürer, 'Formation of the Hebrew Bible', pp. 39–86; and Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, pp. 150–82. The classic expression of this view was Ryle, *Canon*.
16 All translations of ancient sources are the author's own.
17 The Hebrew presented by the editors (Qimron and Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4*, pp. 58–9) and based on 4QMMT[d–e] is:

[ואף . . .]
[כתב]נו אליכה שתבין בספר מושה [ו]בספר[י הנ]ביאים ובדוי [ד   [
. . . [במעשי] דור ודור

As the editors' more detailed transcription shows, however, the spacing between words and the identity of several letters are unclear; for a minimalist reconstruction, see Ulrich, 'Non-Attestation', 202–11.

[9] [. . . And also]

[10] we have [written] to you so that you might understand the Book of Moses [and] the Book[s of the Pr]ophets and Davi[d]

[11] [the deeds of] one generation to the next . . .

Although the significance of '[the deeds of] one generation to the next' is not immediately clear, this passage likewise seemingly envisages a Torah, Prophets and third collection designated by the Psalms ('David').

But such a construal of the evidence has its difficulties.[18] For instance, bipartite references to scripture, such as 'the Torah and the Prophets', are the norm in late Second Temple exegesis. Examples include 'the Law and the Prophets' in 2 Macc. 15:9 and Rom. 3:21 (ΤΟΥ ΝΟΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤῶΝ ΠΡΟΦΗΤῶΝ), as well as mention of the commandments that came 'through the hand of Moses and through the hand of all his servants the Prophets' in 1QS i.3 (ביד מושה וביד כול עבדיו הנביאים).[19] It is also common to find Daniel described as a prophet, suggesting that this was not yet a designation with defined limits. Josephus, for example, saw fit to call Daniel 'a prophet of good things' (*Jewish Antiquities* 10.268), Matt. 24:15 mentions 'the prophet Daniel', while 4QFlorilegium iv.3 refers to 'the book of Daniel the prophet'. In response to such factors, it is possible to adjust the reconstruction outlined above by supposing that there was development over time from a twofold to a threefold arrangement of the scriptures and/or that the precise contents of the scriptural divisions differed from group to group at any one time. Thus, Steinmann has argued for the former possibility, while Abegg et al. have proposed that the Qumran community included Jubilees in the Torah, Enochic writings among the Prophets, and Tobit within a third collection.[20] Others have suggested that at Qumran, and possibly elsewhere, there was an additional fourth class of scripture containing historical works, for 4QMMT's '[the deeds of] one generation to the next', appearing (if the editors' reconstruction is correct) after references to 'Moses . . . [the Pr]ophets . . . and Davi[d]', implies as much.[21]

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18 See further Barton, *Oracles*, pp. 35–44, and Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64.

19 Of course, each element can appear on its own (e.g. 1QpHabakkuk ii.9), and one-part designations covering all scripture also occur (e.g. 1 Macc. 12:9). For further discussion of relevant Hebrew and Greek terms, see Barton, *Oracles*, pp. 35–95, and H. M. Orlinsky, 'Some Terms in the Prologue to Ben Sira and the Hebrew Canon', *JBL* 110 (1991), 483–90.

20 A. E. Steinmann, *The Oracles of God. The Old Testament Canon* (St Louis, MO: Concordia Academic Press, 1999), pp. 183–96, and Abegg, Flint and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, pp. v–vi. See also Flint, 'Scripture'; and S. J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 2nd edn (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), pp. 179–84, respectively.

21 See Flint, 'Scripture', p. 293, and VanderKam, 'Authoritative Literature', 388.

However, Barton, Campbell and Ulrich among others have put forward a more radical alternative which, notwithstanding disagreements on some points, seeks to address more thoroughly the difficulties of the consensus outlined above.[22] This is that late Second Temple Jews had an essentially bipartite scripture comprising the Torah and the Prophets. The former were the books of Moses, who was the prophet par excellence, and incorporated books thought to be of Mosaic origin from the Pentateuch and elsewhere; the Prophets comprised all additional writings linked to other pious heroes in the ancient scriptural story up to the return from exile. These would ordinarily have included not only the contents of the later *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* of the rabbinic Bible but also many books in the later Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. According to this reconstruction, tripartite descriptions of scripture are not what they seem. Thus, the prologue to Ecclesiasticus refers to all ancient scripture ('the Law and the Prophets') and subsequent non-scriptural works ('the others', such as the author's grandfather's). As for Luke 24:44, it highlights the Psalms within the Prophets in a secondary manner, the passage from 4QMMT[d-e] quoted above presumably doing likewise. Indeed, if the phrase '[the deeds of] one generation to the next' is accurately reconstructed and rightly understood as part of the preceding scriptural reference, two types of material within the Prophets may be being highlighted – one in relation to Davidic writings and another vis-à-vis historical works.[23]

In summary, Jews in late Second Temple times probably had a twofold scripture in which 'the Torah' constituted all books thought to originate from Moses, while 'the Prophets' was a loose designation for all other scriptures linked to the pious heroes of ancient Israel and Judah. Both were fundamentally the same in so far as Moses too was viewed as a prophet.[24] But neither formed a canon in the proper sense, for writings could be added to either category from time to time, at least among those who accepted such additions as authentic.[25] That seems the best way of explaining the publication of Jubilees and Daniel in

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22 See Barton, *Oracles*, pp. 44–95; Barton, 'Significance'; Campbell, '4QMMT[d]'; and Ulrich, 'Non-Attestation', pp. 211–14.

23 Note, similarly, that Josephus subdivides Mosaic writings into legal and historical materials in *Contra Apionem* 1.39. On the general significance of *Contra Apionem* 1.37–43, see the contrasting views of Barton, *Oracles*, pp. 58–60, and S. Mason, 'Josephus and His Twenty-Two Book Canon', in L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), pp. 110–27.

24 For Moses as the prophet par excellence, see Barton, *Oracles*, pp. 44–55; for the essential similarity of the Torah and the Prophets, see Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets*, pp. 241–82.

25 See Barton, *Oracles*, pp. 55–75, and J. G. Campbell, '"Rewritten Bible" and "Parabiblical Texts". A Terminological and Ideological Critique', in Campbell et al., (eds.) *New Directions*, pp. 43–68.

the mid-second century BCE, for example, as well as their reception as antique scripture in surviving exegetical literature from the first century BCE and first century CE.[26]

Returning to the situation at Qumran, however, we may make three further points.[27] First, it is likely that there were disagreements among late Second Temple Jews about the authenticity of newly available scriptures. While its widespread use shows that Daniel gained general acceptance, the fact that appeals to Jubilees are less frequent suggests it was rejected in many circles as 'obviously wrong'.[28] Its use in several sectarian works makes it clear, nevertheless, that Jubilees constituted scripture at Qumran.[29] And scholars are increasingly open to the suggestion that some previously unknown writings of a similar nature also had scriptural status at Qumran and possibly elsewhere: 4QReworked Pentateuch[a–e], the Temple scroll and 4QApocryphon of Joshua[a–b] would be prime candidates.[30] In contrast, Esther was probably deliberately excluded from the Qumran scriptures as inauthentic in view of its recommendation of the non-Mosaic festival of Purim.[31]

Second, considerable textual fluidity is evident in the Qumran scriptural manuscripts. Variations of this sort have long been known, of course, through a comparison of the masoretic text (MT), Septuagint (LXX), Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) and other ancient versions which show many minor differences in wording, as well as some more substantive divergences. Jeremiah is a classic case of the latter, for the LXX is approximately one eighth shorter than the MT, with its contents in a partially different order. Yet, surprisingly, the discovery

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26 On the dating of Jubilees and Daniel, see Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, pp. 69–74 and 17–27, 77–83.

27 For a discussion from a somewhat different perspective, see G. J. Brooke, '"Canon" in the Light of the Qumran Scrolls', in P. S. Alexander and J.-D. Kaestli (eds.), *The Canon of Scripture in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, PRISB 4 (Lausanne: Zèbre, 2007), pp. 81–98.

28 E. Ulrich, 'From Literature to Scripture. Reflections on the Growth of a Text's Authoritativeness', *DSD* 10 (2003), pp. 3–25, at p. 22, who presumably envisages that Jubilees' linguistic and legal anachronisms would have been tell-tale signs of inauthenticity.

29 There is an almost certain reference to Jubilees in CD 16:3–4; the remains of a now unidentifiable citation is preserved in 11QMelchizedek iii.18; an allusion to Jub. 23:13 in 4QTanhumim (4Q176) frag. 14 is likely; and 4QText with Citation of Jubilees (4Q228) seems to contain a Jubilees citation (as does the scripture-like 4QApocryphon of Jeremiah B (4Q384)).

30 Note, in particular, that 4QApocryphon of Joshua[b] is cited alongside other scriptures in 4QTestimonia (4Q175); see Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, pp. 88–99. More generally, see Flint, 'Scripture', and VanderKam, 'Questions of Canon'.

31 See initially VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 119–20, and, for a different perspective, S. White Crawford, 'Esther, Book of', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. I, pp. 269–70. More generally, see also White Crawford, '4QTales'.

of scriptural manuscripts among the Qumran Dead Sea scrolls which are up to one thousand years older than other witnesses has exacerbated, rather than palliated, such complexities. Thus, Qumran copies of scriptural books show many minor differences, some mirroring those long known from the MT, LXX and SP and others offering new readings; the same applies to works like Jubilees and 4QApocryphon of Joshua[a–b]. The evidence further shows that substantially divergent editions of some scriptural works also existed side by side at Qumran. This can be seen most dramatically with regard to Jeremiah, for Cave 4 copies include both MT-like (4QJeremiah[a, c, e] (4Q70, 72, 72b)) and LXX-like (4QJeremiah[b, d] (4Q71, 72a)) exemplars.[32] Something similar pertains to Exodus, 1 Samuel and Daniel.[33]

Third, the Qumran scriptural manuscripts show signs of interpretation when it comes to their physical representation, as others have noted.[34] Some are set out stichometrically, for example, while others have paragraph markings.[35] Furthermore, if it is accepted that those Qumran documents penned in *plene* orthography, including some scriptural manuscripts, were copied at Qumran,[36] then variant readings displayed within them may have been exegetically derived within the community. Hence, Gonçalves argues that 1QIsaiah[a]'s text at Isa. 8:11, 'and he turned me from walking in the way of this people' (rather than the MT's 'and he warned me against walking in the way of this people') is a sectarian exegetical variant, for the same wording was probably once cited in the now damaged 4QFlorilegium i.14–15.[37] Assorted variants in the text of Isaiah and Habakkuk within 4QpIsaiah[a–e] (4Q161–5) and 1QpHabakkuk, respectively, have often been explained in like manner.[38] But the textual variety of the Qumran scriptural manuscripts as a whole means it is impossible to be certain about the origin of these and other distinctive readings. They could have been inherited by Qumran scribes from the wider world of late Second Temple Judaism and only then used exegetically.

32 See Eshel, 'Jeremiah, Book of. The Biblical Text', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 1, pp. 644–7.
33 Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, and Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd edn, contain detailed discussion. See also Ulrich in this volume, pp. 83–104.
34 See Fishbane, 'Use, Authority', pp. 367–8, and Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation', pp. 302–3.
35 For such features, see Tov, *The Texts from the Judaean Desert*, pp. 323–51.
36 On this theory, see Tov, 'Biblical Texts', pp. 153–4.
37 F. J Gonçalves, 'Isaiah Scroll, The', ABD 3 (1992), 470–2, at 471.
38 G. J. Brooke, 'The Qumran Pesharim and the Text of Isaiah in the Cave 4 Manuscripts', in A. Rapoport-Albert and G. Greenberg (eds.), *Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Texts. Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman*, JSOTS 333 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 304–20, and Lim, *Pesharim*, pp. 54–63, give examples.

Qumran exegesis and the '*pesher* phenomenon'

Having outlined the nature of the scriptures at Qumran, we can turn in this and the next section to scriptural interpretation within the sectarian Qumran Dead Sea scrolls. Interest in that question has been central to scholarly debate from the early days of research to the present.[39] In particular, taking the 1991 releases into account, over twenty compositions that interpret scripture more or less explicitly are now available.[40]

One well-known feature common to many of these writings is the employment of the Hebrew term פשר (*pesher*; plural, *pesharim*), meaning 'interpretation'. Although not of Qumran origin, the word appears to have taken on special import at Qumran.[41] More specifically, many sectarian documents contain what may be called *pesher* units: sections engaging in the overt interpretation of scripture using *pesher* nomenclature such as 'its interpretation is that' (פשרו אשר) and 'the interpretation of the passage is about' (פשר הדבר על). For example, 1QpHabakkuk vii.5–8, quoting Hab. 2:3, reads: '*For there is yet a vision for the appointed time; it tells of the end and does not lie* (Hab. 2:3). Its interpretation is that the final age will be prolonged and in excess of all that the prophets have spoken, for the mysteries of God are astounding.' Scholars, following Carmignac, have often subdivided Pesher works (or *pesharim*) into continuous, thematic and isolated *pesharim*.[42] The continuous *pesharim*, in which lemmata from a given scriptural book are cited in order and followed by sectarian comment, are the best known and include the relatively well-preserved 1QpHabakkuk.[43] The thematic *pesharim* include 4QFlorilegium

39 Important surveys include Betz, *Offenbarung*; Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation'; Brownlee, 'Biblical Interpretation'; F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Texts*, Exegetica 3.1 (The Hague: van Keulen, 1959); Davies, 'Biblical Interpretation'; Fishbane, 'Use, Authority'; H. Gabrion, 'L'interprétation de l'Écriture dans la littérature de Qumrân', *ANRW* 19:1 (1979), 779–848; Maier, 'Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation'; and G. Vermes, 'Interpretation, History of. At Qumran and in the Targums', *IDBSup* (1976), 438–41. See also the essays in Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation*.
40 These appear in the discussion below, including nn. 43, 44, and 45.
41 See further S. Berrin, *The Pesher Nahum Scroll from Qumran. An Exegetical Study of 4Q169*, STDJ 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2004) and Dimant, 'Pesharim'. On Qumran use of the term *midrash* ('explication'), see initially P. S. Alexander, 'The Bible in Qumran and Early Judaism', in A. D. H. Mayes (ed.), *Text in Context. Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 35–62, at p. 36; for 'the Book of Meditation' (ספר ההגו), see S. D. Fraade, 'Hagu, Book of', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. I, p. 327.
42 See Carmignac, 'Le document'.
43 Other continuous *pesharim* are 4QpIsaiah[a–e], 4QpHosea[a–b] (4Q166–7), Commentary on Micah (1QpMicah (1Q14), 4QpMicah (4Q168)), 4QpNahum (4Q169), Commentary on Zephaniah (1QpZephaniah (1Q15), 4QpZephaniah (4Q170)), and Commentary on Psalms (1QpPsalms (1Q16), 4QpPsalms[a–b] (4Q171, 173)); see Lim, *Pesharim*.

(4Q174), 4QCatena A (4Q177) and 11QMelchizedek (11Q13), and they appear to interpret a selection of scriptural sources according to a given topic.[44] 11QMelchizedek, for instance, uses passages from the Torah and the Prophets to elucidate the role of a heavenly Melchizedek figure. Isolated *pesharim* designate intermittent *pesher* units in predominately non-*pesher* writings, including CD 4:12b–19a and 1QS viii.14–16.[45]

However, although this threefold classification remains a helpful starting point, it has its limitations. For example, not all continuous *pesharim* employ a single base scriptural text.[46] Nor is it always easy to detect the overarching theme in the thematic *pesharim*.[47] And when it comes to isolated *pesharim*, they can be found alongside an almost identical overt interpretation employing pronouns, instead of the term *pesher*, to the same end. For example, CD 8:8–15 cites Deut. 32:33:

> And they have not separated from the people but have rebelled with a high hand so as to walk in the way of the wicked about whom God has said: *their wine is the poison of serpents, the cruel poison* [or *head*] *of asps* (Deut. 32:33). *The serpents:* they are the kings of the peoples; and *their wine*: it is their ways; and *the poison of asps*: it is the *head* of the kings of Greece coming to wreak vengeance upon them.

The non-*pesher* pronominal interpretation formulas present here ('they are . . . it is . . . it is') are even occasionally found in continuous and thematic *pesharim*.[48]

Such complicating factors suggest that a distinction between continuous, thematic and isolated *pesharim* should not be pushed too far, for all seem part of a spectrum that we may call the '*pesher* phenomenon'. Use of pronominal interpretation formulas omitting the technical term *pesher* shows, furthermore, that overt Qumran exegesis cannot simply be equated with this *pesher* phenomenon. In reality, the latter constitutes part of what is increasingly viewed by scholars as a broad continuum of Qumran scriptural interpretation which, as has been especially clear since the 1991 releases, encompasses a lot

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44 The thematic *pesharim* are also often taken to include 4QOrdinances[a–c] (4Q159, 513–14), 4QTanhumim (4Q176), 4QAges of Creation A–B (4Q180–1) and 4QCommentary on Genesis A (4Q252); see Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, p. 13.
45 Note also occurrences of the term *pesher* in 1QLiturgical Text A (1Q30), 4QOrdinances[a], 4QCommentary on Genesis A, 4QExposition on the Patriarchs (4Q464) and 4QpUnidentified (4Q172). Notwithstanding their official sigla, it does not feature in surviving fragments of 3QpIsaiah (3Q4) or 4QpApocalypse of Weeks (4Q247).
46 4QpIsaiah[c], for instance, contains the remains of unidentifiable Jeremiah quotations and a citation from Zech. 11:11.
47 See Lim, *Pesharim*, p. 46.   48 See 4QpIsaiah[a] 8–10, iii.9–10 and 4QFlorilegium iii.1–4.

of diversity.[49] In light of recent research, indeed, three more specific points are important.

First, there is much covert exegesis of scripture in Qumran sectarian documents. This is obviously not part of the *pesher* phenomenon, even though, as Dimant has argued, the underlying exegesis was probably not very different from that behind *pesher* units.[50] For instance, nicknames like 'the Teacher of Righteousness' and 'the Seekers of Smooth Things' have an obvious scriptural origin, while works like the Damascus Document and Hymns scroll often express the Qumran community's identity in language replete with scriptural allusion but avoiding formal citation.[51] Some examples will feature in the next section.

A second point is that a significant proportion of covert exegesis is found in legal interpretation of the scriptures, which was clearly of central importance at Qumran. The survey by Fishbane, as well as earlier studies by Baumgarten and Schiffman, eventually led to a crucial change in scholarly thinking by placing due emphasis on this aspect of Qumran exegesis.[52] Although many no longer view it as sectarian, as noted, publication of the Temple scroll – with its focus on temple, priesthood and purity – was another factor encouraging this shift.[53] Indeed, the importance of legal interpretation at Qumran is now widely acknowledged, especially in view of materials released in 1991, including 4QMidrash Sefer Moshe (4Q249) and 4QMMT[a–f], as we shall see below.

Our third point concerns scholarly debate around the processes underlying Qumran exegesis. Some have argued that Qumran interpretation derived from exegetical techniques akin to those described in rabbinic literature. Indeed, Brownlee produced a list of thirteen exegetical principles close to those of Rabbi Ishmael which, he concluded, were in operation at Qumran.[54] Others, in contrast, have maintained that Qumran exegesis should be seen as reflecting revelatory traditions similar to those of the dream-visions of

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49 See, for example, A. Aschim, 'The Genre of 11QMelchizedek', in F. H. Cryer and T. L. Thompson (eds.), *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments*, JSOTS 290 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 17–31, at p. 26, and Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation', p. 293.

50 Dimant, 'Pesharim', p. 248.

51 On the latter, see Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, pp. 60–3, and Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*; on Qumran sobriquets, see Collins, *Use of Sobriquets*.

52 See Fishbane, 'Use, Authority', and J. M. Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law*, SJLA 24 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), as well as L. H. Schiffman, *The Halakhah at Qumran*, SJLA 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), and L. H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law*.

53 The Hebrew edition, Y. Yadin (ed.), מגילת המקדש (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1977), was followed by the English, *The Temple Scroll*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983).

54 Brownlee, 'Biblical Interpretation'; see further Lim, *Pesharim*, pp. 44–6.

Daniel.[55] One famous passage, 1QpHabakkuk vii.3–5 citing part of Hab. 2:2, suggests as much: 'And when he says *So that the one who reads it may run* (Hab. 2:2), its interpretation is about the Teacher of Righteousness to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants the prophets.' Yet, in addition to the community's belief, demonstrated here, that it had received divine revelation, analyses by Brooke, Campbell, Hughes and others have shown equally that certain techniques were in operation, as will become clear later.[56] It is best to conclude, therefore, that Qumran interpretation presupposed an inspired priestly leadership in receipt of an overarching divine revelation and, at the same time, required the application to scripture of practical exegetical techniques by the Teacher of Righteousness and others.[57] Thus, scriptural laws obvious to all could be described as 'the revealed things' (הנגלות) (e.g. 1QS v.12; 4QFestival Prayers[b] (4Q508) 2, 4), whereas what was known only to the community through its privileged interpretation of those same scriptures was referred to as 'the hidden things' (הנסתרות) (e.g. 4QD[c] 1, 7; 4QH[a] 7 i.19).[58]

Features of Qumran scriptural interpretation

Older systematic descriptions of Qumran exegesis can be seen *inter alia* in Vermes and Fishbane.[59] The 1991 releases have rendered such schematisations problematic in part, however, for the corpus's size and diversity now render it more resistant to systematisation. More particularly, the situation has been made more complex in recent years by several factors: some works deemed sectarian in the past are now widely thought not to be (e.g. the Temple scroll); the large body of non-scriptural yet non-sectarian texts published since 1991 includes scriptural interpretation (e.g. 4QPurities A, B[a–b], C (4Q274–8)); several works previously thought to constitute exegesis were probably scripture proper at Qumran (e.g. 4QReworked Pentateuch[a–e]); and the Qumran scriptures in general were both more wide-ranging and more textually fluid than previously thought.[60] Nevertheless, recent analyses by Maier, Davies and

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55 See Elliger, *Studien*, and Betz, *Offenbarung*.
56 Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran*; Campbell, *Use of Scripture*; and Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*.
57 As Brooke ('Biblical Interpretation', pp. 296–8) has noted, Maier ('Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation', pp. 111–20), by emphasising priestly authority per se at Qumran, underestimates the role of interpretative techniques in the community's scriptural exegesis vis-à-vis the Torah.
58 The language deliberately echoes Deut. 29:28; more generally, see Schiffman, *Halakhah*, pp. 22–32.
59 Vermes, 'Interpretation, History of'; and Fishbane, 'Use, Authority'.
60 On such developments, see D. Dimant, 'Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha at Qumran', *DSD* 1 (1994), 150–9; Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*; and VanderKam, 'Questions of Canon'.

Brooke, among others, have sought to address such issues.[61] Here, therefore, we shall combine recent insights by considering four key features of exegesis in the sectarian Qumran Dead Sea scrolls: (i) overt and covert interpretation; (ii) diversity of content; (iii) plain-sense and ideological exegesis; and (iv) interpretative techniques.[62]

Overt and covert interpretation

We observed above a basic distinction between overt and covert Qumran exegesis. In the former, the interpretation is open and deliberate, and it is often accompanied by citation formulas (e.g. כאשר כתוב 'as it is written') and/or interpretation formulas (פשרו 'its interpretation is').[63] There is a clear distinction between what was presumed to be ancient scripture and its later authoritative interpretation by the Qumran exegete, as seen above already in citations from 1QpHabakkuk and the Damascus Document.[64]

In contrast, scriptural usage in covert interpretation is indirect, with citations proper being by definition absent. Where scriptural phraseology appears to be the by-product of a community immersed in scripture, rather than a deliberate appeal to particular passages, we merely encounter what may be called scriptural 'idiom'.[65] Often, however, the presence of allusive scriptural language is intentional. Examples abound in admonitory sections of the Damascus Document which are replete with allusions to scriptural contexts that reappear in explicit quotations when the composition breaks into overt exegesis. The presence of allusions to Exod. 32:8/Deut. 9:12, 16 in CD 1:13, 21, for instance, is confirmed by citations from Deut. 9:23 and 9:5, respectively, in

61 See Maier, 'Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation'; Davies, 'Biblical Interpretation'; and Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation'.
62 The designation 'genre' has been avoided in this fourfold arrangement, given difficulties in recognising genre in the strict sense vis-à-vis ancient literature; see J. Barton, *Reading the Old Testament. Method in Biblical Study*, 2nd edn (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1996), pp. 1–19. Nevertheless, 'diversity of content' might alternatively be described in loose generic terms, and there has certainly been extensive debate about the supposed genre of the *pesharim* (e.g. M. J. Bernstein, 'Introductory Formulas for Citation and Recitation of Biblical Verses in the Qumran Pesharim. Observations on a Pesher Technique', *DSD* 1 (1994), 30–70; Berrin, *Pesher Nahum*; Brooke, 'Qumran Pesher'; I. Fröhlich, 'Le genre littéraire des pesharim de Qumrân', *RQ* 12 (1985–7), 383–98; Horgan, *Pesharim*; and E. Jucci, 'Il genere "Pesher" e la profezia', *RStB* 1 (1989), 151–68).
63 See further M. Bernstein, 'Scriptures. Quotation and Use', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. II, pp. 839–42.
64 Some have a tendency to view all authoritative sources at Qumran as a seamless whole (e.g. VanderKam, 'Questions of Canon', p. 92), but others rightly point out that scriptural authority in Second Temple times should not be conflated with other types of authority (e.g. Mason, 'Josephus', p. 115).
65 See Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, pp. 46–8.

CD 3:7 and 8:14. Similarly, citations from Hos. 4:16 and 3:4 in CD 1:13–4 and 19:16, respectively, render almost certain the existence of allusions to Hos. 4–5 elsewhere (CD 1:16, 2:3, 4:19, 5:20, 8:3 / 19:15).[66]

Diversity of content

Qumran exegetical writings have a diverse content. It is useful, therefore, to divide them into four broad categories, even though they overlap and two or more can be present within one document: (i) legal interpretation, (ii) historical interpretation, (iii) poetical-liturgical interpretation and (iv) sapiential interpretation.[67]

Legal interpretation

Much of the Qumran sectarian corpus has to do with laws and rules of two main types. First, many rules around the community's communal organisation have little obvious link to scripture, and their origins are unclear. Sections of the Community Rule and Damascus Document, as well as 4QMiscellaneous Rules (4Q265), provide many examples.[68]

Second, as noted in the previous section, there is a considerable amount of legal interpretation of scripture in sectarian exegesis, some of it only available to scholars since 1991. It often brings together two or more scriptural passages, thereby attempting to harmonise apparent contradictions, fill in gaps within scripture, extend the remit of particular commandments and prohibitions, or show that other Jews' practices are wrong. Such legal interpretation is sometimes overt. For instance, the ban on marriage between uncle and niece in CD 5:7–11 uses the quotation formula 'and Moses said' to cite Lev. 18:13, which forbids unions between aunts and nephews, adding interpretatively that 'the law of consanguinities is written for males and likewise for females' (CD 5:9–10).

Elsewhere legal interpretation is covert in so far as the scriptural background is taken for granted rather than made explicit. An example is the extensive portion of 4QMMT dubbed 'Section B' in the editors' composite text. Although there is some citation of scripture, most interpretation in this part of the document is indirect. The scriptural background is assumed, rather than

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66 J. G. Campbell, 'Scripture in the Damascus Document 1.1–2.1', *JJS* 44 (1993), pp. 83–99, and Campbell, *Use of Scripture* discuss these instances in detail.

67 This arrangement combines Brooke's schema ('Biblical Interpretation', pp. 304–14) with Davies' observation ('Biblical Interpretation', pp. 153–64) that Qumran discussion of past, present and future is normally linked exegetically to the ancient scriptural story.

68 See C. Hempel, *The Damascus Texts*, CQS 1 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), and S. Metso, *The Serekh Texts*, CQS 9 (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

stated, and the work intermittently uses scriptural language as its own. For example, 4QMMT B, lines 62–4, reads: 'And also concern[ing the pla]nting of fruit-tree[s] for food planted in the land of Israel, it is like the first fruits for the priests; and the tithe of herd and flock, it is for the priests'. Language from Lev. 19:23–4 and 27:32 regarding fruit from trees during their first three years after planting and the annual tithe from livestock, respectively, is echoed here. Furthermore, these laws are interpreted in as much as the requirement in both scriptural contexts that such produce be 'holy to YHWH' (Lev. 19:24 and 27:32) is understood strictly to imply reservation for the priesthood.[69]

Historical interpretation

A large proportion of Qumran exegetical literature can be described as having to do with history in the broadest sense. That is, the scriptural story from creation to the return from exile is prominent – either in its own right, or for what can be deduced from it about more recent history or current circumstances, or vis-à-vis what it reveals about the future. Although not always easy to disentangle, each of these types of historical interpretation merits further comment.[70]

The first may be described as 'narrative-historical' exegesis. We find the scriptural story recounted in whole or in part in the sectarian author's own words that are, nonetheless, full of scriptural phraseology. There is also often an implicit or even explicit interpretation of what is narrated. Examples include 4QCommentary on Genesis A i.1–ii.5, with its abbreviated retelling of Noah's flood, which remains close to Gen. 7–9. The exegete has, however, added glosses that give the narrative a chronological structure that more clearly fits the community's predominantly solar calendar. Thus, in 4QCommentary on Genesis A ii.1–3, it is made explicit that the flood lasted exactly one solar year:[71] 'And on the seventeenth day of the second month, the land was dry, on the first day of the week. On that day, Noah left the ark at the end of a complete year of three hundred and sixty-four days, on the first (day) of the week.' Another example is CD 2:14–3:20, where history from the fall of the angels (Gen. 6:1–4; Jub. 10:1–4; 1 Enoch 6–16) to the exile is selectively retold as

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69 On 4QMMT, see J. Kampen and M. J. Bernstein (eds.), *Reading 4QMMT. New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History*, Symposium Series 2 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996); more generally, see M. J. Bernstein and S. A. Koyfman, 'The Interpretation of Biblical Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls' in Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 61–87.
70 Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation', pp. 304–14, categorises these three kinds of historical exegesis separately as 'narrative', 'exhortatory' and 'prophetic' interpretation.
71 See G. J. Brooke, 'Genesis, Commentary On', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. I, pp. 300–2.

overwhelmingly one of rebellion. Successive generations succumbed to 'eyes of lechery' (עיני זנות in CD 2:16; cf. Num. 15:39; Ezek. 6:9), as well as 'stubbornness of heart' (שרירות לב in CD 2:17f., 3:5, 11; cf. Deut. 29:18; Jer. 23:17; Ps. 81:13) and 'each man doing what is right in his own eyes' (לעשות איש הישר בעיניו; cf. Deut. 12:8); only Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are praised for their piety.[72] Interestingly, the wilderness generation is accused of eating blood in CD 3:6, though this is nowhere stated in surviving scriptures. The most likely explanation is that the sectarian author deduced from a combination of passages that the failure of that generation to possess the land must have been due to this transgression, for the fact that it is said so of the later exilic generation (Ezek. 33:25) implied as much, especially given the proximity of blood-eating and land possession in Deut. 9:8 and 9:23.[73] More generally, the selective précis of scriptural history in CD 2:14–3:20 indirectly aims at warning contemporaries about the ancient rebels' punishment and encouraging emulation of the patriarchs' faithfulness.

In a second kind of historical exegesis that we may call 'admonitory-historical', such warnings and encouragements aimed at the contemporary audience are more explicit. CD 1:1–12, though broadly similar to CD 2:14–3:20, is an example. Indeed, this part of the Damascus Document boldly continues the story of ancient Israel into the community's recent past, employing scriptural language in the process. The implication is that the author's community and its opponents are the equivalents of the faithful and rebellious of earlier generations and prone to their respective fates.[74] Another instance is found in 'Section C' of 4QMMT (lines 23–30), where an exhortation to remember Israel's kings follows a reminder that the covenant's curses befall the disobedient of past and present alike:[75]

[23]Remember the kings of Israe[l] and ponder their deeds, for whoever of them [24]feared [the To]rah was delivered from troubles and they were see[k]ers of Torah [25]whose iniquities were [for]given. Remember David, who was a man of piety [and] also [26]was [d]elivered from many difficulties and was forgiven. And we also have written to you [27]some of the precepts of the Torah which we think are for the good of you and your people, for we have [s]een [28]with you wisdom and knowledge of Torah. Understand all these things and seek from him so that he may strengthen [29]your counsel and place far from you the schemes of evil and counsel of Belial [30]in order that you may rejoice at the end of time.

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72 See Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, pp. 67–88.   73 See Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, pp. 87–8.
74 See again Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, pp. 51–67.   75 See above, n. 69.

The third type of historically-based interpretation is 'eschatological-historical' in orientation, for scriptural materials are employed vis-à-vis the future. As Brooke has argued, the underlying rationale often seems to be that the passages concerned were regarded as 'unfulfilled promises, blessings and curses'.[76] This can be seen in the employment of Num. 24:15–19, with references to a 'star' and 'sceptre' arising from Israel, in a range of Qumran exegesis.[77] Whatever the import of the verses in Numbers, they were understood at Qumran to relate to a messianic priestly figure and/or his inferior Davidic counterpart.[78]

A more complex example is found in 11QMelchizedek. It is full of scriptural citations from and allusions to Lev. 25, Deut. 15, Isa. 52 and 61, Dan. 9, and Pss. 7 and 82, all of which are employed to bolster the contention that Melchizedek will preside over the eschatological climax to a divinely preordained world history. In the tenth 'jubilee', this heavenly high priest Melchizedek will act on God's behalf to destroy wickedness and expiate the sins of the 'Sons of Light' on the eschatological Day of Atonement. 11QMelchizedek ii.2–8 is illustrative:

> [2]And when he said, *In this Jubilee year each one shall return to his property* (Lev. 25:13), he also said concerning it, *This is* [3]*the manner of the release: every creditor lending anything to his neighbour shall release it; he shall not pressurise his neighbour or his brother, for it has been proclaimed a release* [4]*for Go[d* (Deut. 15:2). Its interpretation] for the end of days concerns the captives who . . . and [5]whose teachers were kept hidden and secreted aw[ay] and from the inheritance of Melchizedek, f[or] . . . and they are the inherit[ance of Melchize]dek who [6]will cause them to return. And liberty will be proclaimed for them so as to set them free from the [burden of] all their iniquities. And this matter wi[ll take pla]ce [7]in the first week of the jubilee after [the ni]ne jubilees. And the D[ay of Atone]ment is the e[nd] of the tenth jubilee, [8]so as to atone on it for all the Sons of [Light and] the men [of] the lot of Melc[hi]zedek . . .

The fact that laws in Lev. 25:13 and Deut. 15:2 contain common vocabulary ('year' and 'years') and a common theme (debt cancellation) explains

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76 Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation', p. 312. Although Brooke speaks of 'prophetic' interpretation here, 'eschatological-historical' avoids terminological confusion in as much as the exegesis concerned involves the Torah and Psalms, as well as books deemed narrowly 'prophetic' by Jews and Christians later in the Common Era.

77 See 4QTestimonia 9–13 (quoting Num. 24:15–17); 1QM xi.6 (citing Num. 24:17–19); and 1QSb v.27 (influenced by Num. 24:17).

78 Num. 24:17 is also cited in CD 7:19–20, although its eschatological import depends on a future identification for the 'Interpreter of the Torah' and/or 'Prince of the whole Congregation', neither of which is certain; see Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, p. 147; Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, p. 93.

their linkage here. But the author also includes in 11QMelchizedek ii.4, 6 eschatological liberation imagery from Isa. 61:1–3, a context appearing elsewhere in the work and also containing 'year', implying thereby that even the faithful owe to God a debt of sin that will be expiated on the Day of Atonement at 'the end of days' (ii.4).[79]

As these examples have begun to show, the three types of historically based interpretation in reality merge into each other. Our subdivision merely aids understanding of what is a complex phenomenon resistant to categorisation.

Poetical-liturgical interpretation

Further sectarian compositions can be classed as 'poetical-liturgical'. These are written in poetical language often mirroring that of the scriptures themselves, and some were probably used liturgically at Qumran. We cannot always be sure about the latter, however, for what has a liturgical form did not necessarily have a liturgical usage. Nevertheless, a clear example appears to be the blessing in 1QS ii.1–4, echoing language from Num. 6:24–6, to be uttered by the priests on admitting new members to the community:[80]

> And the priests shall bless all the men of God's lot who walk perfectly in all his ways and shall say: 'May he bless you with all good and keep you from all harm; may he enlighten your heart with the discernment of life and may he grace you with everlasting knowledge; and may he lift up the countenance of his favour towards you for eternal peace'.

Another common difficulty in poetical-liturgical compositions is determining whether scriptural language was the result of deliberate allusion or merely the by-product of authors steeped in scriptural idiom. Still, the former option best explains much of what is found in the Hymns scroll (1QH, 4QH$^{a–f}$ (4Q427–32)). It often focuses on key words from scripture, with a chain of apparently deliberate intertextual connections. For example, Hughes has convincingly argued that 1QH xvi.6–19 contains primary allusions to 2 Sam. 22:5 and Isa. 37 but also has a complex web of secondary allusions to 1 Sam. 4:19; Isa. 9:6, 59:4–5, 66:7; Jer. 4:31, 10:13, 13:21; Jon. 2; Pss. 18:5, 107:23, 27; and Job 38:16.[81]

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79 For further discussion, see Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, pp. 56–66.
80 See Metso, *Serekh Texts*, p. 25, and, more generally, J. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, ECDSS 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).
81 Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, pp. 185–207.

Sapiential interpretation

A proportion of Qumran literature, including a considerable number of texts released in 1991, is what may be called sapiential.[82] These wisdom writings are, like the poetical-liturgical texts, generally close to scriptural models, and determining which of them are sectarian is problematic. Nevertheless, we can probably include a composition like Instruction (1QInstruction (1Q26), 4QInstruction A^{a-f} (4Q415–8c, 423)).[83] It adds an eschatological twist to traditional wisdom motifs, drawing in one portion, for instance, on the imagery of the heavenly tablets described in 1 Enoch 47:3 and Jub. 30:20–2:[84]

> And you, [14]understanding one, inherit your reward in remembrance of the . . . [for] it comes. Incised is (your?) portion and ordained all the punishment, [15]for incised is all that God has ordained against all the . . . sons of Seth. And a book of remembrance is written before him [16]for those who keep his word, and it is a vision of meditation for a book of remembrance. And he will give it as an inheritance to humanity, together with a spiritual people.

Despite uncertainty as to wording and meaning at points, echoes of Exod. 32:16 ('incised') and Mal. 3:16 ('book of remembrance') are also clearly present.

It is important to note, in addition, that several predominantly non-sapiential Qumran writings contain wisdom sections, such as 1QS iii.13–iv.26 and CD 2:2–11. The latter, like other portions of the Damascus Document, incorporates much scriptural allusion.[85]

Plain-sense and ideological exegesis

It is possible to see in the Qumran sectarian writings a range of interpretative methods from plain-sense exegesis through more ideologically motivated handling of scriptural texts to what Bernstein has classed 'eisegesis'.[86] Plain-sense interpretation can be found in CD 16:6b–12 where scriptural laws about oaths are discussed in a fairly straightforward manner, while another case is seen in 4QCommentary on Genesis A ii.5–8. In that passage, we are told that the curse of Gen. 9:25 fell on Canaan, rather than on his father Ham,

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82 D. J. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts from Qumran* (London: Routledge, 1996), provides an overview.
83 Some have, however, doubted this composition's sectarian status; see G. J. Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation in the Wisdom Texts from Qumran', in C. Hempel et al. (eds.), *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought*, BETL 159 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), pp. 201–20, at pp. 204–5, for examples.
84 This citation is from 4QInstruction^c frag. 1 i.14–16, overlapping with 4QInstruction^d frag. 43.
85 See Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, pp. 106–16, and, more generally, Brooke, 'Wisdom Texts'.
86 Bernstein, 'Interpretation', pp. 376–7.

because God had already blessed the latter in Gen. 9:1. In contrast, an instance of exegesis in which Qumran ideology plays a greater part is 4QOrdinances[a] 2.6–7. Here, laws about the temple tax (Exod. 30:11–16; Neh. 10:32) are interpreted so that this payment is due once in a lifetime only; that reflects the Qumran community's hostility to Jerusalem's priestly hierarchy and contrasts with what we know from elsewhere to have been the normal practice of paying every year.[87] An example of what, to modern eyes at least, might seem like eisegesis is found in CD 6:2b–11a where Num. 21:18 (6:3–4) and Isa. 54:16 (6:8) are connected through similar items of vocabulary: the word 'tool' (כלי) in the latter verse has been related to 'mace' (מחוקק) in the former. Although the sectarian author was doubtless aware of the general background of rebellion in Num. 21, the two passages, once linked, are symbolically interpreted in a manner that is largely divorced from their immediate scriptural contexts.[88] But even in a case such as this, the fact of the initial connection demonstrates the ancient author's attention to the detail of each passage. It also suggests that, by their own lights at least, Qumran authors were not handling the scriptures arbitrarily.[89]

More generally, it is also important to note that several of these modes of interpretation can be found in the same composition. The Damascus Document, as seen, contains instances of both plain-sense and highly ideological exegesis. Similarly, alongside relatively straightforward interpretation in 4QCommentary on Genesis A i.1.–ii.5 and ii.6–8, we find more ideologically based cases. 4QCommentary on Genesis A v.1–6 preserves a 'pronominal' interpretation unit exemplifying the latter, for Jacob's blessing of Judah (Gen. 49:10) appears to be interpreted in a manner implying criticism of the Hasmonaean dynasty contemporary with the author.[90]

Interpretative techniques

Scholars have noticed various interpretative techniques at Qumran and elsewhere in the late Second Temple period. Attempts have been made to identify similarities with the exegetical rules of later rabbinic literature, as mentioned earlier, although recently the widespread existence of detailed late Second Temple principles of interpretation has been doubted.[91] Nonetheless,

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87 See further E. P. Sanders, *Judaism. Practice and Belief (66 BC–AD 63)* (London: SCM Press, 1992), pp. 52, 156.
88 See Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, pp. 94–7.
89 That point has been emphasised recently by Berrin, *Pesher Nahum*, pp. 12–19, and Brooke, 'Biblical Interpretation', pp. 293–4, 313–4.
90 See Brooke, 'Genesis, Commentary On'. 91 See Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, p. 169.

an examination of the employment of scripture at Qumran shows several interpretative techniques that can be paralleled in other literature from the period and which exhibit general similarities to later rabbinic practices.[92]

The commonest technique is what Bernstein calls 'thematic association' in which vocabulary items or themes shared between scriptural passages (within one book or between books) are deemed significant.[93] We have already noted some examples, and such interconnections are employed to solve difficulties within the scriptural text itself or obtain new data on a given subject required by the exegete. We saw above, for example, the connection between Lev. 25:13, Deut. 15:2 and Isa. 61:2 in 11QMelchizedek on the basis of common wording. Another technique is 'specification', according to which a general scriptural pronouncement is given detailed substance.[94] This can involve a relatively straightforward unpacking of a scriptural passage, as, for instance, the identification of the 'righteous' and 'wicked' of Ps. 37:12–3 with the Qumran community and its enemies, respectively, in 4QpPsalmᵃ ii.13–14 (4Q171 ii.13–14). But specification in other cases entails more creative exegesis. For example, 11QMelchizedek ii.16–23 specifies the four referents in Isa. 52:7 ('the mountains', 'the bringer of good news', 'Zion' and 'God') as 'the prophet[s]', 'the anointed of the spir[it]', those who 'establish the covenant' and 'Melchizedek'.[95] Indeed, as this case also shows, a third technique is 'atomisation', in which a scriptural citation's component parts are imaginatively explained with little regard to each other or to what was, to modern eyes at least, the original context.[96] Another instance can be found in CD iv.12–19 where the threefold punishment of Judah, described in Isa. 24:17 as 'terror, and the pit and the snare', is atomised and specified in a way that highlights three key sins attributed by the Qumran community to its opponents: fornication, pursuit of wealth and defilement of the temple.[97]

These techniques of interpretation are not mutually exclusive, for, as we have just observed, two or more can exist in the same document. Although their deliberate nature means that they tend to feature in explicit exegesis, they can nonetheless be found in a variety of subject matter. Thematic association, moreover, underlies much covert Qumran exegesis. And even in contexts where overt interpretation is to the fore, a degree of hidden exegesis is often

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92 See Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*; Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran*, pp. 1–44; and Dimant, 'Pesharim', p. 250.
93 Bernstein, 'Interpretation', p. 380. 94 Bernstein, 'Interpretation', p. 381.
95 Isa. 52:7 was brought into 11QMelchizedek's discussion because of a verbal linkage ('the bringer of good news') with Isa. 61:1 ('to bring good news'); see Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, p. 62.
96 Bernstein, 'Interpretation', p. 381. 97 See Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, pp. 127–8.

detectable below the surface. An example is 4QFlorilegium iii.14–17, where a range of scriptures is quoted and interpreted, including Ps. 1:1 and Ezek. 37:23 which are linked by common use of the word 'dwelling' (מושב). However, since the long verse in Ezek. 37:23 is only partially cited, with 'dwelling' itself omitted, the Qumran author assumed his readers were sufficiently familiar with scripture to grasp the connection themselves, even though it is not made explicit.[98]

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how diverse the interpretation of the scriptures at Qumran was. Scripture itself was different in two main respects from what eventually became the norm within Jewish and Christian communities in the Common Era: on the one hand, considerable textual fluidity is evident in surviving manuscripts and, on the other, there was probably no canon in the strict sense of a definitive, closed list of scriptural books.[99] Indeed, Num. 24:17 varies in its textual form between several citations in sectarian documents,[100] for example, while the Qumran community tended to accept as authentic new scriptures such as Jubilees. Furthermore, we have seen that the '*pesher* phenomenon', though important, by no means encompassed the whole of Qumran exegesis, which is best viewed as a broad and varied spectrum. At one extreme, we find the kind of overt interpretation associated with so-called continuous *pesharim* like 1QpHabakkuk, with concentration on one scriptural book and thoroughgoing use of the term *pesher*; then comes less programmatic employment of scripture in the thematic *Pesharim* such as 11QMelchizedek, using *pesher* and pronominal interpretation formulas intermittently but also engaging in less systematic exegesis. In the middle of the spectrum, we find interpretative texts with isolated *pesharim* and independent 'pronominal' units that occur alongside material of a different or mixed nature. Towards the (other) end of the spectrum comes less overt interpretation, such as that in 4QTanhumim,[101] followed, finally, by the covert exegesis found in many Qumran sectarian writings (e.g. sections of the Damascus Document and the Hymns scroll).

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98 Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, pp. 39–41.

99 However, on the emergence of 'canons' in the sense of the growth of discrete collections of classic literature linked to ancient individuals (Moses, David and others), see Davies, *Scribes and Schools*.

100 See nn. 77 and 78 above.   101 On this work, see Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, pp. 78–87.

Such diversity is further borne out by several other key features of Qumran interpretation which, in addition to covert and overt exegesis, include a wide variety of content (i.e. legal, historical, poetical-liturgical and sapiential materials), varied approaches ranging from the plain-sense to the highly ideological, and several interpretative techniques (e.g. thematic association, specification and atomisation). It is worth adding that a particular scriptural passage is not necessarily handled in the same way within different sectarian compositions. The use of Isa. 8:11 in 4QFlorilegium iii.15–16, for instance, is different from that in 1QSa i.2–3 and elsewhere.[102]

It is also important to appreciate that much of what has been observed in the course of our discussion about Qumran exegesis can be paralleled vis-à-vis exegesis in other literature from the late Second Temple period. Examples include Ben Sira, 1 Maccabees, the works of Philo and Josephus, and books in the New Testament.[103] The individuals and communities responsible for these and other interpretative writings were, like those who engaged in scriptural interpretation at Qumran, doubtless influenced by a range of historical-political and socio-religious factors. The rise and fall of Seleucid dominance, the emergence of Hasmonaean independence, and the vagaries of Roman rule suggest themselves as potent historical-political factors.[104] On the socio-religious side, we have the development of the notion of scripture itself, the formation of religious sects and parties (Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees and others), and the inevitable encounter with ideas from the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.[105]

What remains distinctive about the interpretative enterprise at Qumran, therefore, is the pervasive underlying sectarian message pertaining to the community's position as the sole locus for the continuance of God's covenant

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102 See Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, p. 105.

103 In the first instance, see further, respectively, R. J. Coggins, *Sirach*, GAP (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); J. R. Bartlett, *1 Maccabees*, GAP (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); P. Borgan, 'Philo of Alexandria as Exegete', in A. L. Hauser and D. F. Watson (eds.), *A History of Biblical Interpretation. Vol. 1: The Ancient Period* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 114–43; L. H. Feldman, 'Josephus, Biblical Figures in', in J. Neusner and A. J. Avery-Peck (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. IV, pp. 1778–94; and S. Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New. An Introduction*, CBSS (London: Continuum, 2001). There is also overlap with what later emerged in rabbinic Judaism; see note 91 above, as well as G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996) and J. M. Harris, 'Midrash Halakhah', in S. T. Katz (ed.), *The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, CHJ 4 (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 336–68, at pp. 343–65.

104 For further discussion, see relevant sections of L. L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, and Cohen, *From the Maccabees*.

105 See further Sanders, *Judaism* and Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, as well as the essays in W. O. McCready and A. Reinhartz (eds.), *Common Judaism. Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2008).

with Israel. This reflects Grabbe's general observation that late Second Temple Jews increasingly grounded their identity in an authoritative scripture, alongside the authority of the temple and its personnel.[106] The Qumran community represented an extreme form of this development, holding that it was the Teacher of Righteousness and his successors, not the political and religious leaders in Jerusalem, who could interpret the scriptures properly. Not only was the status of the Jerusalem hierarchy eclipsed thereby, but those at Qumran also believed themselves to be a kind of interim spiritual temple experiencing a foretaste of the blessings promised in scripture for 'the end of days'.[107] Such a state of affairs explains both the origin and identity of the community in general and its scriptural exegesis in particular. The oft-quoted 1QS viii.12–16 is relevant:

> And when these become a community in Israel according to these rules, they shall be separate from the dwelling of the men of injustice to go into the desert to prepare there the way of him, as it is written, *Prepare in the wilderness the way of* ✳✳✳✳; *make straight in the desert a highway for our God* (Isa. 40:3). This is the study of the Torah which he commanded by the hand of Moses to do according to everything revealed from time to time, and just as the prophets revealed through his holy spirit.[108]

A major corollary of the community's special status in its own eyes, as reflected here and in 1QpHabakkuk vii.1–8, was the superiority of its exegesis of the Torah and the Prophets, although other Jews doubtless sometimes agreed on particular interpretations of individual passages.[109] Another was the community's essentially negative relationship to the wider Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, although the level of hostility seems to have varied at different times.[110]

A third corollary was that the Qumran community believed that its members would have a central place in the eschaton, for they were destined to partake in God's final victory over wickedness in both the earthly and the heavenly realms.[111] That conviction was naturally grounded in an

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106 Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, pp. 165–70.   107 See Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, pp. 103, 107.
108 The divine name appears as four dots in this passage, represented here by four asterisks.
109 That is the best explanation, for instance, of parallels between the community's legal interpretations in 4QMMT[a–f] and those attributed to the Sadducees in m. Yadaim; see Campbell, *Deciphering*, pp. 155–7.
110 The tone in the second-century BCE 4QMMT[a–f] appears conciliatory vis-à-vis the Jerusalem authorities, for example, whereas it is hostile in the later 1QpHabakkuk; see Campbell, *Deciphering*, pp. 102–9.
111 For further discussion, including the meaning of 'the end of days' (אחרית הימים) at Qumran, see J. J. Collins, 'Eschatology', in Schiffman and VanderKam (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. i, pp. 256–61.

interpretation of the scriptures, as reflected in sectarian compositions like the War scroll (1QM, 4QM^a–g), 4QRule of War (4Q185), the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa, 4QSE^a–i (4Q249^a–i)) and 1QSb.[112]

As a final example, indeed, we may turn to 1QM xi.1–12, part of a prayer to be recited before the final battle to overthrow evil, which draws on the David and Goliath story in 1 Sam. 17, not least for its repeated refrain 'Yours is the war' (לך המלחמה; cf. 1 Sam. 17:47). It also employs many other scriptural texts to create an intricate web of citations (Num. 24:17–19; Isa. 31:8) and allusions (e.g. Exod. 15:3–4; Deut. 7:1, 8:17–8; 2 Sam. 8:1; 2 Kings 13:3–5, 14:26–7; Zech. 12:6). The cumulative effect is to remind the sectarian reader both of God's mighty deeds in the scriptural past and of scriptural promises predicting similar victories in the future consummation of history.[113]

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112 J. Duhaime, *The War Texts. 1QM and Related Manuscripts*, CQS 6 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), and Metso, *Serekh Texts*, discuss these works in detail.
113 See especially Duhaime, *War Texts*, pp. 103–16.

The Septuagint

KRISTIN DE TROYER

In memoriam Udo Quast

The Old Testament in Greek, the collection of texts commonly called the Septuagint (LXX), was repeatedly subject to revision by Jews in Antiquity. In what follows, the 'Septuagint proper', comprising the texts thought to reflect early translation (third century BCE onwards), is distinguished from the revised Greek texts which soon began to emerge; most famous are the versions current in the second century CE and later under the names of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion.[1] Septuagint texts and these (and sometimes other) revised Greek texts were set out in parallel columns to show their differences by the third-century church father Origen in his *Hexapla*.[2] The aim of this chapter is to introduce the history of the Septuagint and its revisions and to present important aspects of Septuagint study.

The Septuagint proper

Contents and arrangement

What is commonly called the Septuagint is a collection of Greek translations of the different biblical books. In most cases, the text of the Septuagint is the Old Greek text as it was translated by the first translators. In the Septuagint one also finds biblical books that are often labelled deuterocanonical or apocryphal. Although one can read in some introductions that these books were considered to have been written in Greek and not in Hebrew or Aramaic, Jerome is known to have translated Tobit and Judith – two of the deuterocanonical

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1 Swete, *Introduction*; Tov, 'Jewish Greek Scriptures'; Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 109–54.
2 F. Field (ed.), *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875); on textual material discovered since, see Salvesen, *Origen's Hexapla*.

books – from the Aramaic.[3] More precisely, the following books were also found in the Septuagint that were not present in the Hebrew / Aramaic text of the Bible as handed down in the Jewish community: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira), 1 Esdras (in the Vulgate labelled 3 Esdras), 1–4 Maccabees, the Psalms of Solomon, the Odes of Solomon, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, the additions to the Book of Daniel, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the additional chapters to the Book of Esther, Ps. 151. Discoveries, however, of Hebrew texts in the Cairo Genizah (see Ulrich in this volume, pp. 83–104) and the Qumran caves (see Campbell in this volume, pp. 242–66) have brought to light Hebrew or Aramaic texts of Tobit, Ecclesiasticus and Ps. 151.

The Greek translations of the biblical texts were first produced for the Jewish Greek-speaking community. When the Christians later started quoting biblical texts, they too used the Greek text.

The Hebrew Bible is divided into Law (Torah), Prophets, former and latter (*Nevi'im*) and Writings (*Ketuvim*). In the Septuagint the five books of the Law remain together as a whole, forming the Pentateuch, but the Former Prophets (the historical books beginning with Joshua) are commonly separated from the Latter Prophets, with the poetic books located in between. The Writings are broken up; the non-poetical books go either to the historical group (as with Ruth and 1–2 Chronicles) or the Prophets (as with Daniel). Some early Christian compilers of Greek biblical booklists accordingly group the books in sequence as historical (beginning with the Pentateuch), poetical and prophetic.[4]

Textual witnesses

Our best witness to the Septuagint is Codex Vaticanus. Codex Vaticanus is the oldest (fourth century CE) complete Greek Bible.[5] There are two more codices that also play an important role: Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus, both from the fifth century. Besides codices written in beautiful uncials there

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3 But, as B. Kedar remarks, Jerome 'left other books (Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus and Maccabees) unrevised'; see Kedar, 'The Latin Translations', p. 321, with reference to the work on Jerome found in H. F. D. Sparks, 'Jerome as Biblical Scholar', in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge University Pess, 1970), pp. 510–41. See also Swete, *Introduction*, p. 223–4.
4 For a fuller account, see Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 216–19.
5 In 1999, the Vatican produced a facsimile edition: see *Codex vaticanus graecus 1209*, Bibliorum sacrorum graecorum (Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana & Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999). Also published was an introduction: P. Canart, P.-M. Bogaert and S. Pisano, *Prolegomena to Codex Vaticanus B*, Bibliorum sacrorum graecorum (Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana & Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999).

are also papyri[6] – much smaller and much more fragmentary – and smaller codices, called minuscules. With the help of all these texts as well as the daughter versions, that is the translations of the Greek translation, the text of the first Greek translation can be reconstructed.

Moreover, the reconstruction of the text can benefit from exploring quotations of the Septuagint in the Jewish literature, especially but not only by Philo and Josephus, in the New Testament and in the church fathers.[7] The issue at stake here is to which sort of Greek text the quotations in the New Testament and in patristic literature witness. Whereas older generations of New Testament scholars tended to conceive of 'the Septuagint' in a very general sense,[8] more recent scholars distinguish between different stages in the development of the Old Greek text towards the 'Septuagint' and different uses by different authors.[9]

Finally, in order to do research on the Old Greek text, it is of utmost importance to have critical editions of the daughter versions of the Old Greek text, such as the Old Latin, the Syro-*Hexapla*, the Ethiopic, the Slavonic, the Armenian, the Coptic and so on.[10] The daughter versions of the Septuagint are valuable for establishing its text. Whereas the daughter versions listed above are translated from the Greek text, there are also the versions of the Hebrew text, such as the Aramaic (Targumim), Latin (Vulgate), Syriac (Peshitta) and so forth. Studying the translation technique of the daughter versions can give a good insight into the state of the Old Greek text from which they were

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6 See for instance, K. De Troyer, 'Joshua', in R. Pintaudi (ed.), *Papyri Graecae Schøyen (PSchøyen I)*, Papyrologica Florentina 35/Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection 5 (Florence: Gonnelli, 2005), pp. 79–145, plates XVI–XXVII; and K. De Troyer, 'Leviticus', in D. Minutoli and R. Pintaudi (eds.), *Papyri Graecae Schøyen (PSchøyen II). Essays and Texts in Honour of Martin Schøyen, with an Introduction by James M. Robinson*, Papyrologica Florentina 40/Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection 5/2 (Florence: Gonnelli, 2010), pp. 1–68, plates I–XVI.

7 See Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 258–73.

8 See for instance, D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), p. 34. With regard to Matthew's use of Old Testament texts, Senior writes: 'Are these quotations Matthew's own translations from the Hebrew or did he use an already existing Greek version such as the Septuagint?'

9 See for instance, M. J. J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible. The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist*, BETL 173 (Leuven: Peeters and Leuven University Press, 2004). See also the essays collected under the title 'Reception History of the LXX in Early Judaism and Christianity' as the fourth part of Kraus and Wooden, *Septuagint Research*, with contributions from F. Wilk: 'The Letters of Paul as Witnesses to and for the Septuagint Text', S. Ahearne-Kroll: 'Abandonment and Suffering', H. Utzschneider: 'Flourishing Bones. The Minor Prophets in the New Testament', K. Jobes: 'The Septuagint Textual Tradition in 1 Peter', M. Karrer: 'The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Septuagint'; R. Brucker: 'Observations on the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the Septuagint Psalms'.

10 The following book deals with the daughter versions of the Old Greek text of the psalter: A. Aejmelaeus and U. Quast (eds.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen. Symposium in Göttingen*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Dritte Folge, 230, MSU 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000).

translated. More precisely: when we know how the translators normally translated the Greek text, then we can use the texts of the daughter versions to reconstruct the Greek text and its history. With regard to some of the daughter versions there is discussion about, for instance, their mutual relations. To name one example, the direction of dependence between the Georgian and Armenian Bibles is not clear. Slightly different is the discussion about the Peshitta. Whereas it is normally considered a version of the Hebrew text, there are cases where one can observe influence from the Syro-*Hexapla*, which is a daughter version from the Old Greek. Another interesting phenomenon is that daughter versions that are independent of each other, such as the Armenian and the Ethiopic, are useful when evaluating readings from major (also independent) witnesses. Especially in the sections of biblical books where there is a *kaige* or an Antiochian text, but no extant Old Greek text, the daughter versions are very important as they might corroborate readings, especially those believed to represent the Old Greek text.

The following editions of the Septuagint are available.[11] First there is the edition produced by H. B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*.[12] This three-volume edition is based on Codex Vaticanus and its apparatus offers the variants from the most important uncial codices. This text edition was the forerunner of the larger (unfinished) Cambridge Septuagint edition produced by A. E. Brooke, N. McLean and H. St. J. Thackeray.[13] Both could be considered diplomatic editions, as they both more or less reproduce the text of Codex Vaticanus. In contrast to these diplomatic editions stand the eclectic ones: the hand-edition of the Septuagint, prepared by A. Rahlfs[14] and recently corrected and reviewed by R. Hanhart,[15] and the *editio maior* which is being produced under the auspices of the Göttingen Akademie der Wissenschaften.[16]

The following modern translations of the Septuagint or parts thereof have also appeared: the French *La Bible d'Alexandrie* under the leadership of

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11 See also http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ioscs/editions.html.

12 H. B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*, 3 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1895–9).

13 A. E. Brooke and N. McLean (eds.), *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Text of Codex Vaticanus. Vol I: The Octateuch* (Cambridge University Press, 1906–17); A. E. Brooke, N. McLean and H. St. J. Thackeray (eds.), *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Text of Codex Vaticanus. Vol II: The Later Historical Books* (Cambridge University Press, 1927–35); A. E. Brooke, N. McLean and H. St. J. Thackeray (eds.), *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Text of Codex Vaticanus. Vol III: Esther, Judith, Tobit* (Cambridge University Press, 1940).

14 Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*.   15 Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, rev. R. Hanhart.

16 *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum graecum*. For a survey of the volumes that have already been published, see http://www.septuaginta-unternehmen.gwdg.de/Englisch/Engl_Startseite.htm.

M. Harl, G. Dorival and O. Munnich,[17] the Italian Brunello translation,[18] the North American *New English Translation of the Septuagint*, under the direction of A. Pietersma and B. Wright,[19] the *Septuaginta Deutsch* under the direction of M. Karrer and W. Kraus,[20] and the Spanish translation under the direction of N. Fernández Marcos.[21]

Origins

Whether or not the text of the Septuagint can be reconstructed and how the history of the text needs to be viewed is part of a larger debate on the origins of the Septuagint in which two names dominate: P. de Lagarde[22] and P. Kahle.[23] Whereas the former reflected especially on the Hebrew text and Greek texts of the Bible, the latter used especially the Targumim (i.e. the Aramaic translations of the biblical text) for his formulation of the history of the text. According to Lagarde it was possible to reconstruct the urtext, that is the original biblical text, using the Hebrew and Greek texts. In his attempts to reconstruct the Hebrew text of the Bible, Lagarde also needed to reconstruct the original Greek text from which all Greek manuscripts were derived. This

17 In *La Bible d'Alexandrie*, the following volumes have been published: *La Genèse* (ed. Marguerite Harl, 1986), *L'Exode* (ed. Alain Le Boulluec and Pierre Sandevoir, 1989), *Le Lévitique* (ed. Paul Harlé and Didier Pralon, 1988), *Les Nombres* (ed. Gilles Dorival, 1994), *Le Deutéronome* (ed. Cécile Dogniez and Marguerite Harl, 1992), *Jésus* (ed. Jacqueline Moatti-Fine, 1996), *Les Juges* (ed. Paul Harlé), *Premier livre des Règnes* (ed. Michel Lestienne and Bernard Grillet, 1997), *Les Proverbes* (ed. David-Marc d'Hamonville, 2000), *L'Ecclésiaste* (ed. Françoise Vinel, 2002), *Les Douze prophètes. Osée* (ed. Jan Joosten, Eberhard Bons and Stephan Kessler, 2002), *Les Douze prophètes. Joël, Abdiou, Jonas, Naoum, Ambakoum, Sophonie* (ed. Marguerite Harl, Cécile Dogniez, Laurence Brottier, Michel Casevitz and Pierre Sandevoir, 1999), *Les Douze prophètes. Aggée, Zacharie* (ed. Michel Casevitz, Cécile Dogniez and Marguerite Harl, 2007), *Baruch, Lamentations, Lettre de Jérémie* (ed. Isabelle Assan-Dhôte and Jacqueline Moatti-Fine, 2005).
18 A. Brunello (ed.), *La Bibbia secondo la versione dei Settanta. Prima ed unica traduzione in lingua moderna con introduzioni, commento e note* (Rome: Istituto diffusione edizioni culturali, 1960). See also: G. Toloni, 'An Almost Unknown Translation of the Greek Bible into Italian', *BIOSCS* 36 (2003), 93–101.
19 A. Pietersma and B. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford University Press, 2007).
20 M. Karrer and W. Kraus (eds.), *Septuaginta Deutsch. Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009); *Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011).
21 N. Fernández Marcos, *Septuaginta. La Biblia griega de judíos y cristianos*, Biblioteca de estudios bíblicos minor 12 (Salamanca: Sigueme, 2008).
22 P. de Lagarde, *Librorum veteris testamenti canonicorum pars prior graece* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1883); P. de Lagarde, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1866); and especially P. de Lagarde, *Ankündigung einer neuen Ausgabe der griechischen Übersetzung des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1882).
23 P. Kahle, *Der massoretische Text des Alten Testaments nach der Überlieferung der babylonischen Juden* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902); Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*. See also Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 53–7.

quest led him to reconstruct the Lucianic text of the Greek Bible, which is of utmost importance for the reconstruction of the Old Greek text. Lagarde needs to be credited for seeing the importance of the Lucianic manuscripts.

Kahle emphasised that the biblical Hebrew, Greek and Samaritan texts were derived from what he called vulgar texts, thus implying textual plurality. With regard to the Septuagint, he claimed that there was not one original Greek translation, but many Greek translations that later underwent a process of unification. This was also how he looked upon the Hebrew text.

In a sense, Albright later developed a similar hypothesis and this was the beginning of the theory of local texts, a theory further developed by Cross and one to which we will return later in this chapter.

Now, whereas the term 'Septuagint' is normally used to refer to the collection of Greek books found in the Christian bibles and in the oldest complete Christian manuscripts, such as Codex Vaticanus, it has become standard to refer to the first Greek translations of specific books by using the designation Old Greek (OG). However, the oldest complete Greek Bible, Codex Vaticanus, does not always reproduce the OG text of the books it contains, but often offers later Greek texts (for Isaiah, for instance, it offers a Hexaplaric text; in the sections of Samuel and Kings for which *kaige* texts exist, it offers the *kaige* text).[24]

Moreover, in scholarship it has become commonplace to talk about the Old Greek text of a specific book, and not of the Old Greek as a whole. Hence, when dealing with the Greek translation of the Bible, it is better only to formulate conclusions with a view to a specific book, and not with regard to the Bible as a whole, or a section of it.

Character of the translation

Concerning the time and location of the origin of the first Greek translation, it is also better to treat the different books separately. Many scholars, following the lead of the Letter of Aristeas,[25] which is the fictional letter explaining how

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24 In 1958 Barthélemy discovered that Theodotion, one of the famous Jews who revised the Old Greek text, had a predecessor who created a recension of the Old Greek translation; see D. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila*, VTS 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1963) and E. Tov, with the collaboration of R. A. Kraft and a contribution from P. J. Parsons, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8ḤevXIIgr)*, The Seiyâl Collection 1; DJD 8 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990). That predecessor was once labeled Ur-Theodotion, but now has become known under the name of *kaige* or *kaige*/Theodotion. See below, 'Revisions of the Septuagint'.

25 For a critical edition, see H. St. J. Thackeray, 'The Letter of Aristeas', in Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 531–606, and A. Pelletier, *Lettre d'Aristée à Philocrate*, SC 89 (Paris: Cerf, 1962). For a translation, see R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English. Vol. II: Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), pp. 83–122.

the Old Greek translation of the five books of Moses came into being, locate the origins of that translation in Alexandria.[26] The Greek fragments of biblical text found among the Dead Sea scrolls[27] could, however, be an indication that Greek texts were also read and/or produced in places other than Alexandria.

The Letter of Aristeas describes how, on request of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283–46 BCE), a delegation, including Aristeas, was sent to Eleazar, the high priest in Jerusalem.[28] The goal of the mission was to obtain the best copy of the Jewish Law in order to translate it into Greek and place it in the library in Alexandria, under the curatorship of Demetrius, the librarian. Seventy-two persons were selected and sent as translators along with the most precious copy of the Law to Alexandria. Located on the peninsula Pharos, they produced in a miraculous way a great translation. That translation was accepted into the library of Alexandria. Moreover, the local Jews received the translation with the utmost enthusiasm.

One of the final paragraphs of the Letter contains a prohibition to revise the text which had been produced:

> After the books had been read, the priests and the elders of the translators and the Jewish community and the leaders of the people stood up and said, that since so excellent and sacred and accurate a translation had been made, it was only right that it should remain as it was and no alteration should be made in it. And when the whole company expressed their approval, they bade them pronounce a curse in accordance with their custom upon any one who should make any alteration either by adding anything or changing in any way whatever any of the words which had been written or making any omission.[29]

The history of the Septuagint, however, proves that many revisions were undertaken.

There is quite a long list of legendary elements in the story as told in the Letter of Aristeas. As Moses was sent to the top of a mountain in order to write the Law of God, so the translators were sent to a peninsula for the translations. Moses spent forty days and nights on his hilltop, and the seventy-two worked for seventy-two days. The language used in the Letter of Aristeas, the issues described and the miraculous agreement of the translators on the entire translation turns the Letter of Aristeas into a beautiful literary fiction.

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26 For an introduction to the Letter of Aristeas, see Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint* and Rajak, *Translation and Survival*. See also B. C. Wright III, '"The Letter of Aristeas" and the Reception History of the Septuagint', *BIOSCS* 39 (2006), 47–68.
27 See appendix 4, 'The Greek text', in Tov, *Scribal Practices*, pp. 299–302.
28 For an elaborate description, see Rajak, *Translation and Survival*, pp. 24–63.
29 Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, p. 121.

As the Letter situates the narrative in the period of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, it seems to suggest the existence of a Greek translation of the five books of Moses in the late third or early second century BCE.

The study of the Septuagint has also contributed to the knowledge of the Judaism of its time. Not only does the Septuagint help to define and understand Hellenised Judaism,[30] it also contains many an interpretation that helps to understand the cultural context. The issue at stake here is whether or not there is interpretation present in the translation, which goes beyond pure rendering of the Hebrew text into Greek.[31] As the organisers of the Helsinki symposium on translation, interpretation and meaning formulated the question: 'How can we recognise and describe interpretative elements in early translations?'[32] Z. Frankel argued for similarities between Palestinian and Alexandrian exegesis and showed that one could find similar ideas about life in both Palestinian midrashim and in the Septuagint with its actualising translation.[33] Also L. Diestel pointed to the possibility of a translation 'that easily became a paraphrase'.[34] This topic was later given attention by I. L. Seeligmann, who in 1940 dealt with Hellenisation and actualisation of the Bible in the Septuagint.[35] Seeligmann then turned to the book of Isaiah and demonstrated how it should be read as a document of Jewish–Alexandrian theology.[36] Similarly, J. Schaper has argued for reading the Septuagint psalter as a Jewish eschatological document.[37] R. Hanhart has demonstrated how translation technique functions as interpretation and how the Greek texts of Daniel and Isaiah depict issues and perspectives of Hellenistic

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30 H. St. J. Thackeray, for instance, uses the Septuagint to gather information about the Jewish festivals. See H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship. A Study in Origins*, The Schweich Lectures 1920 (London: The British Academy, 1920; 2nd edn, 1923), pp. 40–79, 80–111. More recently, see R. Feldmeier, '"Weise hinter eisernen Mauern". Tora und jüdisches Selbstverständnis zwischen Akkulturation und Absonderung im Aristeasbrief', in M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer (eds.), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, WUNT 72 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), pp. 20–37.

31 See Z. Frankel, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*, Historisch-kritische Studien zu der Septuaginta 1 (Leipzig: Vogel, 1841).

32 See www.helsinki.fi/collegium/e-series/volumes/index.htm.

33 Frankel, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*.

34 L. Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der Christlichen Kirche* (Jena: Mauke, 1869), p. 10. See also A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel* (Breslau: S. Skutch, 1857), p. 159.

35 I. L. Seeligmann, 'Problems and Perspectives in Modern Septuagint Research', trans. J. H. Seeligmann, *Textus* 15 (1990), 169–232; reprinted in R. Hanhart and H. Spieckermann (eds.), *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, FAT 40 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), pp. 23–80.

36 I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah. A Discussion of Its Problems*, Mededelingen en Verhandelingen nr. 9 van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap 'Ex Oriente Lux' (Leiden: Brill, 1948); reprinted in Hanhart and Spieckermann (eds.), *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, pp. 119–294.

37 J. Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, WUNT II/76 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

Judaism.[38] There are different terms used to denote the phenomenon of inter-pretation: interpretation, actualisation, rereading and transformations.[39]

For a long time in the history of biblical research the Septuagint was used as a tool to reconstruct the Hebrew text in places where the latter was not so clear. In recent years, however, and especially since the onset of the publication of *La Bible d'Alexandrie*, scholars have started to deal with the Septuagint as a literary document in its own right.[40] That is, the Greek Bible is no longer used solely within the field of the reconstruction of the Hebrew text and its history, but also treated as a document which witnesses to the use of the Greek Bible within its own settings. Special attention is given to the study of the Greek used in the Old Greek and its subsequent revisions. A. Léonas studied the Greek that was used in Jewish–Hellenistic literature, Christian literature and their respective cultural contexts, which contributed to the special sort of translation that is the Septuagint.[41] His book precisely describes the issues at stake with regard to 'translation Greek'.[42] In the present volume, the question is addressed in the chapter on 'Varieties of Greek in the Septuagint and the New Testament'.[43]

The Greek Bible is also studied with a view to its relation to the Hebrew (and for some parts Aramaic) underlying text (*Vorlage*). Studies in this area entail lexical research, explorations of the style of both the source text and the target text, and syntactical studies. Precisely these three areas of research can contribute to a characterisation of the translation. The 'Helsinki school' has

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38 See, for instance, his study of Dan. 11:29 and Isa. 9:1 (8:23)–7 (6), in Hanhart, *Studien zur Septuaginta*, pp. 80–94 and pp. 95–109 respectively. See also the third part, 'Light from the Septu-agint Translators', in T. Rajak, S. Pearce, J. Aitken and J. Dines (eds.), *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenis-tic Rulers* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 165–252, with contributions by S. Pearce, J. Aitken, J. Dines, L. Grabbe and T. Evans.

39 For the latter term, see T. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint. Toward an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*, CBET 47 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007).

40 See for example Harl, *La Langue de Japhet*; C. Boyd-Taylor, 'In a Mirror, Dimly. Reading the Septuagint as a Document of Its Times', in Kraus and Wooden (eds.), *Septuagint Research*, pp. 15–31; Usener, 'Die Septuaginta im Horizont des Hellenismus'.

41 Léonas, *Recherches*.

42 Note that E. Tov does not consider translation Greek to be a real language.

43 See Joosten in this volume, pp. 22–45. The field of Septuagint Greek is also a topic of the ongoing SBL unit entitled 'Biblical lexicography'. This unit was sparked by Jellicoe's 1968 desideratum to create a Septuagint lexicon. The lexicography of the Greek Bible was also the subject of the first book in the Septuagint and Cognate Studies series: R. A. Kraft, *Septuagintal Lexicography*, SBLSCS 1 (Missoula, MT: University of Montana Press, 1972). Moreover, the translation projects of NETS and LXX Deutsch both deal with the specific problems at stake in this field; see for instance, R. J. V. Hiebert, 'Lexicography and the Translation of a Translation. The NETS Version and the Septuagint of Genesis', *BIOSCS* 37 (2004), 73–86, and Kreuzer, 'Lexicography and Translation'.

been known to focus on these topics.[44] Moreover, a thorough knowledge of the semantics, style and syntax of a document can help editors of manuscripts to reconstruct lost sections of text[45] and scholars that are reconstructing *Vorlagen* of Greek texts.[46]

A fine and difficult line to draw is the one between a faithful translation of the *Vorlage* and an interpretative rendering. When does a Greek text provide evidence that it is not a (faithful) translation of a (lost) Hebrew *Vorlage*, but an *interpretation* of the Hebrew parent text? In other words, when does a translator also become an interpreter? James Barr exposed 'the logic of how literalism works'[47] and how the first Greek translation, by adhering more to the literal side of the translation spectrum without forgetting to correct semantic impressions and improving the impressions, actually became a translation that was literal and free at the same time.[48]

The 'translation versus interpretation' debate should also be compared and contrasted with the results of the discussion on the 'rewritten Bible'. For instance, how is and what makes 'para-biblical' literature different from biblical literature? The Genesis Apocryphon[49] rewrites the patriarchal stories

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44 The late Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen can be considered the founder of the 'Helsinki school'. See R. Sollamo, 'In Memoriam Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen', *BIOSCS* 35 (2002), 37–9. His two students are Raija Sollamo and Anneli Aejmelaeus. The next generation consists of Seppo Sipila and Anssi Voitila. All these have published in the line of Soisalon-Soininen, although Anneli Aejmelaeus has now also taken on the area of reconstruction of the Old Greek text and its history, especially of 1 Samuel, whereas Raija Sollamo has directed her students more towards Qumran studies.

45 See for instance the reconstruction of lost sections of the Minor Prophets scroll of Naḥal Ḥever by E. Tov. Cf. Tov, Kraft and Parsons, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll*.

46 See for instance, Z. Talshir, *I Esdras. From Origin to Translation*, SBLSCS 47 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1999).

47 Barr, *Typology*, p. 324 (= p. 50).

48 That the problem is still at the core of Septuagint research can be gleaned from A. Schenker (ed.), *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible. The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered*, SBLSCS 52 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2003). Although the title seems to indicate a shift towards assuming the faithful translation of *Vorlagen* that are at times different from the masoretic text, the contributions to the volume leave open whether that is actually the case. The book deals with Judges (N. Fernández Marcos), Kings/3 Kingdoms (A. Schenker), Ezra–Nehemiah/1 Esdras (D. Böhler), Jeremiah (P.-M. Bogaert), Ezekiel (J. Lust) and Daniel (O. Munnich). It concludes with a contribution which deals with the large-scale differences between the Old Greek and the Hebrew text and ancient versions, compared with evidence from other ancient sources; cf. E. Tov, 'The Nature of the Large Scale Differences between the Old Greek and the Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, and Latin Texts, Compared with Similar Evidence in Other Sources', in Schenker (ed.), *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 121–44.

49 The official publication labelled it Genesis Apocryphon. Cf. N. Avigad and Y. Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon. A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea. Description and Contents of the Scroll, Facsimiles, Transcription and Translation of Columns II, XIX–XXII* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew University and Heikhal ha-Sefer, 1956). It was, however, J. C. Trever who designated the text as apocryphal. He then suggested the name: ''Ain Feshkha Lamech Scroll'; see J. C. Trever, 'Identification of the Aramaic Fourth Scroll from 'Ain Feshkha', *BASOR* 115 (1949), 8–10, 9.

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of Genesis. Indeed, according to Fitzmyer, the Genesis Apocryphon 'presents a free reworking of the biblical stories'.[50] Similarly, the Temple scroll can be considered a reworking of the Pentateuch. Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that the Temple scroll was seen as a replacement of the (established pentateuchal) Law. In other words, was the Temple scroll meant to be 'rewritten Bible' or 'Bible'? The examples given so far stem from the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series and are Aramaic and Hebrew texts. There are, however, also Greek biblical texts that look like examples of 'rewritten Bible'.[51]

A pertinent example is that of 1 Esdras. Unfortunately, no Hebrew / Aramaic fragments have been found yet that could buttress the reconstruction of a full *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras. Whether or not 1 Esdras is a fragment from a larger composition now lost, a compilation of different texts from the Bible, a story that serves 'to form a framework for the Story of the Youths',[52] or a Semitic story that is older than and slightly different from the canonical Ezra–Nehemiah text[53] – the point is that 1 Esdras in a sense 'rewrites' the story of (at least) the book of Ezra (and Neh. 8) and 2 Chron. 35–6.[54]

The prolegomenon of Sirach also attests to the rewriting of text, albeit it on the Greek level: 'not only this book, but even the Law itself, the Prophecies, and the rest of the books differ not a little when read in the original'.[55] According to Barr, the grandson of Sirach is here expressing his 'dissatisfaction with the performance of Greek translation from Hebrew which was to lead to the movement for increasing literalism'. Indeed, his translation was a remarkable mix of 'literal' and 'free'.[56] The translation produced by the grandson of Sirach can be compared with (fragments of) the Hebrew texts of the book of Sirach found in the Cairo Genizah and among the Dead Sea scrolls.[57] The debate,

However, after the unrolling of the entire scroll, it became obvious that it was more than a Lamech scroll, and hence Avigad and Yadin called it 'Genesis Apocryphon'.

50 J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I. A Commentary*, 2nd edn, Biblica et Orientalia 18A (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971), p. 6.

51 For a survey of 'rewritten Bible', see Collins in this volume, pp. 165–89 and Stone, *Jewish Writings*.

52 Talshir, *I Esdras*, p. 6.

53 L. L. Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, Old Testament Readings (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 80.

54 For a survey on 1 Esdras scholarship, see K. De Troyer, 'Zerubbabel and Ezra. A Revived and Revised Solomon and Josiah? A Survey of Current 1 Esdras Research', *Currents of Biblical Research* 1:1 (2002), 30–61.

55 Prologue to Sirach.   56 Barr, *Typology*, pp. 317–18 (= pp. 43–4).

57 For a good introduction to this field, see P. C. Beentjes, '*Happy the One Who Meditates on Wisdom' (Sir. 14,20). Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira*, CBET 43 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), and B. G. Wright, *No Small Difference. Sirach's Relationship to Its Hebrew Parent Text*, SBLSCS 26 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989).

however, is still going on as to whether 'H-I' (i.e. the Hebrew original of Sirach published between 190 and 180 BCE[58]) can or cannot be reconstructed. Wright rightly points to the necessity of a full study of the semantic, poetic and syntactical levels in order to come to a reconstruction of a Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Greek Sirach.[59]

It could be argued that the Old Greek translations, in very subtle and very different ways, and in many cases within the limits of what the Hebrew text could have suggested, interpreted the text of the Hebrew biblical books. Whether small variations or structural reorganisations of the text were combined with less or more material,[60] the Old Greek translators continued the process of editorial rewriting of biblical texts that is visible in books like Isaiah (with its components Proto-, Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah), Deuteronomy (with its core texts and its pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic layers) and Chronicles (as a rewriting of for instance Samuel and Kings) as well as in apocryphal/pseudepigraphical books like the Letter of Jeremiah.[61] Moreover, the process of ongoing interpretation can also be deduced from the absence of one stable and set Hebrew biblical text in the first centuries BCE and CE. Indeed, the large number of non-aligned texts, together with the smaller amount of OG and Samaritan texts, in Qumran seems to suggest that the evolution of the Hebrew (pre-masoretic) text had not yet come to an end and that interpretation was still going on within the biblical texts, as opposed to within commentaries and/or *pesharim*. On the other hand, one also has to admit that precisely the presence of commentaries and/or *pesharim* points to the growing importance and authority of the Hebrew (pre-masoretic) text – a text that clearly was worth commenting upon.

58 Beentjes, *'Happy the One who Meditates on Wisdom'*, p. 4.
59 Wright, *No Small Difference*, pp. 249–50. On the biblical paraphrases as produced by Philo and Josephus, see Horbury in this volumes, pp. 289–320.
60 The different texts of the book of Jeremiah, namely MT, OG and, for instance, the texts of Qumran, seem to point to at least two sorts of books: a longer MT and a shorter reorganised OG (whose *Vorlage* was similar to, but not totally like, 4QJer^b), see E. Tov, 'Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah', in P.-M. Bogaert (ed.), *Le livre de Jérémie*, BETL 54 (Leuven: Peeters and Leuven University Press, 1997), pp. 145–67, and P.-M. Bogaert, 'De Baruch à Jérémie. Les deux rédactions conservées du livre de Jérémie', in Bogaert (ed.), *Le livre de Jérémie*, pp. 168–73.
61 For a good survey of how the letter was, on the one hand, an interpretation of a section of MT Jeremiah and, on the other hand, was being reinterpreted in other literature, see L. Doering, 'Jeremiah and the "Diaspora Letters" in Ancient Judaism. Epistolary Communication with the Golah as Medium for Dealing with the Present', in K. De Troyer and A. Lange (eds.), with the assistance of K. M. Goetz and S. Bond, *Reading the Present in the Qumran Library. The Perception of the Contemporary by Means of Scriptural Interpretations*, Symposium Series 30 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2005), pp. 43–72.

The discussion about translation versus interpretation also needs to be seen within the context of the debate regarding the sacredness of the Old Greek translation. The older debate seems to point to an evolution in the status of the text: at first the Old Greek translation of the Law was highly regarded or at least highly recommended,[62] but then differences between the OG and the later emerging pre-masoretic text might have led to some discussion about the value of the text. Swete already remarked: 'An official text differing considerably from the text accepted in earlier times had received the approval of the Rabbis and the Alexandrian version which represented the older text, began to be suspected and to pass into disuse.'[63] One can actually observe two trends: in the Jewish community, although the Old Greek text was highly respected, more and more attention was being given to the Hebrew, pre-masoretic text, and in the Christian community, the Greek, Septuagint text became the received text. As the two communities were at least for some time using the Greek text, discussion also arose about the precise wording and inspiration of the texts. Justin Martyr remarked to Trypho: 'Your scriptures are rather not yours, but ours, for we are left persuaded by them, while you read them without comprehending the spirit that is in them.'[64] This text is often quoted in the context of the controversy between Jews and Christians regarding the Septuagint. However, from this quotation one can also conclude that both Jews and Christians were indeed using the Septuagint. Whereas some scholars point to the controversy between Jews and Christians regarding scriptures as the origin of the disuse of the Septuagint by the Jews, it seems more plausible to emphasise that the Jewish comparison between the texts of the Septuagint and the Hebrew texts led them to value the pre-masoretic text more than the Septuagint. Moreover, it is precisely from studying the actual quotations of the Minor Prophets by Justin that one can observe that not only the Old Greek text was in use but also its recensions (see below).[65] Fernández Marcos also points to the reception of the Septuagint in the works written by Hellenistic Jewish historians and in the works of Philo and Josephus.[66] Scholars[67] have emphasised the Septuagint as a Jewish document of the

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62 That is one of the goals of the Letter of Aristeas.   63 Swete, *Introduction*, p. 30.

64 *Dial.* 29.2. See especially T. J. Horner, *Listening to Trypho. Justin Martyr's Dialogue Reconsidered*, CBET 28 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

65 And this holds true for both the Jewish and the Christian communities, see E. R. Bevan and C. Singer (eds.), *The Legacy of Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1948), pp. 85–93, at pp. 86–7. Cf. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila*, pp. 203–12.

66 See Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 260–1 and 264–5. Cf. Horbury in this volume, pp. 289–320.

67 These scholarly positions are reflected in the titles of the following volumes: Hanhart, *Studien zur Septuaginta*, and M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum*

Hellenistic period and as a document that stood 'between' Judaism and Christianity.[68]

Revisions of the Septuagint

The terms 'revision' and 'recension' are sometimes used almost interchangeably, but the broader term 'revision' is commonly applied to the work of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The Greek versions of Aquila and Symmachus were transcribed by Origen[69] in the third and fourth columns of his Hexapla,[70] the Septuagint was given in the fifth column, and Theodotion followed in the sixth.[71] Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion were described by Christian writers from the second century onwards as 'translating' from Hebrew into Greek (a description which surviving fragments tend to justify for Aquila and Symmachus, although Theodotion remains relatively close to the Septuagint) as well as making an 'edition' (*ekdosis*) of the Greek text.[72] Revision of this wide-ranging kind, embracing fresh translation, could have regard to Greek style as well as textual fidelity. 'Recension', which usually indicates the more restricted activity of correction of the Septuagint text towards other Greek manuscripts or towards what was taken to be the sense of the Hebrew original, is commonly applied to the textual work attributed by Jerome to correctors of Septuagint

und Christentum, WUNT 72 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994). The last chapter of the latter book was amplified, translated and published separately; see Hengel with Deines, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture*. For a review of the latter volume, see K. De Troyer, in *RBL* 2005 (www.bookreviews.org/BookDetail.asp?TitleId=4388).

68 For later Jewish negative reactions towards the Septuagint, see, for instance, G. Veltri, *Eine Tora für den König Talmai*, TSAJ 41 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), p. 216.

69 On Origen and his work, see Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*, and Kamesar, *Jerome*, pp. 4–40.

70 The project that envisions publishing 'A Field for the 21st Century' is of great importance in the area of *Hexapla* studies. Indeed it is the goal of the Hexapla Institute (see www.hexapla.org; the project is headed by P. Gentry, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, B. ter Haar Romeny, Leiden University, and A. Salvesen, University of Oxford) to publish a new critical edition of the fragments of Origen's *Hexapla*. This project will be crucial in establishing the pre-Origenic readings as well as the influence of the Origenic recension. See also Salvesen, *Origen's Hexapla*.

71 There exists an old manuscript in which these columns are still visible, see I. Card. Mercati, *Psalterii hexapli reliquae. Pars Prima. Codex Rescriptus Bibliothecae Ambrosianae o 39SVP. Phototypice expressus et transcriptus* (Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticane, 1958).

72 See Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.21, 1–3, on Isa. 7:14 (Theodotion and Aquila each 'translated' (*hermeneusen*)); Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.16, 1 (the 'editions' (*ekdoseis*) of those others who 'translated' (*hermeneutokon*) the holy scriptures beside the seventy, including Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion); discussion by Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part 1, pp. 493–504 (here revised by M. D. Goodman; excluding Symmachus); Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 109–54 (on Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion).

manuscripts in use in the church, including Lucian of Antioch at the beginning of the fourth century, discussed below.[73]

Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, all ascribed by patristic writers to the second century CE, can accordingly be described as early Jewish revisers of the Septuagint. It had, however, long been suspected, partly on the basis of Theodotion-like quotations in the New Testament, that the process of revision had begun in the pre-Christian period.[74] This suspicion was confirmed above all by the discovery of a Theodotion-like Greek version of the Minor Prophets in Naḥal Ḥever (Wadi Habra) in the Judaean wilderness. The fragments were provisionally edited by D. Barthélemy. His discussion set the tone for the next fifty years of research.[75] Though some of his contextualisations seem unlikely, he did renew the field in two ways. First, he confirmed that Theodotion had a predecessor who created a recension of the Old Greek translation. That predecessor is now called *kaige* or *kaige*/Theodotion, being identified with the reviser-translator whose characteristics, found especially in Codex Vaticanus and related manuscripts of the Septuagint of 2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings, include the rendering of Hebrew $w^e gam$ with Greek *kaige*. Since these characteristics recall those of translations attributed to Theodotion, who is commonly dated in the second century CE, this translator had earlier been termed proto-Theodotion or Ur-Theodotion.[76] Moreover, Parsons dated the Naḥal Ḥever Minor Prophets scroll, more precisely hand A, on the basis of its writing to the later first century BCE.[77] As hand A stems from the later first century BCE, the text most likely is even a bit older. Hence, *kaige* produced a recension of the Old Greek text early in the first century BCE, if not earlier. Tov locates *kaige* in the middle of the first century BCE.[78] The relations of the *kaige* revision, the Naḥal Ḥever text of the Minor Prophets and the translations current under the name Theodotion (especially that of the book of Daniel) to each other and to the historical figure of Theodotion are still

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73 See Jerome, prologue to Chronicles (Paralipomena), on the threefold variety in corrected Septuagint manuscripts in the eastern Roman provinces, going back to scholars including Lucian; Jerome, preface to the four Gospels, naming Lucian as a corrector also of New Testament codices; see R. Weber et al., *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, 2nd edn, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975), vol. I, p. 546, vol. II, p. 1515; Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, p. 224.
74 Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 47–9; Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 148–9 (both discussing suggestions of pre-Christian Jewish revision akin to Theodotion made by G. Salmon in conjunction with J. Gwynn in the 1880s).
75 Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila*. For a summary of Barthélemy's work, see R. A. Kraft, 'Reassessing the Impact of Barthélemy's *Devanciers*, Forty Years Later', *BIOSCS* 37 (2004), 1–28.
76 Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, pp. 15–28, 114–15.
77 See Tov, Kraft and Parsons, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll*, pp. 16–26, especially p. 26.
78 Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd edn, p. 145.

discussed.[79] As it proves very difficult to distinguish between the oldest layer of, for instance, Ur-Theodotion/*kaige* and the later 'historical' Theodotion, the question remains of how to differentiate between earlier and later layers in other recensions, if at all.[80] It is clear, however, that the revision represented by *kaige* stands early in a line of recensional activity, attested by the first century BCE, which eventually led to Symmachus[81] and Aquila. This early revision corrected the Old Greek text towards the Hebrew text that was current in those days. This text, in some cases, was no longer the Hebrew text from which the Old Greek had been translated. Moreover, in a number of instances, that Hebrew text was not yet the Hebrew text that is now known as the masoretic text. In other words, both the Hebrew and the Old Greek texts were being developed and revised simultaneously (the Hebrew text as late as the first century BCE, if not later), and the Old Greek continued to be revised at least until the fourth century CE.[82]

In his work, Barthélemy also dealt with the revision of Lucian mentioned above, and this is the second way in which he renewed the field. More specifically, he worked on the Samuel–Kings problem. Here the manuscripts in which the Lucianic recension was found had not undergone the *kaige* recension.[83] The Lucianic text in the books of Samuel and Kings was strongly debated in the 1970s.[84] It was S. Brock who, in his 1966 dissertation, studied its characteristics.[85] N. Fernández Marcos and his team took on the study of the witnesses of the Lucianic text and started an edition of that

79 M. Goodman in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 501–3; Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 148–53 (allowing both for an Ur-Theodotion and for further revision by Theodotion himself in the second century CE); Kraft, 'Reassessing the Impact'.

80 See Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 312–53.

81 See A. Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1991).

82 See S. Brock, 'To Revise or Not to Revise. Attitudes to Jewish Biblical Translation', in Brooke and Lindars (eds.), *Septuagint*, pp. 301–38.

83 'Only the group of the Antiochian manuscripts did not undergo the καίγε-recension'; see N. Fernández Marcos, 'Der antiochenische Text der griechischen Bibel in den Samuel- und Königsbüchern (1–4 Kön)', in Kreuzer and Lesch (eds.), *Im Brennpunkt*, pp. 177–213, at p. 191.

84 See R. A. Kraft (ed.), *1972 Proceedings. Septuagint and Pseudepigrapha Seminars*, SBLSCS 2 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1972). For a summary of the 1970s discussion, see Kraft, 'Reassessing the Impact', 16–20, with references to the papers delivered by Tov, Barthélemy, Muraoka and Cross. For the input of E. Tov, see E. Tov, 'The Methodology of Textual Criticism in Jewish Greek Scriptures, with special attention to the problems in Samuel–Kings. The State of the Question', in Tov, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, pp. 489–99; also E. Tov, 'Lucian and Proto-Lucian. Towards a New Solution to the Problem', *RB* 79 (1972), 101–13, reprinted in Cross and Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, pp. 293–305 and in Tov, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, pp. 477–88. For the work of S. Brock, see S. Brock, *The Recensions of the Septuagint Version of 1 Samuel. With a Foreword by N. Fernández Marcos*, Quaderni di Henoch 9 (Turin: Silvio Zamorani, 1996), originally his DPhil thesis, Oxford (1966).

85 Brock, *The Recensions of the Septuagint Version of 1 Samuel*, p. 96.

text, which he called the Antiochian text.[86] Moreover, the Antiochian text was now studied in its relationship with the Old Latin.[87] It soon became widely accepted that there was a difference between the fourth-century Lucian and the 'author' of the Lucianic text, especially given the earlier date of the Old Latin.[88] In the early 1990s, the Lucianic and the proto-Lucianic texts, especially Samuel and Kings, were still on the agenda – this has to do with the publication of the Qumran texts of Samuel and Kings, which is discussed hereafter.[89]

The discovery of 4QSam[a] pushed the date of the Antiochian text further back.[90] It was, however, the publication of the Samuel texts of Qumran in DJD that again put Samuel in the picture.[91] As 4QSam[a] displays a text very similar, albeit in Hebrew, to the Lucianic text,[92] and as it is dated to the first century BCE, more precisely 'in the interval c.50–25 BCE',[93] it becomes obvious that the early fourth century CE Lucian, too, had a predecessor.

The discussion about the Lucianic recension and an older predecessor has created what one might call a linguistic problem. The issue is the following. There are now two layers in the so-called Lucianic revision: the first one

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86 N. Fernández Marcos and J. R. Busto Saiz, with the collaboration of V. Spottorno Díaz-Caro, *El texto antioqueno de la Biblia griega Vol. II: 1–2 Reyes*, Textos y Estudios Cardenal Cisneros de la Biblia Políglote Matritense (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992); and N. Fernández Marcos and J. R. Busto Saiz, with the collaboration of V. Spottorno Díaz-Caro and S. P. Cowe, *El texto antioqueno de la Bibla griega. Vol. III: 1–2 Crónicas*, Textos y Estudios Cardenal Cisneros de la Biblia Políglote Matritense (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1996).

87 See especially the work by Trebolle Barrera, 'From the "Old Latin"'. See also Trebolle Barrera, *The Jewish Bible*.

88 See above for a similar discussion with regard to Theodotion and the others.

89 In Brooke and Lindars, *Septuagint*, the following contributions deal with Samuel – Kings: E. Tov, 'The Contribution of the Qumran Scrolls to the Understanding of the LXX', R. P. Gordon, 'The Problem of Haplography in 1 and 2 Samuel', F. Polak, 'Statistics and Textual Affiliation. The Case of 4QSam[a]/LXX', Z. Talshir, 'Is the Alternate Tradition of the Division of the Kingdom (3Kgdms 12:24a-z) Non-Deuteronomistic?' See also Aejmelaeus, *On the Trail*, pp. 123–41.

90 'Their great value [i.e. the value of the Qumran Samuel fragments] is that they confirm that the Antiochian text, in its oldest layer, not only dates back to the first century CE, but is also rooted in some way in the Hebrew tradition'; see Fernández Marcos, 'Der antiochenische Text', p. 199. See also F. M. Cross, 'A New Qumran Biblical Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew Underlying the Septuagint', *BASOR* 132 (1953), 15–26; F. M. Cross, 'The Oldest Manuscripts from Qumran', in Cross and Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, pp. 147–76; F. M. Cross, 'The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert', in Cross and Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, pp. 177–95.

91 F. M. Cross, D. W. Parry and R. J. Saley, '4QSam[a]', in F. M. Cross, D. W. Parry, R. J. Saley, and E. Ulrich (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4. Vol. XII: 1–2 Samuel*, DJD 17 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), pp. 1–216. See also A. Fincke, *The Samuel Scroll from Qumran. 4QSam[a] Restored and Compared to the Septuagint and 4QSam[c]*, STDJ 43 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 1–216.

92 See especially E. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, HSM 19 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1978), p. 117.

93 See Cross, Parry and Saley, '4QSam[a]', p. 5.

(supposedly) produced in the first century BCE, and a second revision done by the historical Lucian in the third to fourth centuries CE. The problem, however, is that some scholars claim that the first level was already a revision, more specifically a recension, towards a Hebrew text (which was not yet the masoretic text) and not simply the Old Greek text itself. F. M. Cross and E. Ulrich claim that 4QSam[a] is the Hebrew *Vorlage* towards which the Old Greek text was revised.[94] A. Aejmelaeus, however, states that the original layer of the Lucianic text in Samuel–Kings is nothing but the Old Greek text.[95] E. Tov specifies that it is the Old Greek or one of the original Greek texts[96] whereas N. Fernández Marcos clearly recognises Lucianic traits in the first layer of the text.[97] He also points to the fact that Barthélemy first identified the original layer with an unrevised Old Greek text,[98] but that he later changed his mind and identified a level of revision already in the proto-Lucianic text.[99]

Thus, the problem is not just 'historical' (when did Lucian live?), but also 'qualitative' (is there revisional and/or recensional activity visible already in the earliest layer?). The latter question could also be specified as follows: is there improvement of the Greek in the first layer? Or are there corrections towards the Hebrew text, which, of course, at that point is not yet the masoretic text?

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94 Cross, 'The History of the Biblical Text', p. 191; Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*; E. Ulrich, 'Josephus's Biblical Text for the Books of Samuel', in L. H. Feldman and G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989), pp. 81–96; reprinted in Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 184–201.

95 Aejmelaeus, *On the Trail*, pp. 131–49, at p. 137. See also p. 135: '(because) I think there was only one Old Greek translation'.

96 "I suggest that its substratum contained either *the* OG translation or any OG translation', cf. Tov, 'Lucian and Proto-Lucian', p. 103; reprinted in Cross and Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, p. 295; revised version entitled: 'Lucian and Proto-Lucian. Towards a New Solution of the Problem', in Tov, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, p. 479.

97 N. Fernández Marcos, *Scribes and Translators. Septuagint and Old Latin in the Books of Kings*, VTS 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 27–37, at p. 36. With a reference to J. W. Wevers, 'Septuaginta Forschungen seit 1954', 75.

98 Barthélemy first stated that boc_2e_2 and *kaige* originally used the same Old Greek text. Fernández Marcos quotes Barthélemy: 'the old Septuagint, more or less degenerated and corrupt', cf. N. Fernández Marcos, 'The Lucianic Text in the Books of Kingdoms. From Lagarde to the Textual Pluralism', in A. Pietersma and C. Cox (eds.), *De Septuaginta. Studies in Honour of John William Wevers on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Mississauga: Benben, 1984), pp. 161–74, at p. 169, with reference to Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila*, p. 127.

99 Again a quote from Barthélemy: 'an extended recension – aimed to render it more Greek – which the text of boc_2e_2 underwent'; cf. Fernández Marcos, 'The Lucianic Text', p. 170, with a reference to D. Barthélemy, *Études d'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament*, OBO 21 (Fribourg and Göttingen: Éditions Universitaires and Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978), p. 224. I have to acknowledge here that it is still not clear to me whether or not this implies that Barthélemy accepts a revised Old Greek text. What can be gleaned from this statement is that a proto-Lucian recension started as soon as the Old Greek translation was established.

Therefore, if we decide to call the historical first layer of text 'proto-Lucian', the question is whether recensional and/or revisional activity is already visible in that first layer. Or is that first layer nothing but the Old Greek text? S. Brock and N. Fernández Marcos do admit that it is very difficult precisely to establish the moment when stylistic improvements started to happen.[100] Also, the work of F. M. Cross, who saw the connections between the texts of 4QSam and the Old Latin,[101] as well as the work of E. Ulrich, especially on the relationship between the Qumran Samuel texts and the text of Josephus,[102] is of importance in testing whether or not there are pre-Hexaplaric corrections in the earliest layer of the Lucianic text. Pre-Hexaplaric corrections are ones that are made to the text before Origen reviewed it. These corrections are mostly intended to bring the Old Greek text closer to the Hebrew text current in those days. Tov, however, sharply responds that 'it must be pointed out that Lucian derived such elements mainly from the "Three" and the fifth column of the *Hexapla*, as Rahlfs has shown'.[103]

With regard to the so-called Lucianic text (i.e. the later stage in the Lucianic recension), it is indeed better to talk about an 'Antiochian' text,[104] for it is not clear who precisely used this text.[105] It should be noted, however, that N. Fernández Marcos locates both texts (i.e. the earlier and the later layers of the text) in the Antiochian realm.[106] He does seem to make a distinction between the earlier and the later layer of the Antiochian text, although it seems that even his later layer is not the one dated to the third or fourth century, for his later layer seems connected with the first-century political context.[107]

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100 See Fernández Marcos, 'The Lucianic Text', p. 172; Brock, *The Recensions of the Septuagint Version of 1 Samuel*, p. 306.

101 Cross, 'The History of the Biblical Text', pp. 188–9.

102 Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*; Ulrich, 'Josephus's Biblical Text'.

103 Tov, 'Lucian and Proto-Lucian', p. 103.

104 Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 223–38.

105 S. Sipilä, for instance, has demonstrated that Chrysostom and Theodoret, who are supposed to use the Lucianic text of the book of Joshua, actually use it hardly or not at all. See S. Sipilä, 'John Chrysostom and the Book of Joshua', in B. A. Taylor (ed.), *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Cambridge 1995*, SBLSCS 45 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 329–54; S. Sipilä, 'Theodoret of Cyrrhus and the Book of Joshua. Theodoret's *Quaestiones* Revisited', *Textus* 19 (1998), 157–70. See also N. Fernández Marcos and A. Sáenz-Badillos, *Anotaciones críticas al texto griego del Génesis y estudio de sus grupos textuales*, Textos y Estudios 'Cardenal Cisneros' 12 (Madrid: CSIC, 1972); and J. W. Wevers, 'A Lucianic Text in Genesis?', *BIOSCS* 6 (1973), 22–35.

106 'Rather, the fact that Josephus knew the text at least partly, as well as the different translations of the *Vetus Latina* indicate that the text quickly reached at least the capital of the empire'; see Fernández Marcos, 'Der antiochenische Text', pp. 191–2.

107 See Fernández Marcos, 'Der antiochenische Text', p. 192.

In sum, it might be good to use the labels 'proto-Lucianic' and 'Antiochian' text in a simple historical sense.[108] The debate around whether or not there is already a recensional element in the oldest layer must remain open.[109]

In this context, it is also necessary to say that Codex Vaticanus can no longer be seen as always representing the Old Greek text.[110] It seems that Codex Vaticanus already shows traces of being revised, albeit small ones.[111] In other words, there are already readings in Codex Vaticanus that might reflect corrections towards the Hebrew text which was current in the day of the revisor, and not in the days of the original Greek translation. However, more research needs to be done in this area.

At any rate, it has become ever clearer, as the instances of Theodotion and Lucian both show, that the process of revision and recension of the Greek text began in the pre-Christian period and continued thereafter with both Jewish and Christian contributions; Origen's *Hexapla* in the third century CE gives insight into an ongoing development. Moreover, it should also not be forgotten that some revisions were in use for a long time.[112] Finally, the discussion about revisions and recensions has its impact on the study of the Hebrew Bible and especially on the methods used in its study.[113] One of the main issues is the question of which text should be preferred when analysing texts: the masoretic text, the Hebrew text underlying the Septuagint text, or another text?

The wider significance of Septuagint studies

Discoveries and editions of early Greek biblical manuscripts, together with those of the Dead Sea scrolls, underline textual variety and raise questions about the biblical 'canon'. Among the Dead Sea scrolls, there is no evidence that can buttress the existence of a 'five books of Moses' scroll, nor is there

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108 This solution is a bit different from the one suggested by E. Tov, who proposes to use the label 'proto-Lucianic' to refer to the activities of the first person who revised the text and was living in the first century BCE, and the label 'Lucianic' to refer to the activities of the third–fourth century CE person called Lucian; see Tov, 'Jewish Greek Scriptures', pp. 230–1.
109 See Fernández Marcos, 'Der antiochenische Text', p. 191.
110 See De Troyer, *Joshua*.
111 See above, n. 5, for bibliographical information regarding Codex Vaticanus.
112 See N. De Lange, J. G. Krivoruchko and C. Boyd-Cameron (eds.), *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions. Studies in Their Use in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, TSMJ 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
113 See for instance, A. van der Kooij, 'Zum Verhältnis von Textkritik und Literarkritik. Überlegungen anhand einiger Beispiele', in J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume Cambridge 1995*, VT Suppl. 66 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 185–202; and De Troyer, *Rewriting the Sacred Text*.

absence of evidence that can support the idea that a 'five books of Moses' scroll never existed.[114] G. Dorival correctly explains that the idea of a Greek Pentateuch does not necessarily imply five books on one scroll. Calculations indeed show that a (Greek) Pentateuch is even less likely to have existed than a Hebrew Torah scroll. Moreover, from studying early Greek codices, such as the Schøyen Leviticus and Joshua manuscripts, one can conclude that biblical books circulated as single volumes which were maybe also meant to stand together. Until the fourth century, however, there are no codices that contain all the biblical books printed in Bibles nowadays. The material hence does not allow for using the concept of 'Bible' as we currently do, namely with regard to a one-volume complete Bible. Moreover, whereas there is no discussion about the majority of the books that are normally included in a Bible and regarded as authoritative scripture, there are questions among members of the Jewish community and the churches about the authority or status of some books.[115]

While the meaning of the term 'Bible' thus remains an open question, there also is a debate about the internal division of the Bible and the biblical canon. For instance, in the Jewish and Christian traditions, the concept of the five books of Moses is an old one – the concept 'Law and Prophets' also appears often in the New Testament – but the word 'Pentateuch', although used in some ancient sources, seems to have come into vogue in the seventeenth century, with the (re)discovery of the so-called Samaritan Pentateuch, and it then continued to be used in critical scholarship.[116] Similarly, although the word 'canon' seems to have been used early on, it would be good not to think of it in terms of 'a closed canon of Biblical texts, in which even the sequence of the books has been established'.[117] The earliest extant lists dealing with what precisely constituted the canon were drawn up by Josephus, who names twenty-two books (*Contra Apionem* 1:37–43); by Origen, who lists the Hebrew names of the books when discussing Ps. 1 and is quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*; and by Melito.[118] There is, however, in 2 Esdras

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114 See Tov, *Scribal Practices*, pp. 74–9, especially pp. 75–6.
115 See Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64.
116 K. De Troyer, 'When Did the Pentateuch Come into Existence? An Uncomfortable Perspective', in M. Karrer and W. Kraus (eds.), *Die Septuaginta. Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 269–86.
117 For a detailed dismissal of the theory of the closure of the Hebrew canon by the Council of Yavne (Jamnia), see Beckwith, 'Formation of the Hebrew Bible', pp. 58–61.
118 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.4. See H. J. Lawlor and J. E. L. Oulton, *Eusebius. The 'Ecclesiastical History' and the 'Martyrs of Palestine', Translated with Introduction and Notes*, 2 Vols. (London: SPCK, 1954), vol. I (text), p. 197, vol. II (notes), p. 216. See Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 197–230, and Beckwith, 'Formation of the Hebrew Bible', pp. 49–51. For Melito's list, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 4.26. 13–14.

14:44[119] a list of twenty-four books (which may, though, be identical with the twenty-two books listed by Josephus) – besides the seventy to be read only by the wise – and the number is supported by the Talmud and rabbinic literature.[120] The basic number of books in the Septuagint which the tradition seems to have settled for is twenty-two – but then there is evidence of what Swete already called an 'expansion of the Hebrew canon',[121] which was effected by adding and/or mentioning books after the twenty-two, especially in the East, though the West 'did not scruple to mingle non-canonical books with the canonical'.[122] The Septuagint thus, *ipso facto*, draws the reader's attention to the discussion about the canon and Bible. In this context, it is good to be mindful of the concepts proposed by R. A. Kraft: he claims that the old theories on the Septuagint (e.g. the Lagarde-versus-Kahle debate) are using 'post-scrolls' perceptions and 'mega-codex' technological concepts, and the present author believes that the same holds true for the debate about the 'canon' in general.

In the context of the wider significance of Septuagint studies, another important point needs to be made. The results of the past fifty years of research, especially on the *kaige* and Antiochian recensions, have so far hardly been taken into account by 'general' Hebrew Bible scholars. It would be good if, for instance, students of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History and '*kaige*/Antiochian' scholars took each other's results into account.[123] It seems obvious – especially with regard to Samuel and Kings, but also with regard to Joshua: books that are close to the hearts of the scholars of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History – that the Hebrew texts underlying the *kaige* and the Antiochian texts are at times different from the later masoretic text which many Hebrew Bible scholars use as the basis for their inquiry. Hence, revisions of current theories pertaining to the Deuteronomistic History are necessary, revisions that are to take into account slightly different Hebrew texts. The question here is how, in the so-called *kaige* sections of Samuel, the establishment of a different Hebrew text, reconstructed with the help of the Antiochian text, would affect the current theories about the Deuteronomist(s), theories that are built on the Hebrew (masoretic) text.

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119 Also referred to as 4 Esdras.
120 For a discussion of the problem of precisely which books are counted in the twenty-two or twenty-four and how the twenty-four actually represent the thirty-nine found in printed Hebrew Bibles, see Swete, *Introduction*, pp. 219–26.
121 Swete, *Introduction*, p. 222.   122 Swete, *Introduction*, p. 223.
123 For instance, see E. Tov, 'The LXX and the Deuteronomists', in A. Rofé, M. Segal, S. Talmon and Z. Talshir (eds.), *Text-Criticism and Beyond. In Memoriam of Isac Leo Seeligmann*, Textus 23 (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University and Magnes, 2007), pp. 145–71.

Biblical interpretation in
Greek Jewish writings

WILLIAM HORBURY

Greek Jewish interpretation is a well-known source of Christian exegesis, and has many links with rabbinic midrash, but its surviving literary deposit began to emerge in the Hellenistic age, during the third century BC. Biblical exposition in Greek gained impetus as the conquests of Alexander the Great helped to spread Hellenism to non-Greek peoples.[1] Jews in Judaea and in the large diaspora populations abroad were particularly affected by the dynasties of Alexander's successors in Egypt, the Ptolemies, and in Syria, the Seleucids.[2] Then the Hellenistic culture of this period flowered afresh in the Roman empire.

Biblical interpretation found in Greek Jewish writings is considered here.[3] It can properly be called Hellenistic Jewish exegesis, but the phrase has a broader range than this chapter has; interpretation influenced by Hellenism can also be found in Hebrew and Aramaic texts, and in Greek biblical versions (Stemberger, Hayward and De Troyer in this volume, pp. 190–217, 218–41 and 267–88). Attention is focused here on the interpretation of Greek-speaking Jews as presented in their own Greek compositions. This narrower topic is still extensive. It highlights Jewish participation in Greek literary culture. Yet, as will be seen, it also indicates a broad Jewish exegetical tradition, shared by Semitic-language as well as Greek-language biblical interpretation.[4]

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1 On Hellenism and the Hellenistic age see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. I, pp. 2–3; Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*; Funck, *Hellenismus*; Follet, *L'hellénisme d'époque romaine*; Bugh, *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*.

2 Hegermann, 'The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age', pp. 115–66; diaspora settlement is surveyed by region in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 1–86 (here revised by F. Millar).

3 For a survey of Jewish literature composed in Greek see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I–II, pp. 470–889.

4 Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*; G. Vermes, 'Bible and Midrash. Early Old Testament Exegesis', in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 199–231, reprinted in G. Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 59–91.

The context of Greek-language interpretation was the rise of Greek as a Jewish vernacular. Greek was spoken by Jews in Egypt and Cyrene, Cilicia and Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and the islands. Aramaic prevailed among Jews in Mesopotamia and Babylonia; in Syria and Judaea it was strong, as place names in Josephus and the Gospels show, but it overlapped with Greek. In Judaea there was also some writing and speech in Hebrew.[5] In the long run, Greek formed a great link between Jewish, Samaritan and Christian biblical interpretation.

Landmarks

The two best-known witnesses to Greek Jewish biblical interpretation stand relatively late in its history. Philo the philosopher, justly famed as an allegorist, wrote in Alexandria under Roman rule including the principate of Gaius Caligula (37–41); and Josephus the historian, born in Jerusalem in the year of Caligula's accession, issued his books in Rome from the seventies onwards. Expository works form the greater part of Philo's surviving writings, and an interpretative biblical paraphrase occupies more than half of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*.

Philo and Josephus are Jewish representatives of the revival of Greek literature in the early Roman empire.[6] Philo loves the classical authors, but also draws on the vocabulary of the koine or mixed-dialect Greek of the Hellenistic age; Josephus, a little later, is affected by Atticism, the movement towards recovering the Attic Greek of the classical period.[7] Greek Jewish biblical interpretation in their time is also represented by some Christian writings, notably those of Saint Paul, a Cilician Jew with strong links with Judaea. Yet Philo, Paul and Josephus all inherit a long tradition of Jewish interpretation in Greek.

This older tradition survives largely through fragments of Greek Jewish authors of the Hellenistic age, notably the chronographer Demetrius in the third century BC, and in the following century the philosophical exegete Aristobulus and the historian Eupolemus.[8] Their writings are chiefly known through quotation in the first century BC by Alexander Polyhistor of Miletus,

5 Barr, 'Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek', pp. 79–114.
6 Writers attesting this revival include Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Arrian, and Aelius Aristides; see in general Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*; Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*.
7 On Atticism see Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, pp. 17–42; for Philo as representing literary prose before the strong influence of the Atticising movement, Leopold, 'Philo's Vocabulary and Word Choice', pp. 137–40; for Josephus' Atticism, Thackeray and Feldman, *Josephus*, vol. II, pp. xiii–xiv.
8 Van der Horst, 'The Interpretation of the Bible', pp. 519–46; Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', pp. 130–98, at pp. 162–89.

in a lost work on the Jews which itself survives mainly through quotations made from it by the third-century Christian moralist Clement of Alexandria, and in the early fourth century, more fully, by Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Praeparatio evangelica*.[9]

The Septuagint Pentateuch, once more from the third century BC, opens the surviving series of Greek biblical translations (see De Troyer in this volume, pp. 267–88). These also are monuments of exegesis, but here they are noted especially as a medium through which the biblical texts reached their Greek-language expositors. A second landmark in translation is the Greek version of Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom of Jeshua Ben Sira, made by his grandson for use in Egypt not long after 132 BC. The grandson's preface notes that biblical translations show 'no small difference' from the Hebrew; they are then already felt to be inadequate, and the need for revision and interpretation is implied.

The Greek Ecclesiasticus, itself a kind of biblical compendium, also exemplifies the Greek currency of Semitic-language additions to the biblical library, and their probable influence on Greek Jewish exegesis.[10] Such additions eventually included Jewish works composed in Greek, above all 2 Maccabees, abridged from a Greek history by Jason of Cyrene, and the more marginal 3 and 4 Maccabees. Some books which are probably related to Semitic-language writings, notably the Wisdom of Solomon, also seem in their present form to be Greek compositions rather than translations.[11] Other Greek compositions in the extended biblical library may be hard to identify as such; their style, marked by Semitisms and the language of the Septuagint, suggests translation but might also reflect Greek in use among Jews, especially in areas of bilingualism in Greek and a Semitic language. Debated examples include the *Testament of Abraham*.[12]

The Greek Jewish writings which embody biblical interpretation also include some ostensibly non-Jewish works. These were composed or adapted by Jews so as to suggest Hellenic indebtedness to the Jewish biblical books.[13]

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9 On the general fidelity of quotation in this work of Eusebius see S. Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*.
10 Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 506–8.
11 Thus it is possible that the early chapters of Wisdom correspond to a Semitic-language book issued concurrently or earlier, as was the case with Josephus' *Jewish War*; for discussion see M. D. Goodman in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, p. 569, n. 77. Similar questions are raised by other texts evincing typically Greek concepts or style, including *Joseph and Aseneth* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.
12 Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part II, pp. 705–6, 762–3.
13 For a survey see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 617–700 (revised by Goodman).

Thus the Letter of Aristeas was issued to commend the Septuagint, under the name of a Greek at the Ptolemaic court.[14] In a higher flight of pseudepigraphy, Gentile Greek inspiration was presented by Jews as reflecting, like Balaam's prophecy, the revelation of the true God. Biblical accounts of creation, Jewish history and a future age were taken up in Jewish Sibylline oracles and Jewish Orphic poems.[15] Biblical laws were likewise integrated with the gnomic verses of Phocylides.[16]

Lastly, Jewish inscriptions in Greek give further indications of the use and interpretation of biblical books. They include not only occasional allusions to the biblical texts but also attestations of biblical proper names (here papyri offer an important supplement). Thus the over a hundred inscribed Jewish epitaphs in Greek known from Ptolemaic and early Roman Egypt include, among a majority of Greek and Graeco-Egyptian names, the Graecised biblical names Abramos, Eisakis, Jacobos, Rachelis, Judas, Josephos, Mariame (Miriam), Eleazaros, Jesus (Joshua), Somoelos (Samuel) and Mardochaeus; all but the last two of these are pentateuchal.[17] The hints of various kinds from epigraphy are relatively slight, but they begin in the Hellenistic age and continue into times and places in the later Roman empire from which little or no Greek Jewish literature survives.

Setting

It seems likely that among Greek-speaking Jews the public readings of the law of Moses were in Greek, although Philo notes the Hebrew original even as he commends the Septuagint; an Alexandrian Jewish festival celebrated the translation on the island of Pharos (*V. Mos.* 2.26; 39–42).[18] Jews made use of Greek biblical texts throughout the period of Greek and Roman rule. The regulation of synagogue readings in Justinian's *Novella* of 553 suggests that, although the Jewish use of Hebrew had probably increased by his time, a Greek rendering

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14 On the Letter of Aristeas see n. 76, below, and De Troyer in this volume, pp. 267–88.

15 See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 618–54 (the Sibyllines), pp. 661–7 (Orphica) (introduction); Bate, *The Sibylline Oracles III-V*; Collins, 'Sibylline Oracles', pp. 317–472; Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*; Holladay, *Fragments*, vol. IV *Orphica* (text, translation and commentary).

16 Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 687–92 (introduction); Wilson, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (translation, commentary and text).

17 Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*, pp. 258–63 (index); papyri and ostraca as well as inscriptions formed the basis of D. Rokeah, 'A Prosopography of the Jews in Egypt', in *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, ed. Tcherikover, Fuks and Stern, vol. III, pp. 167–96.

18 See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 142–4 (here revised by Millar).

could still be added to a public reading of the Hebrew.[19] Jewish study of Greek renderings continued in medieval Byzantium, now often through transliteration of Greek into Hebrew characters. Greek-speaking Samaritans in Antiquity similarly used Greek biblical translations and wrote books in Greek.[20]

The mention of synagogues in connection with Justinian points to an environment of interpretation, the meeting place known to Greek-speaking Jews as *proseuché* ((house of) prayer) or *synagogé* ((house of) assembly).[21] Inscribed Greek dedications of prayer-houses in Ptolemaic Egypt survive from the third century BC onwards.[22] Biblical books were kept, read out and expounded there. According to Philo, Jews assemble on the sabbath to read and expound their holy books (*Somn.* 2.123, 127), a priest or elder reads and expounds 'the holy laws' point by point (*Hyp.* 7.13), and this exposition makes the place of prayer (*proseukterion*) a school of virtue (*V. Mos.* 2.215–16; similarly, *Spec. leg.* 2.62, and, on prayer-houses in Rome, *Leg. ad Gaium* 156).[23] In Asia Minor, theft of sacred books from the Jews' 'sabbath-house' (*sabbateion*) was forbidden by Roman decree.[24]

In this period it seems likely that the scriptures were brought into the assembly, but later their custody in a fixed ark or shrine, as became usual in Palestine, is epigraphically attested at Ostia and then at Sardis.[25] The deposit of

19 Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part 1, p. 143, n. 22 (the introduction of Novella 146 speaks of long-standing disagreement between Jews who wish only the Hebrew tongue to be used in the reading of the sacred books, and those who wish to add Greek).

20 See P. W. van der Horst, 'The Samaritan Languages in the Pre-Islamic Period', *JSJ* 32 (2001), 178–92; reprinted in van der Horst, *Japhet in the Tents of Shem*, pp. 235–49; on attestations of Greek biblical texts used by Samaritans see Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 167–9; R. Pummer, 'The Greek Bible and the Samaritans', *REJ* 157 (1998), 269–358. A Samaritan inscription from Thessaloniki (fourth–sixth century AD), quoting Num. 6:22–7 in Greek, is republished as Mac17 in D. Noy, A. Panayotov and H. Bloedhorn, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis. Vol. I: Eastern Europe*, TSAJ 101 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), pp. 100–5. Samaritan Greek authors in the Hellenistic age included the historian Pseudo-Eupolemus and probably the epic poet Theodotus; see Holladay, *Fragments*, vol. I, pp. 157–87, vol. II, pp. 51–204.

21 For concise presentation of literary and epigraphic sources see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. II, pp. 423–63; for implications of the Philonic evidence, Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship*, pp. 74–88; for trends in discussion, Olsson and Zetterholm, *The Ancient Synagogue*.

22 Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*, nos. 22, 117 (third century), 24, 25, 125 (second century), 27, 28 (second or first century BC).

23 Law study rather than Bible study is detected in these passages by P. Mandel, 'Scriptural Exegesis and the Pharisees in Josephus', *JJS* 58 (2007), 19–32; but comparison with *De somniis*, and other associations between biblical books and prayer-houses suggest that the 'laws' in *Hyp.* 7.13 are the pentateuchal books.

24 Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.164 (a decree attributed to Augustus).

25 D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe. Vol. I: Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), no. 13 and plate VI (Ostia, perhaps late second century); W. Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis. Vol. II: Kleinasien*, TSAJ 99 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), nos. 129, 131 (Sardis, fourth–sixth century).

sacred books in diaspora prayer-houses agrees with Judaean custom, illustrated at Caesarea and Masada at the time of the first Jewish revolt against Rome.[26] The Jerusalem temple itself had a library; tradition, following biblical hints, traced it to ancient times.[27] A copy of the laws was carried after other spoils from the temple in the triumph of Vespasian (Josephus, *B. J.* 7.150).

The synagogue fostered biblical interpretation not only through the custody, reading and exposition of the books, but also through scriptural allusion in prayer. The use of prayer and hymnody in the *proseuché* has been doubted, partly on the basis of Philo's presentation of the Sabbath assembly in educational terms, as quoted above.[28] Prayer there is suggested, however, by the name *proseuché*, 'prayer-house', viewed with the literary witness to Greek Jewish prayers, psalms and hymns. Early examples are the priestly prayers recalling the Eighteen Benedictions (Amidah) in 2 Maccabees (1:24–9, 2:17–18, both echoing Exodus), and listing biblical instances of deliverance in 3 Maccabees (2:1–20, 6:1–15). Biblical phrases could be reshaped philosophically.[29] Jewish prayer also lies behind some Greek Christian prayer, as in 1 Clement (59–61) and the *Apostolic Constitutions* (7.33–8, 8.12).[30] Biblical themes and phrases in Greek Jewish prayer represent both a form of biblical interpretation and a stimulus to it.

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26 Josephus, *B. J.* 2.291–2 (copies of the law from the Caesarean synagogue), 408, 433–4, 447 (capture of Masada); compare Philo, *Prob.* 61–2 (Essenes in Palestine hear the reading and exposition of 'the books' in sacred places called 'synagogues'); see E. Tov, 'The Text of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek Bible Used in the Ancient Synagogues', in Olsson and Zetterholm (eds.), *The Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 237–59 (pp. 237–40 on Masada finds).

27 Exod. 17:13, Deut. 31:9, 24–6; *Ass. Mos.* 1:17–18 (Moses commands Joshua to store the books in jars in the place created for the invocation of God's name); Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.38 (a writing (*graphé*) laid up in the temple), 4.302–4 (Moses hands over books (*biblia*) to the priests; his prophecies are in a book (*biblos*) in the temple), 5.61 (the writings (*grammata*) laid up in the temple). All these passages were current in Greek. Mishnaic allusions are discussed with Josephus and other rabbinic texts by Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, pp. 82–5.

28 For discussion see W. Horbury, 'Women in the Synagogue', in W. Horbury, W. D. Davies and J. Sturdy (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Vol. III: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 358–401, at pp. 361–7; P. W. van der Horst, 'Was the Synagogue a Place of Sabbath Worship before 70 C.E.?', in S. Fine (ed.), *Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 18–43; reprinted in van der Horst, *Japhet in the Tents of Shem*, pp. 55–82; Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship*, pp. 173–4.

29 W. C. van Unnik, 'Eine merkwürdige liturgische Aussage bei Josephus (Jos Ant 8, 111–13)', in O. Betz, K. Haacker and M. Hengel (eds.), *Josephus-Studien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1974), pp. 362–9; P. W. van der Horst, 'Common Prayer in Philo's *In Flaccum* 121–124', in J. Tabory (ed.), *Kenishta. Studies of the Synagogue World*, vol. II (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2003); reprinted in P. W. van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT 196 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), pp. 108–13; N. Förster, 'The Prayer of Choni in Josephus, Jewish Antiquities xiv 24', in R. Hayward and B. Embry (eds.), *Studies in Jewish Prayer*, JSS Supplement 17 (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 101–16.

30 H. Löhr, *Studien zum frühchristlichen und frühjüdischen Gebet*, WUNT 160 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); van der Horst and Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek*.

Biblical study probably also went on separately, sometimes perhaps in a room attached to the prayer-house.[31] It is attested at a high level in the quasi-monastic Jewish community of the Therapeutae, near Alexandria.[32] Members of the community engaged in daily contemplative study of the laws, the oracles of the prophets, the hymns and other writings, which they understood allegorically; they used writings of the founders of their school of thought as exemplars in this method, and they themselves composed all kinds of hymns (Philo, *V. contempl.* 25–9).

Lower levels of biblical study are indicated when Philo speaks of Jews as taught from the cradle by parents, tutors (*paidagogoi*) and instructors, and above all by the holy laws and unwritten customs, to consider the one God as father and maker of the cosmos (Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium* 115; cf. *Spec. leg.* 1.314). His phrase 'unwritten customs' points to Jewish as well as to Greek use of this conception.[33] His stress on early biblical education recalls biblical precepts on teaching children, as at Deut. 4:9–10, 6:7, 11:19 LXX, laws also highlighted by Josephus (*Antiquities* 4.211; *Contra Apionem* 2.204). Biblical presentations of the law as itself the great educator, as in Ps. 19:7–8 (making the simple wise, enlightening the eyes), reappear in the image of the law as *paidagogos*, used to make a Christian point by Paul (Gal. 3:24).

Greek education affected scriptural education, and for an appreciable number of Jews went on together with it. The preliminary or general studies (*encyclia*), including grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, music and logic, were needed by all, in Philo's view, and Philo's Moses shone in them.[34] Philo regards this general Greek education, symbolised by Hagar the handmaid (Gen. 16:1–6), as a step towards the true philosophical wisdom, symbolised by Sarah the wife (Philo, *Cong.* 73–80) and to be found in the law of Moses. Such education fostered reception of biblical books as literary works, amenable to Greek hermeneutical inquiry.[35] It encouraged co-ordination of biblical and Greek literature, and derivation of the best in Hellenic tradition from the biblical

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31 For such rooms see Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*, nos. 9, 24, 25, 28, with pp. 49–50 on their possible use for teaching.

32 On the site of their settlement see Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers*, pp. 74–93.

33 See the comment by E. M. Smallwood (ed.), *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), pp. 208–9.

34 Philo, *Cong.* 24. 74–80; *V. Mos.* 1.23–4; see F. H. Colson, 'General Introduction', in F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker et al., *Philo*, vol. i, pp. xvi–xvii; Chadwick, 'Philo', pp. 137–92 at p. 140 and nn. 3–4); Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 264–5 (similar views of Philo and Plutarch); E. Koskenniemi, 'Moses – a Well-Educated Man. A Look at the Educational Idea in Early Judaism', *JSP* 17 (2008), 281–96.

35 A. Kamesar, 'Philo and the Literary Quality of the Bible. A Theoretical Aspect of the Problem', *JJS* 46 (1995), 55–68.

source (as in Aristobulus, discussed below). Education in Greek as well as Jewish letters and philosophy then combined with sabbath and festal assemblies, and the prayer-house itself, to form a setting for biblical interpretation.[36]

Forms and methods

Jewish biblical interpretation current in Greek has some contact of varying degrees of closeness with Greek literary scholarship and its attention to text, commentary, lexicography and book collection. Thus the Letter of Aristeas is one of the sources which attest the making of a royal library in Alexandria in the third century BC.[37] Yet Greek Jewish exegesis is also linked with Hebrew and Aramaic interpretation. The integration of scripture with addition and explanation, as attested in Chronicles or later in Jubilees, reappears in many Greek examples of the so-called 'rewritten Bible', discussed below.[38]

The structure of Jewish exegesis was also often shaped, however, by Greek interpretative forms. Jewish authors from Demetrius to Philo were influenced by the Hellenic hermeneutical question and answer, known in Byzantine Greek as *erot(o)apokrisis* and in Latin as *quaestio et solutio*. A question (Greek *zetema*) about the text is posed, and its solution (*lysis*) is then expounded. This method was applied to Homer and Plato from early times, and its biblical application among Jews was continued in Greek and Latin Christian exegesis.[39] It is already adumbrated, however, in the biblical books (Deut. 6:20–5), and in rabbinic scriptural interpretation too a part is played by the question why a particular expression is used, recalling the Hellenic question and answer.[40]

Then continuous commentary in the simple form of a textual quotation (*lemma*) followed by exposition was also established in Hellenistic study. Famous Alexandrian commentators on the poets range from Aristarchus in

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36 On a Jewish share in Greek education combined with education in Judaism see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. I, 65–83; on Jewish schooling in general, Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. II, pp. 417–22.

37 Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 99–102.

38 Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', pp. 89–156; Alexander, 'Retelling the Old Testament', pp. 99–121; P. S. Alexander, 'Essay with Commentary on Post-Biblical Jewish Literature', in J. Barton and J. Muddiman (eds.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 792–829, at pp. 794–5.

39 Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 64–8; Dörrie and Dörries, 'Erotapokriseis', cols. 342–70; Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 274–80; Volgers and Zamagni, *Erotapokriseis*.

40 W. Bacher, *Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*, 2 parts (Leipzig, 1899, 1905; reprinted in 1 vol. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965), part I, pp. 96–7; part II, pp. 100–1, s.v. *lamah* 'why?'

the second century BC to Theon under Tiberius.[41] Jewish biblical commentary in the first century BC is attested by Hebrew interpretations of the Pentateuch, prophets and psalms discovered among the Qumran finds, but in the surviving corpus of Greek Jewish exegesis it first appears near the time of Theon, in Philo's allegorical treatises on Genesis, discussed below. Rabbinic texts show what may be traces of lost pentateuchal commentary from the age of Trajan and Hadrian.[42]

Homily provides a prominent exegetical form in patristic literature and the midrash. Interpretation was also central in earlier Greek Jewish homily, as Philo and the New Testament show; but, despite such reflections as 1 Cor. 10:1–13, direct literary attestation of homilies in Greek Jewish sources is limited.[43]

The modes of interpretation followed by Greek-speaking Jews were likewise largely those known in Hellenistic scholarship. Thus the contrast between allegory and the literal sense is well marked in Jewish interpretation, but it had long been central in interpretation of Homer.[44] Discernment of allegory had redeemed the poets considered as teachers from the charges of impiety levelled at them since Xenophanes in the sixth century BC, above all by Plato, who also held that the young could not grasp any such deeper sense (*hyponoia*).[45] To its exponents allegory was much more than a defensive device. A revival of it accompanied the Stoic movement, notably in the Homeric interpretation of Crates of Mallus at Pergamum in the second century BC.[46] In this period allegory lent itself naturally to Jewish defence and exposition of the scriptures.

41 Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 212–33, 276–7; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *History of Classical Scholarship*, ed. H. Lloyd-Jones [English translation] (London: Duckworth, 1982), p. 12.

42 W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 2nd edn, 2 vols., (Strasbourg, 1903; reprinted Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965), vol. I, pp. 196–211, on interpretations of Exod. 15–18 ascribed to Joshua b. Hananiah and Eleazar of Modin in the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael (text and translation in J. Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933–5 and reprints), vol. II, pp. 1–191).

43 On treatments of Samson and Jonah preserved in the Armenian Philo, see F. Siegert, *Drei hellenistisch-jüdische Predigten*, 2 vols., WUNT 20, 61 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980, 1992); Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style', pp. 191–7; on biblical exposition in the prayer-house, see Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship*, pp. 88–95. 4 Maccabees is written in the form of a speech, but is probably not the literary deposit of a homily.

44 Procopé, 'Greek Philosophy', pp. 451–77, at pp. 462–76.

45 Xenophanes (Homer and Hesiod imputed to the gods all that is shame and blame for men), discussed with early Homeric allegory by Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 8–11; Plato, *Rep*. 2.377c–383c, banning Homer and the poets for false theology (with 378d on the deeper sense), discussed by Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', pp. 131–3; on both, see Procopé, 'Greek Philosophy', pp. 462–9.

46 Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 237–42; the allegorical treatises of Cornutus and Heraclitus, two non-Jewish contemporaries of Philo, are examined by Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, pp. 23–52, and, with the addition of Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Homero*, by Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', pp. 137–9.

When Eusebius (*P. E.* 8.9) wants to illustrate the meaning expressed by allegory in Mosaic law, he can thus simply quote two Jewish interpretations of the age of Crates, from the Letter of Aristeas and Aristobulus. Philo both allegorises and quotes allegories he has heard, for example on Abraham and Sarah as mind and virtue (*Abr.* 99); he notes this understanding of scripture among the Therapeutae in Egypt (*V. contempl.* 25–9, cited above and mentioning exegetical books) and the Essenes in Palestine (*Prob.* 82). Some Hebrew exegesis known from the Qumran finds can also be called a kind of allegory.[47] Pentateuchal allegory is assumed by Paul (Gal. 4:24, on the stories of Hagar and Sarah as 'spoken in allegory') and Josephus (*Antiquities* 1.24, on Moses as allegorist).

The term *allegoria*, 'speaking of other things [than those meant]', is Hellenistic rather than classical (Plato, as cited above, used *hyponoia*), and in Jewish sources first appears in Philo. Earlier writers can say instead that Moses is 'speaking figuratively' (*tropologôn*, Letter of Aristeas 150), or 'adopts phrases applicable to other things' (Aristobulus, frag. 2, in Eusebius, *P. E.* 8.10.3).

In the Letter of Aristeas, Aristobulus and Philo the terms used to discuss allegory and the literal sense (*to rheton*, for example in Philo, *Somn.* 1.101) were taken over from Homeric interpretation.[48] It will have become clear that, as with Homer, allegory was envisaged not as an imposition of the expositor's fancy, but as a discernment of the author's intention, stimulated by what might seem inexplicable strangeness or obscurity in the text. As Josephus put it, some things Moses skilfully veils in enigmas (*ainigmata*), others he allegorises with reverence (*Antiquities* 1.24). This view was not entirely without biblical support. Biblical books, like Homeric poetry, can verge on the use of allegory, as with the Song of Moses on the vine, Nathan on the ewe-lamb or Ezekiel on the foundling (Deut. 32:32–3, 2 Sam. 12:1–7, Ezek. 16:3–34). Elements of the vocabulary of allegory appear in the Septuagint (so *parabolé*, *ainigma*, Num. 12:8, 23:7; Prov. 1:6 and elsewhere).[49] Hermeneutical rules are not gathered in surviving Greek Jewish literature as they are later on in rabbinic and patristic texts, but sometimes they are mentioned. Thus allegory in Philo has its 'canons' or 'laws' (*Somn.* 1.73, 102 respectively).[50]

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47 For discussion see Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, pp. 194–5.

48 See the lists in Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', pp. 138–9 (Greek literary study), 152 (Letter of Aristeas), 161 (Aristobulus); cf. p. 185 (Philo repeats existing terminology).

49 *Iliad* 9.502–14, on prayers as the daughters of Zeus, is discussed as an instance of allegory in Homer by Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, p. 5.

50 On rules for discernment of allegory deduced from Philo's exegesis see Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, pp. 199–200.

This interpretation flourished side by side with adherence to a literal inter-
pretation by those 'who cling to what is written' (Aristobulus, frag. 2, in
Eusebius, *P. E.* 8.10.3). Literal adherence may sometimes have betokened zeal,
for on the other side neglect of the commandments by some who understand
the Pentateuch allegorically is later acknowledged by Philo (*Migr.* 89–90).
Philo himself urges recognition of their symbolism together with observance
of them in their literal sense (*Migr.* 91–3); conversely, we should not halt at the
outward appearance of the text, but go on from shadow to substance (*Conf.*
190; with greater asperity towards the literalist, *Somn.* 1.101–2). In the case of
narrative, however, discussed further below, he could insist on its simply alle-
gorical sense. This difference in the treatment of laws and narratives reflects
the needs of Jewish practice. It reappears in the distinction between rabbinic
interpretation in the spheres of *halakhah*, 'walking', where practice is being
related to the laws, and *haggadah*, 'telling', where narrative can be treated
more freely.[51]

By contrast, the interpretation considered below under the heading of
rewritten Bible, including much from Demetrius, Eupolemus, Philo himself
and Josephus, incorporates material from interpretative tradition but remains
in the sphere of the literal sense. It includes, however, exegesis by analogy with
other biblical texts; thus Demetrius, as noted below, attests to an association
of Hos. 12:5 with Gen. 35:25 on wrestling Jacob. This biblically rooted process
has Greek parallels, reappears in the Septuagint and other ancient versions,
and is noted, perhaps with encouragement from Greek usage, in the rabbinic
hermeneutic rule of *gezerah shavah*, the 'equal decree' to which two separate
passages may be subject.[52] It is especially through textual association of this
kind and through reflection of exegetical tradition that Greek Jewish writings
document the history of Jewish interpretation in general, from the Bible to
rabbinic midrash.[53]

Lastly, biblical allusion highlights prophetic aspects of exegesis. These again
have links with other Jewish interpretation, including what has been called
'mantological exegesis' of oracles in the Bible and the Qumran texts.[54] Thus

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[51] G. Stemberger, *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash*, 2nd edn trans. and ed. M. Bockmuehl
(Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 16.
[52] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 247–52; Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, 199–
200, 226 (the seven exegetical rules ascribed to Hillel); Stemberger, *Introduction to Talmud and
Midrash*, pp. 18–20.
[53] Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition* and 'Bible and Midrash', J. Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique
du judaïsme antique d'après les témoins textuels d'Isaïe*, VTS 33 (Leiden: Brill, 1982); Stemberger,
Introduction to Talmud and Midrash, pp. 233–40.
[54] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 443–524.

prophecy and fulfilment form the framework of the prayer-allusions noted already in 2 Macc. 1:29 'Plant thy people in thy holy place, as Moses said' (in Exod. 15:17) and 2:17–18 'God who . . . restored the kingdom and the priesthood and the hallowing, as he promised through the law' (in Exod. 19:6). Here the law is viewed as prophecy. This outlook accords with the biblical profile of Moses as prophet (as at Num. 12:8, Deut. 34:10), and the Septuagintal designation of biblical passages as *logia* 'oracles' (so Num. 24:4, 16; Deut. 33:9, on Levi's custody of oracles and covenant, indicating the scriptures as well as the priestly breastplate; Ps. 118 (119):11). The usage recurs in Philo (*Dec.* 16, the laws were truly oracles of God) and the New Testament (as at Acts 7:38, Rom. 3:2). Allusion shows concern too with prophets and their books, as at 2 Macc. 15:12–16 (in a vision, Onias the high priest introduces Jeremiah) or Sib. 5.414–33 (the blessed ruler in the last time of the saints is pictured from Dan. 7).

Recognition of scripture as prophecy encourages a sense of the inspiration of authors and translators (see the following section). Through concern with fulfilment it also fosters interpretation in the mode of typology. This takes its name from Greek Jewish exegesis in Pauline form (Adam is a *typos*, 'figure', of the one who is to come, Rom. 5:14), but it already appears within the prophetic books themselves, as when a new exodus like or more than the first is foretold (Isa. 11:11–16, Jer. 16:14–15, Mic. 7:14, etc.).[55] Typological allusion can link deliverance past and present, as at 2 Macc. 15:22–36, on the destruction of Sennacherib and now of Nicanor, marked by a new festival.[56] Implicit typology is exemplified in Philo, when the future return of the dispersion is a greater exodus (*Praem.* 164–6, expanding Deut. 30:3–5 in this biblical manner).[57]

Prophetic interpretation of this kind is indeed implied by the focus of Greek Jewish piety on biblical and post-biblical deliverances, notably through the new feast days of the cleansing of the sanctuary, of Nicanor and Mordecai (2 Macc. 10:8, 15:36), of deliverance from Philopator (3 Macc. 6:36, 7:19–20) and of the seventy translators. Series of deliverances figure in prayer and in the summaries of rewritten Bible on a biblical pattern exemplified in Ps. 136. The vision of Onias and Jeremiah just noted (2 Macc. 15:12–16) suggests a visual awareness of prophets, other great biblical and post-biblical figures,

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55 Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 350–79.

56 Compare 2 Macc. 7:6 (Deut. 32:36 quoted on present endurance, with a hint at the coming Maccabean victory, 2 Macc. 8:2–5); 3 Macc. 6:1–40 (deliverances of Israel, of Daniel and of Jonah presage Egyptian Jewish deliverance from Ptolemy Philopator, marked by a new festival).

57 Compare Sib. 5.281–5, where the land in the future age flows with milk and honey, recalling Exod. 3:8, Num. 13:27 on its first occupation.

and the souls of the righteous (Wisd. 3:1; note prayer for the dead, 2 Macc. 12:41–5). This would then be part of the background of their interpretation as exemplars, noted below from Wisdom and Philo. These features of piety are probably not restricted to Greek-speaking Jews, but appear clearly in Greek Jewish writings.[58]

The prophetic aspects of Greek Jewish exegesis are linked with the biblical prophetic tradition and its later Semitic-language development, including apocalypses from Enoch onwards. They also, however, converge with Greek interest in oracles, as in the Jewish Sibyllines. Typology too can appear in Greek and Roman poetry, as when Apollo in his mother's womb at Cos foretells another god who shall rule the island, Ptolemy Philadelphus (Callimachus, *Hymn* 4.165–70), or Virgil depicts Aeneas at the site of Rome (*Aen.* 8).

The links of interpretative forms and modes with ancestral Jewish as well as Greek exegesis should not disguise the influence of Greek hermeneutics across language boundaries in the Jewish community. Allegory already occurs in the Letter of Aristeas and Aristobulus in the second century BC, reappears in a different manner in the next century in the Qumran texts, and then abounds again in Philo a century later. The question-and-answer form marks Demetrius, Aristobulus and Philo, and seems also to have affected rabbinic exegesis. The commentary form happens to be first attested in the Qumran texts, and then in Philo; it too can perhaps be glimpsed again through rabbinic tradition.

Bible

The term 'bible' is not inappropriate to Greek-speaking Jews, for both the English word and the thing itself, in the sense of a collection of sacred books, derive ultimately from the pre-Christian Jewish community. Jews referred in Greek to the holy books, *biblia*, Christians took up the habit, and in Latin and French the transliterated Greek plural became the singular *biblia* and *bible*. The related Greek noun *biblos* was used similarly by Jews. Relatively early examples of usage are 1 Macc. 12:9 (a translated text) 'the holy *biblia* which are in our hands', and 2 Macc. 8:23 (a Greek composition) 'reading the holy *biblos*'; the phrase 'the holy books' (*bibloi*), used in an Augustan decree cited above (Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.164), occurs often in Philo. Other terms

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58 On what can be called a cult of the saints in Judaism of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods see W. Horbury, 'The Cult of Christ and the Cult of the Saints', *NTS* 44 (1998), 444–69, reprinted with additions in W. Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 351–80.

include *grammata*, *graphai* ('writings') and *anagraphai* ('records'), also qualified as 'holy' in Philo, Josephus and the Pauline corpus (Rom. 1:2 *graphai*; 2 Tim. 3:15 *grammata*).[59]

These books formed a collected library at least from the Hellenistic age onwards.[60] The twofold formula 'Law and Prophets' continues, but a threefold division becomes well marked. The preface to the grandson's translation of Ecclesiasticus twice speaks of the Law, the Prophets and other books, and a threefold division recurs in Philo, Saint Luke's Gospel and (with the number of books in each class) Josephus.[61] Then the total number of books is given as twenty-two in Josephus, as just cited, and twenty-four in the contemporary 2 Esdras (14:44–6). Both numbers probably attest to a collection corresponding to the twenty-four books of a present-day Hebrew Bible, for Ruth and Lamentations can be counted as parts of Judges and Jeremiah respectively.

In this tripartite library the most important part was the Law, as Philo's pentateuchal concentration suggests (and the pentateuchal predominance in biblical names attested in Egyptian epitaphs may also point in this direction); but in Philo as elsewhere the prophets, psalms and wisdom books are quoted together with Moses. With the numbering of the works in each class, met in Josephus, Jewish practice comes close to the Greek establishment of selective lists of approved authors in different classes (the nine lyric poets form the most famous example), a critical process which was in full swing with the work of Aristophanes of Byzantium in Alexandria at the end of the third century BC.[62] The collection, classification and counting (with implications of exclusion) which issue in a selective list were familiar to Jews at the time of Josephus. Such a list is first termed a 'canon' in the church fathers, but the Greek Jewish biblical library already both attests and is interpreted by what can be called a biblical canon.

The Septuagint collection as known today includes the books classed by Jerome as apocrypha. A Christian account of the Bible in the late second-century Muratorian fragment notes Wisdom outside the Old Testament, and

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59 Burkhardt, *Die Inspiration*, pp. 75–91; Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.264 (*grammata*); *Contra Apionem*. 2.43 'the laws and the allied *anagraphai*'; and as cited in n. 27 above.
60 On the biblical canon see Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64; here attention is restricted to conceptions of a biblical library attested among Greek-speaking Jews.
61 Philo, *V. contempl.* 25, cited above; Luke 24:44 (Law, Prophets and Psalms); Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.38–40 (books of Moses, of the prophets after Moses and 'the rest'); compare in Hebrew the 'halakhic letter' from Qumran Cave 4, 4QMMT (Moses, the prophets, David . . . ; 4Q397, frags. 14–21, lines 10–11), and the rabbinic threefold grouping of Law, Prophets and Writings.
62 Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 203–8.

a Jewish booklist quoted by Origen has Maccabean books 'outside'.[63] In Philo's time the twenty-two books in Greek were probably already joined by works like Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus and 1–2 Maccabees, and also by less approved books like Enoch.[64] The extension of the biblical library had begun in the early Hellenistic age.

The Septuagint Pentateuch was revered as a twin sister of the Hebrew Torah, the translators having shared the inspiration of Moses (Philo, *V. Mos.* 2.40). Yet the 'no small difference' of Ben Sira's grandson hints at criticism. Lovers of the Septuagint had to emphasise that revision (*diaskeué*) was forbidden (Letter of Aristeas 310). The revision which reflects comparison with a Hebrew text and culminates in the 'minor Greek versions' of the second century AD (Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion) had begun before Philo's time.[65] Despite their prestige, the Septuagint renderings were constantly reviewed. Among Greek-speaking Jews, as in Greek scholarship more generally, broad interpretative debates on allegory and the literal sense were matched by attention to the text.

Early expositors (third and second century BC)

In the history of Hebrew biblical literature and exegesis there is a big gap between Chronicles, probably of the mid-fourth century BC, and the Hebrew original of Ecclesiasticus, over a hundred and fifty years later. An early form of Enoch may perhaps antedate Ben Sira, but the continuity of Jewish interpretation emerges more definitely from Greek translation and exposition of the third century BC, as attested by the Septuagint Pentateuch and Demetrius.

Demetrius

Demetrius probably wrote under Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–205 BC); as quoted by Clement of Alexandria, he reckons the period from the exile of

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63 On the Muratorian Fragment (its Old Testament section is lost, apart from the additional category in which Wisdom falls), see Verheyden in this volume, pp. 389–411; for Origen's Jewish list, Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 625; on this aspect of both, see W. Horbury, 'The Wisdom of Solomon in the Muratorian Fragment', *JTS*, NS 45 (1994), 149–59.
64 On the origins of the Septuagint collection of books, see Hengel with Deines, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture*; the German original (in M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer (eds.), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), pp. 182–284) is discussed in Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy*, pp. 29–33.
65 On these versions see Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 109–54, and De Troyer in this volume, pp. 267–88.

the ten tribes to this reign.[66] He is then the earliest witness to the Septuagint Pentateuch, and to Greek Jewish study of the books of Moses together with the historical books and the prophets. He stands out in the excerpts by Alexander Polyhistor quoted by Clement and Eusebius as a chronographer, concerned with the ages and descent of the biblical characters and the dates of events.[67] This historical biblical study is taken up by Jews and Christians such as Eupolemus, Josephus and Eusebius; Demetrius illustrates Josephus' view of records of lineage as the great instances of historical and biblical record in general (Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.29–37). The wider importance of genealogies, dates and numbers in exegetical tradition stands out in the Genesis summaries of the *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo, 1–8, or of Acts 7, discussed below under the heading of rewritten bible.

In the long frag. 2 (Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.21.1–19), on Jacob and his descendants down to Levi, Aaron and Moses, Demetrius establishes that Jacob's twelve children by Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah and Rachel (Gen. 29:28–30:24) were born during his second seven years' service to Laban, before the six years which he served for the flock (Gen. 31:41); this was possible because children from the same mother appeared at ten-month intervals. This triumph of exactitude on these births of eleven patriarchs and Dinah is approached but not quite rivalled in a probably slightly later exposition from Judaea, in the book of Jubilees (28:9–24), which makes no reference to the seven years. It seems likely that both sources build on existing historical exegesis of the patriarchal genealogies; Demetrius, however, shows greater skill in accepting what seems to be the biblical datum of seven years, and explaining it by the rapid and sometimes overlapping series of births. His comparable chronological treatments of Zipporah (explaining how she could be contemporary with Moses, although he appears to belong to a later generation after Abraham than she does) and of the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar have been taken to suggest that 'he shows an originality and directness of approach akin to that of Eratosthenes', the great contemporary Alexandrian critic and chronographer.[68]

The exegetical basis of this exposition in general emerges more clearly when it reflects the posing of questions noted above. Thus it is explained in

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66 Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.21.141, discussed by Schürer (revised here by M. D. Goodman), *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 513–17.
67 Holladay, *Fragments*, vol. I, pp. 51–91; J. S. Hanson, 'Demetrius the Chronographer', in *OTP*, vol. II, pp. 843–54 (translation and notes).
68 Demetrius, frags. 3 (Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.29.1–3) and 6 (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.21.141, cited in n. 66, above), discussed in Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, vol. I, pp. 692–3.

frag. 2 why (Gen. 45:9–11, cf. Gen. 41:46) Joseph waited for nine years before sending for Jacob and his brothers (they were shepherds, 'an abomination to the Egyptians', and had to give themselves out to be cattle-breeders, Gen. 46:34 LXX), and why (Gen. 43:34, cf. 45:22) Benjamin was given five times as much to eat as any of his brothers (the two sons of Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin, thus between them had portions of food which matched in total the portions given to the sons of Leah). These points in frag. 2, together with the question of why the Israelites had arms to fight Amalek (Exod. 17:13) when they came out of Egypt unarmed (frag. 5), and perhaps also the answer suggested to the problem of Zipporah's age (frag. 3), indicate a substratum of question-and-answer comment, and once again attest to an existing tradition of Greek Jewish exegesis.[69]

Links of Demetrius with Jewish exegesis in general, and not simply with Greek Jewish exegesis, were suggested by resemblances to Jubilees and other examples of rewritten Bible noted above. They are further indicated by a combination of Genesis with Hosea in frag. 2. The 'man' with whom Jacob wrestles (Gen. 32:25) is 'an angel of the Lord', a phrase which expands, without quoting, the allusion to this story in Hos. 12:5 'an angel'. Here the Law is being interpreted by the Prophets. Variations on Demetrius' interpretation recur in Philo (*Mut.* 14, one of God's powers, his Logos), Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (18:6 'the angel that was over the praises'), the Palestinian Targums (Neofiti: the archangel Sariel), the apocryphal Greek *Prayer of Joseph* quoted by Origen, *Comm. Joh.* 2.25, on John 1:6 (the archangel Uriel), and the midrash (Ber. R. 77:2, the angel-prince of Esau; Ber. R. 78:1, the archangel Michael or Gabriel).[70]

This pentateuchal interpretation by implicit analogy with a comparable prophetic verse does not remove the mainly historical character of Demetrius' literal exegesis, but it underlines the closeness of Demetrius to wider Jewish exegetical tradition, as noted above, and now especially to the kind of inter-pretation attested near Demetrius' time in the Septuagint Pentateuch. Here a literal translation is also an interpretation remaining within the bounds of the literal sense, but illuminating the text by the method of exegetical analogy.[71]

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69 Frag. 5 (Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.29.16), discussed with the questions from frags. 2 and 3 by van der Horst, 'The Interpretation of the Bible', pp. 530–2.

70 J. Z. Smith, 'The Prayer of Joseph', in *OTP*, vol. II, pp. 699–714, at pp. 707–9; van der Horst, 'The Interpretation of the Bible', p. 530; M. Harl, *La Bible d'Alexandrie. Vol. I: La Genèse* (Paris: Cerf, 1986), p. 243.

71 Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, pp. 180–1; Siegert, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament*, pp. 165–8.

Aristobulus and the Letter of Aristeas

In the following century Aristobulus represents philosophical exegesis.[72] He dedicated books on the Mosaic law to Ptolemy VI Philometor (reigned 180–145 BC), according to Eusebius' *Chronicle* (151st Olympiad, year 4 of Philometor). He cites with implicit approval but seeming detachment a teaching of the Peripatetics, the followers of Aristotle, and has often but debatably been ascribed to this school himself.[73] Links between Jews and Aristotelians are at any rate suggested by other texts too. Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus called the Jews a nation of philosophers, and a philosophical Jew was praised by Aristotle himself, according to Clearchus of Soli (quoted by Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.179–81).[74]

Eusebius' date for Aristobulus agrees with Clement of Alexandria on 'Aristobulus in the first book addressed to Philometor' (*Strom.* 1.22.150).[75] The fragments concentrate on the Pentateuch, but, like the fragments of Demetrius, attest other biblical reading too; 'Solomon said that she [wisdom] existed before heaven and earth' (frag. 5, Eusebius, *P. E.* 13.12.11; cf. Prov. 8:22–30).

Aristobulus again reflects the influence of the question-and-answer form, but the exegetical answers now unfold symbolism rather than history. 'When we had replied sufficiently to the questions [*zetemata*] set before us, you called out, O king, asking why through our law the divine power is signified by hands, arms, face, feet and walking' (frag. 2, from Eusebius, *P. E.* 8.9.38–10.18).

Philometor's question resembles the after-dinner questions on kingship posed by Ptolemy Philadelphus in the probably roughly contemporary Letter of Aristeas (187–294).[76] In its scriptural bearing, however, it is closer to the exegetical questions of Philo's Therapeutae, or those on the dietary laws put by the royal embassy to Eleazar the high priest in the Letter of Aristeas. The answer to these in the Letter (128–71) includes allegory starting from the intention of Moses, in the manner noted above; he can hardly have legislated

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72 Holladay, *Fragments. Vol. III: Aristobulus* (text, translation and notes); A. Yarbro Collins, 'Aristobulus', in *OTP*, vol. II, pp. 831–42 (translation and notes).
73 Frag. 5, in Eusebius, *P. E.* 13.12.10; for Aristobulus as an Aristotelian, see Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.15.72, Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.6.6, and modern scholars reviewed by Holladay, *Aristobulus*, pp. 204–6 (the ascription is unlikely, especially in view of the detachment of the reference to the Peripatetics).
74 On Theophrastus and Clearchus see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. I, pp. 256–7 (quotation and discussion); Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, vol. I, nos. 4 and 15 (text, translation and comment).
75 Schürer (revised here by M. D. Goodman), *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 579–86.
76 On the probably second-century date of the Letter of Aristeas (Aristobulus and the Letter might then draw on the same tradition concerning the origin of the Septuagint), see Schürer (revised here by M. D. Goodman), *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 677–87; on interpretative methods in the Letter, see Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', pp. 144–54.

so carefully out of regard for mice and weasels (cf. 1 Cor. 9:9, on the ox treading out the corn in Deut. 25:4 'Does God care for oxen?'). He mentions such things rather as a sign (*semeion*), speaking symbolically (*tropologôn*; 150); the term *allegoria* itself is not yet in use.

Aristobulus' comparable answer to Philometor in frag. 2 is an exposition of seemingly anthropomorphic scriptural passages, including Exod. 13:9 with 3:20 and 9:3 (hand), 17:6 (standing), 19:11 and 19:16–18 (descent amid trumpet-blasts and fire). Moses is once again judged to speak of high matters, adopting speech about other things. Those who do not cling to what is written (*to grapton*) will see that his language is metaphorical, or, in the case of the 'descent' upon Sinai, that the fire on all sides without burning and the trumpet-blasts without instruments were provided to show the divine ubiquity and greatness.

Allegory was then established in Greek Jewish pentateuchal interpretation in the second century BC, thriving on contrast with the literal sense, as Aristobulus and the Letter of Aristeas together show. The defensive character of these passages recalls the moralising Homeric allegory discussed above.

A characteristic *motif* of Greek Jewish exegesis emerges fully for the first time in Aristobulus: the combination of the theory that the great philosophers and poets drew their wisdom from Moses with the practice of quoting them to confirm the biblical books. So 'Plato followed our law' (*nomothesia*), and had clearly studied each point in it, for translations of it into Greek were current before Alexander the Great (frag. 3, in Eusebius, *P. E.* 13.12 and Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.22). Indeed, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, all following Moses on the divine making and preservation of the cosmos, are confirmed by poets, from the legendary Orpheus and Linus to the Stoic Aratus, all indebted to Moses; Orpheus (or rather a Jewish Pseudo-Orpheus) and Aratus are quoted in frag. 4, on creation, Linus in frag. 5, among a series of poetic witnesses to the Sabbath (Eusebius, *P. E.* 13.12). Part of the extract from Aratus ('we also are his offspring') reappears in the speech ascribed to Saint Paul on the Areopagus (Acts 17:28), the assumptions of which are illuminated by Aristobulus.

Eupolemus

Lastly, a Seleucid as well as a Ptolemaic horizon emerges in extracts from Eupolemus, a probably Judaean contemporary of Aristobulus.[77] These recall

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77 He calculated the years from Adam, as he said 'to the fifth year of the reign of Demetrius' (I Soter, 158/7 BC), 'the twelfth year of Ptolemy' (VIII Euergetes II Physcon, 159/8 BC), according to Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.21, who interpreted this as a reference to the Seleucid king Demetrius I; the Seleucid regnal year is mentioned before the Ptolemaic one. On Eupolemus' date and setting, see Schürer (revised here by M. D. Goodman), *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part I, pp. 517–21.

Demetrius in their historical bent, but attest to various kinds of systematisation and expansion. They range from Moses to the Babylonian exile, and indicate knowledge of the Pentateuch, the historical books and the prophets, with their traditional interpretation, as well as acquaintance with Greek literature.[78]

Moses, in accord with the view just noted from Aristobulus, is 'the first wise man' (*sophos*). He teaches letters (here in the basic sense of the alphabet) to the Phoenicians, who in turn impart them to the Greeks. He is also, however, followed by a succession of Jewish rulers. They are more clearly continuous than is the case in the Bible. A succession of three prophets who govern the people, consisting of Moses, Joshua and Samuel, is followed in the counsel of God by a succession of three kings – Saul, David and Solomon (frag. 2, in Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.30). Here there is perhaps a reconciliation of two pentateuchal predictions and ordinances, Deut. 18:15–22 on the ruling prophet like Moses whom all shall obey, and Deut. 17:14–20 (compare the blessing of Judah in Gen. 49:10) on the divinely chosen ruler and his sons, to be appointed after entry into the promised land. This scheme then aligns the historical books with the Pentateuch on the basis of Mosaic ordinance, smoothing over difficulties in prediction and record. It also has apologetic force; the Jews now have a long continuous line of monarchs, comparable with any claimed by the Greeks.

A second aspect of historical exegesis in Eupolemus is one already met through Demetrius, the Letter of Aristeas and Josephus: recognition of the importance of documentary records (*anagraphai*), evinced in the naming of contemporary rulers and the quotation of doubtful as well as authentic documents. Thus in Kings and Chronicles Solomon marries Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 3:1, 7:8, 9:16, 24; 2 Chron. 8:11), but this event is illuminated in Eupolemus (frag. 2, in Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.30–4) by a mention of David's alliance with the Egyptian Pharaoh Vaphres (Hophra, cf. Jer. 44:30), perhaps an interpretation of 1 Kings 9:16–17 (Pharaoh captures Gezer from the Canaanites and gives it to his daughter, and Solomon rebuilds it). Solomon on his accession requests that Vaphres supply Egyptian labour for the building of the temple, the men are sent from six specified Egyptian nomes, and Eupolemus reproduces the correspondence. These letters stand beside a shortened but at the same time expanded form of Solomon's correspondence with Huram (Hiram) of Tyre, as presented in 2 Chron. 2:3–16. Desire to emulate Greek documentation pervades an interpretation which builds on existing narrative features.

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78 For the fragments see Holladay, *Fragments*, vol. i, pp. 112–35 (text, translation and notes); F. Fallon, 'Eupolemus', in *OTP*, vol. ii, pp., 861–72 (translation and notes).

In another constitutional passage (frag. 2, *P. E.* 9.30; cf. 1 Chron. 23:1–2), David commits the government to Solomon before the high priest and the twelve tribal princes. Solomon's temple is described with extra-biblical detail.[79] When Eupolemus aligns Kings and Chronicles with Jeremiah, the prophet is threatened not just with death, but with death by burning, and responds undaunted with a bon mot on the wood required – which the Jerusalemites will need instead, he says, for cooking and digging in exile for their captors (frag. 4, in Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.39). These additions recall the stories of Solomon, Rehoboam and Jeroboam inserted in the Septuagint text of 1 Kings (3 Kingdoms).[80] Like Demetrius, but more fully, Eupolemus attests expansion of parts of the Pentateuch and the historical books, a kind of rewritten Bible.

Rewritten Bible

Greek writings in or near the genre of rewritten Bible (see n. 39, above) preserve much explanatory paraphrase of the kind noticed in Eupolemus and Demetrius. Still more such material survives from Semitic-language tradition. Long Aramaic and Hebrew biblical paraphrases include the originals of Jubilees and Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, together with the Genesis Apocryphon and the Temple scroll discovered in the Qumran caves. The first two of these were translated into Greek, but surviving paraphrase composed in Greek hardly rivals them for length until the time of Philo and Josephus, discussed below. The earlier Greek compositions of this kind are still impressive in their variety.

Thus in *Joseph and Aseneth*, a tale with features of a romance, Joseph's mixed marriage (Gen. 41:45) is the happy ending of a mystical narrative of approach to Judaism by a high-born Egyptian maiden.[81] Then the stories of both Joseph and Moses in Egypt receive their most Hellenic Jewish expansion in Artapanus on the Jews, preserved fragmentarily through Alexander Polyhistor and Eusebius.[82] Joseph himself engineers his transfer to Egypt in order to outwit

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79 Van der Horst, 'The Interpretation of the Bible', pp. 538–9.
80 Gooding, *Relics of Ancient Exegesis*.
81 See Schürer (revised here by M. D. Goodman), *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part 1, pp. 546–52; the work is first attested in a sixth-century Syriac version made from Greek, is handed down in Greek with saints' lives and allied material, and has always been set in Late Antiquity by some scholars. It has probably received some Christian colouring, but much in its content points to Jewish origin in the Hellenistic age.
82 See Schürer (revised here by M. D. Goodman), *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part 1, pp. 521–5; Gruen, *Diaspora*, pp. 201–12 (stressing sheer entertainment value for Jews, but allowing an apologetic tinge). Artapanus is judged to be non-Jewish by H. Jacobson, 'Artapanus Judaeus', *JJS* 57 (2006), 210–21; but his exaltation of the Jewish ancestors speaks against this view.

his brothers, and Moses is Musaeus, here viewed as the instructor of Orpheus; but he is also the source of all the Egyptians' wisdom. He divided their land into nomes and gave them their hieroglyphs and their gods (compare Deut. 4:19). He was accordingly himself venerated by the grateful Egyptians as Thoth-Hermes at Hermoupolis – truly becoming 'a god to Pharaoh' (Exod. 7:1).

The exodus is dramatised in iambic verse on the model of a Greek tragedy by Ezekiel Tragicus, again preserved through quotation, mainly by Eusebius.[83] Additions to the biblical account include Moses' dream-vision of himself enthroned, and the appearance of a majestic bird, probably the phoenix, among the palm-trees of Elim.[84] The drama probably reflects theatrical performance.

Then the non-metrical Greek of the Wisdom of Solomon often recalls the Septuagintal renderings of biblical verse, but is also influenced by Platonism, Hellenistic vocabulary and rhetorical style. Wisdom rewrites the account of Solomon's prayer from 1 Kings 3 and 2 Chronicles 6 to present a radiant portrait of divine wisdom, and paraphrases the narratives of the plagues and the exodus.

These instances attest to expansion of the biblical text, but an important aspect of rewritten Bible, as noted above, is also summary. Thus Wisdom presents the biblical figures from Adam to Moses as a short series of unnamed examples of virtue (Wisd. 10:1–11:1). In the Jewish Sibyllines, the briefly told story of the Tower of Babel is joined with historicisation of the myth of the Titans to make them human kings, in the manner of Euhemerus; and the history of Israel is traced from Ur of the Chaldees to the Babylonian exile and the hope of restoration through a royal tribe, probably Judah as in Gen. 49:8–10 (Sib. 3.97–154, 211–94).[85] These short retellings of narrative are matched by summaries of the pentateuchal laws. Thus Pseudo-Phocylides attests a summary, also used by Philo and Josephus, which integrates the laws with Greek maxims; the chief biblical sources are Exod. 20–3, Lev. 18–20 and Deut. 27.[86] The Sibyl lists Jewish moral excellences and calls Gentiles to repentance in lines which also reflect the grouping of laws (Sib. 3.234–47, 4.24–34, 162–70). In 4 Maccabees (2:4–16) laws are gathered to show that they reflect right reason.

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83 Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.28–9; for the fragments with translation and comment, see *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*, ed. H. Jacobson; Holladay, *Fragments. Vol. ii: Poets*, pp. 301–529.
84 For discussion see J. Heath, 'Homer or Moses? A Hellenistic Perspective on Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel Tragicus', *JJS* 58 (2007), 1–18.
85 For comment see Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, pp. 167–77, 196–208; according to Euhemerus, at the beginning of the third century BC, the gods were originally great earthly kings.
86 Barclay, *Against Apion*, pp. 353–61 (appendix 5); see n. 16, above.

Greek Jewish summaries recur in Christian books. Narrative is summed up in Acts 7:2–53 and 1 Cor. 10:1–11, both cited above, and Heb. 11:1–40. A legal example is the expanded decalogue, alluding to other laws and to Proverbs, derived from a lost treatise on the two ways in Didache 2, Barnabas 19 and the Latin *Doctrina apostolorum*.[87]

Thus for Greek-speaking Jews, as for their Aramaic-speaking contemporaries and as later on for ancient and medieval Christians, the biblical texts were surrounded by a penumbra of paraphrase and expansion, which might sometimes be more familiar than the texts themselves. These expansions and summaries remained within the sphere of the literal sense, and were suitable as introductions to the Bible and the Jewish way of life. In Christianity, a biblical summary formed the major part of the narration given by the catechist to learners, as described by Saint Augustine.[88] It is likely that in the Greek-speaking Jewish community also the rewritten Bible served the purposes of education.

Philo of Alexandria

In Philo the *encyclia* discussed above prepare for philosophy, which as in Aristobulus is held to take its truest and oldest form in the Bible; pre-Socratics and Stoics alike drew on Moses (*Leg. all.* 1.108, on Heraclitus; *Prob.* 57, on Zeno), but 'prophecy reaches to the things which the mind cannot grasp' (*V. Mos.* 2.6).[89] Philo the Platonic philosopher mainly addresses those philosophical questions which bear on faith and morals, and he does so mainly as a devout biblical exegete.[90] For him the greatest virtue is *eusebeia*, reverence or piety (*Spec. leg.* 4.147). His warmth of experiential piety indeed makes him a landmark in the history of mysticism, here too in the exegetical realm; he first clearly makes meditation on scripture central in the soul's search for the divine.[91]

87 H. van de Sandt and D. Flusser, *The Didache. Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, 3.5 (Assen: Van Gorcum / Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002), pp. 162–5.

88 Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, ed. and trans. J. P. Christopher (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1926).

89 Chadwick, 'Philo', pp. 150–4.

90 Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie*; P. Borgen, 'Philo of Alexandria', in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings*, pp. 233–82, at pp. 233–46, 259–64; Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*; Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*; Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', pp. 162–89; Cohen, *Philo Judaeus*, pp. 242–77; M. Hadas-Lebel, *Philon d'Alexandrie. Un penseur en diaspora* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), pp. 187–254.

91 A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition. From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 18–35, citing passages including *Leg. all.* 3.169–70, on Exod. 16:13–16a (the divine word as the soul's food).

In the years 39–40 Philo was the senior member of an Alexandrian Jewish delegation to the emperor Gaius Caligula. He could then have been born about 20 BC.[92] Once (he wrote) he had leisure for philosophy and the contemplation of the cosmos; then he was plunged into the sea of civil cares; but he thanks God that the eyes of his soul were not wholly dimmed, and he could still give himself to the sacred messages of Moses, with love of knowledge peering into each, in order to unfold and display what is not known to the multitude (Philo, *Spec. leg.* 3.1–6). This thanksgiving may relate to the time of Gaius or to pressures felt at an earlier stage, but it shows that Philo wrote some of his works at least amid public life. It also suggests that the predominantly biblical nature of his surviving works is not misleading; he clearly regards biblical exposition as his ongoing task.

Philo continues approaches met already in the Letter of Aristeas, Aristobulus and Wisdom. Against this background he seems representative rather than marginal.[93] Correspondingly, he can reflect current teaching; he recounts an allegory on Deut. 25:11–12 which he has heard (*Spec. leg.* 3.178), but elsewhere gives it as his own (*Somn.* 2.68–70).[94] His etymologies, springboards for allegory, probably rest on onomastica.[95] He drew on the summary of law also used by Pseudo-Phocylides and Josephus.[96] Then interpretations known from Philo recur in rabbinic texts and the Targums, suggesting Philo's share in an exegetical tradition common to Greek and Semitic-language interpreters.[97]

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92 Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium* 182, on his seniority and experience, discussed by J. Morris in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part II, p. 816, n. 15.

93 The question is discussed by G. E. Sterling, 'Recherché or Representative? What Is the Relationship between Philo's Treatises and Greek-Speaking Judaism?', *Studia Philonica Annual* 11 (1999), 1–30.

94 Chadwick, 'Philo', p. 138 and n. 2; D. M. Hay, 'Philo's References to other Allegorists', *Studia Philonica* 6 (1979–80), 41–75. The view that Philo reproduced sources extensively, advanced by W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom* (FRLANT, NF 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1915)), was denied by Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie*, pp. 171–4, especially because of Philo's uniform style, but is reconsidered more favourably by Runia, *On the Creation of the Cosmos*, pp. 19–20.

95 D. T. Runia, 'Etymology as an Allegorical Technique in Philo of Alexandria', *Studia Philonica Annual* 16 (2004), 101–21; see for example *Cong.* 44–5, on the names Nahor 'rest of light', Milcah 'queen' and Reumah 'seeing something' (Gen. 22:23–4).

96 *Hyp.* 7.1–9 (Exod. 20–1 and Lev. 18–20 are important sources), discussed with other indications that Philo and Josephus drew on a common summary of the law by Barclay, *Against Apion*, pp. 353–61 (appendix 5); see n. 86 above.

97 Cohen, *Philo Judaeus*, pp. 33–7, 278–87; C. T. R. Hayward, 'Balaam's Prophecies as Interpreted by Philo and the Aramaic Targums of the Pentateuch', in P. J. Harland and C. T. R. Hayward (eds.), *New Heaven and New Earth. Prophecy and the Millennium. Essays in honour of Anthony Gelston* (Leiden, Boston, MA and Cologne: Brill, 1999), pp. 19–36. Contacts between Philo and the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael on Exodus include *Hyp.* 6.5–8, on 13:11 (see n. 110 below).

His Bible is still the Septuagint, and he gives the individual names of the five books of Moses and other books; his mention of sections of the Pentateuch and his occasional quotations from prophecy, psalmody and wisdom may form clues to public reading in his time.[98] He envisages authors and hearers, not simply a text; the inspired Moses is central – prophets, wisdom-writers and psalmists are 'associates of Moses', and devout Jews are 'pupils of Moses'.[99]

Philo's *quaestiones* on Genesis and Exodus follow the question-and-answer method outlined above. They quote the text connectedly, and probably form the thread of his other exegetical works.[100] Their relation to oral teaching appears from his description of the Therapeutae; after scripture has been read one puts a question, and another answers at length (Philo, *V. contempl.* 75–6).[101]

As for commentary and other forms of exposition, his numerous treatises on the Pentateuch probably form parts of two separate but overlapping works, hard to order chronologically, termed in modern study an allegorical commentary and an exposition of the laws.[102] First, an allegorical commentary on Gen. 2–17, 28, 31 and 41 has many links with the *Quaestiones*; for ancient recognition of the relevant treatises as a group, compare Eusebius on Philo's books about the sequence of events in Genesis, 'which he entitled Allegories of the Holy Laws'.[103] The series comprises the eighteen treatises from *Legum allegoria*, on Gen. 2–3, to *De somniis*, on the dreams of Jacob and Joseph. These expound biblical passages continuously, stick closely to the quoted biblical

98 D. T. Runia, 'Philo's Reading of the Psalms', *Studia Philonica Annual* 13 (2001), 102–21; N. G. Cohen, *Philo's Scriptures. Citations from the Prophets and Writings. Evidence for a Haftarah Cycle in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSup 123 (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2007).

99 See for example *V. Mos.* 2.40, cited above (the Septuagint translators run together with the most pure spirit of Moses); *Conf.* 39 (Zechariah one of the associates of Moses); *Spec. leg.* 1.345 (Jews as pupils of Moses); further quotations in J. Lierman, *The New Testament Moses*, WUNT II/173, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), pp. 43–5, 219–20. This widespread interpretation seems better suited to the contexts than the view that the phrases refer to a 'circle of Moses', a group of exegetes to which Philo for a time belonged, urged by Cohen, *Philo's Scriptures*, pp. 175–97.

100 The view that they were restricted to Genesis and Exodus (the books specified by Eusebius in his description of Philo's works, *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.1–5) is taken after discussion of possible references to Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy by J. Morris in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part II, pp. 827, n. 45.

101 So Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie*, pp. 179–80, 231–4; on the *Quaestiones* and their relation to other Philonic exegesis see D. M. Hay (ed.), *Both Literal and Allegorical. Studies in Philo of Alexandria's Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991); P. van der Horst, 'Philo and the Rabbis on Genesis. Similar Questions, Different Answers', in Volgers and Zamagni, *Erotapokriseis* (eds.), pp. 55–70; reprinted in van der Horst, *Jews and Christians*, pp. 114–27.

102 Summaries in Schenck, *A Brief Guide to Philo*, pp. 16–19; on the difficulty of determining their order in time, see J. Morris in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part II, pp. 841–4.

103 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.1, seemingly taking the present title of the treatise on Gen. 2–3 as covering the whole series of treatises.

text, and often relate it to other texts from the Pentateuch and elsewhere; despite their treatise form, they deserve the name of commentary. They seem to follow the pattern of the oral expositions used among the Therapeutae (though not necessarily peculiar to them), as praised by Philo: they are leisurely, deliberately slow and repetitive, treating the inner meanings conveyed in allegory so that through the words of the holy scriptures, as through a mirror, the rational soul of the hearer beholds the exceeding beauty of the concepts (*V. contempl.* 76–8).

Second, an exposition of the laws (see *Abr.* 3 'we must search out the laws in regular sequence') begins with the cosmogony (*De opificio mundi*) and the patriarchs, who are viewed (*Abr.* 5) as personified laws, 'laws endowed with life and reason' (*empsychoi kai logikoi nomoi*). The life of Moses was probably reckoned with this exposition by Philo.[104] Then four legal treatises cover the decalogue, the special laws, the laws as illustrating the virtues, and the rewards and punishments envisaged by Moses (*De praemiis*, on the blessings and curses at the end of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and future hope).[105] Allegory appears, but the presentation recalls rewritten Bible; based on paraphrase, it lacks the textual study found in the *Quaestiones* and the allegorical commentary.[106]

The two larger works cannot be neatly contrasted as narrative and legal, for the exposition includes narrative, or as allegorical and literal, for the exposition includes allegory. Still, whereas the allegorical commentary has a non-historical focus on the interior life and timeless truth, the exposition brings the laws together with a vast history from Adam and Eve to Moses, with a look towards messianic redemption in *De praemiis*.[107] Again, the allegorical commentary sticks to biblical lemmata, but paraphrase marks the exposition of the laws. This exposition could then suit a general Jewish public, catechesis

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104 *Praem.* 53 seems to allude retrospectively to it, and Num. 24:7 LXX is interpreted in the same way, as a prophecy yet to be fulfilled, in *V. Mos.* 1.289–90 and *Praem.* 95.

105 On the coherence of the whole series see J. Morris in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, part II, pp. 830–55.

106 The whole exposition can be viewed as 'rewritten Bible', despite its measure of philosophical theology, in view of its adherence to the pentateuchal framework; see Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, pp. 63–79, discussed by Martina Böhm, *Rezeption und Funktion*, pp. 119–20.

107 On the eschatological interpretation of Num. 24:7 LXX in *De praemiis*, see Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, pp. 265–80 (hope for a messianic but non-Davidic world emperor); W. Horbury, 'Monarchy and Messianism in the Greek Pentateuch', in M. A. Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, BETL 195 (Leuven University Press, 2006), pp. 79–128, at pp. 104 (cf. 97), 121–4 (Philo here is consistent with earlier association of Num. 24 with a Judahite and Davidic deliverer).

or external reading by non-Jews; proselytes are welcomed in it.[108] The exact allegorical commentary requires a more advanced biblical knowledge and piety. Probably both were valued in the Jewish community, as later in the church.

Philo has been famous or infamous as an allegorist. As F. W. Farrar put it, he could 'sublimate . . . pale generalities out of narratives which thrill with life'.[109] Philo himself, however, found the life precisely in the allegory, when the soul sees clearly through the mirror of the words to the beauty of the concepts (*V. contempl.* 76–8, cited above). As biblical allegory became central in the piety of Origen and then of the monastic movement, so it will have served the Greek Jewish piety sketched above, which could produce a group like the Therapeutae.

Moreover Philo, like his forebears discussed above, viewed the biblical books as teaching, and was troubled by passages which seemed unworthy. Hence in interpreting narrative he can claim defensively that an allegorical sense is the only one that Moses could have envisaged. Thus the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8) was meant to be taken 'symbolically rather than literally' (*Op. m.* 154); none should impiously suppose that the deity tills and plants (*Leg. all.* 1.43). This bold course was not always followed. Thus the promise to Israel of a land inhabited by others (Exod. 23:20–33) also needed defence, but Israel's entry could not be wholly set aside as an event; in Philo it is indeed one more allegory of entry into philosophy (*Qu. Exod.* 2.13, on 23:20–1), but it also showed divine judgement on the wickedness of the old inhabitants (*Spec. leg.* 2.170, cf. Exod. 23:24, Wisd. 12:3–7), and a wonderful voluntary submission by the Canaanite multitudes to the few but God-beloved Israelites (*Hyp.* 6.5–8, cf. Exod. 23:27–31).[110]

The laws for Philo were likewise symbols of deeper meaning, as in the Letter of Aristeas, but the allegorical commentary insists on their observance

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108 Thus Böhm, *Rezeption und Funktion*, pp. 236–8, 324–6, 397–403 finds an apologetic, externally directed tendency in the exposition of the laws, whereas the allegorical commentary presupposes educated but committed Jewish readers, and the *Quaestiones* are perhaps an early work sketching possible approaches. For proselytes in the exposition see *Spec. leg.* 1.51–2 and *Virt.* 102–3, on Lev. 19:34 LXX 'as the homeborn among you, so shall be the proselyte'; *Praem.* 152, on Deut. 28:43 LXX 'the proselyte among you shall go up and up'.

109 F. W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation* (London: Macmillan, 1886), p. 146.

110 K. Berthelot, 'Philo of Alexandria and the Conquest of Canaan', *JSJ* 38 (2007), 39–56; on rabbinic parallels to the historical explanations (including the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael, Pisha, 18, on Exod. 13:11, on the voluntary departure of the Canaanites), see M. Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land. The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites* (Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles, CA and Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 210–12.

(*Migr.* 89–93, cited in discussion of methods above). Just as apologetic needs can mitigate the allegorisation of narrative, so here in the laws practice is influential.

In the exposition, Philo's classification of the many 'special laws' under headings provided by the Ten Commandments (*De Decalogo*; *Spec. leg.* 1.1–4.131) does not depend on allegory. It probably reflects widespread teaching; compare the roughly contemporary expanded Decalogue of the Two Ways mentioned above. This scripturally based classification contrasts with the simply topical arrangement found in Josephus (see below), but has affinities with the recognition of great commandments which include or imply others, attested in Greek morality, in the gospels and rabbinic literature.[III] Then, however (*Spec. leg.* 4.132–end; *Virt.*), Philo arranges the commandments to illustrate great virtues, recalling the virtuous patriarchal 'living laws' earlier in the exposition.

Despite Philo's capacity for sympathy with the literal sense and national history, his work contrasts with Greek Jewish historical exegesis. Faced with the names of Nahor's children and wives (Gen. 22:23–4), Demetrius the chronographer would hardly have warmed to Philo's comment 'let no sane person suppose that this is recorded as a historical genealogy' (*Cong.* 44).

Josephus

Josephus presents himself consistently as a biblical interpreter. 'A priest himself and the offspring of priests, he was not ignorant of the prophecies in the sacred books' (Josephus, *B. J.* 3.352). Then in his *Antiquities*, finished about twenty years later in 93–4, when he was fifty-six (*Antiquities* 20.267), books 1–11 form the fullest surviving example of rewritten Bible. He now says (*Antiquities* 20.263–4) that he surpassed his fellow Jews in the learning characteristic of his country and people; they attribute wisdom only to those who have exact understanding of the laws and can interpret the force (*dynamis*) of the holy writings (*hiera grammata*).

His place as a *Greek* Jewish exegete was won by assiduous labour. Philo the Alexandrian belonged by language and education to the Greek literary tradition, but Josephus was a Jerusalemite who wrote his first account of the war of the Jews against the Romans in his 'ancestral language', probably

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[III] Plutarch, *Cons. ad Apoll.* 28 (two commandments on which others depend) and Sifre Lev. 19:8 (the commandment to love one's neighbour is a great category in the law) are quoted to illustrate Matt. 22:36 (the great commandment in the law) by W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, 3 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), vol. III, p. 240.

Aramaic (*B. J.* 1.3). He says that it was a heavy task to translate his *Antiquities* into an alien tongue, Greek (*Antiquities* 1.7), that he had to learn literary Greek with great effort (*Antiquities* 20.263), and that he had used assistants for the Greek of the *Jewish War* (*Contra Apionem* 1.50) – attaining, as noted above, a fashionably Atticistic style.[112]

In the *Jewish War* he alludes to the Pentateuch, the historical books and the prophets, but often presupposes rewritten Bible. One example concludes his account of the fall of Jerusalem. The first founder of the city, called Righteous King, was the first to officiate as priest to the God and to build the temple, and therefore gave Solyma the new name Hierosolyma, 'holy Solyma' or 'temple Solyma' in Greek (*B. J.* 6.438; repeated, without the explicit claim that this king built the temple, in *Antiquities* 1.180). Here Gen. 14:18–20 (Melchizedek king of Salem was priest of the most high God) is amplified, it seems by association with Ps. 76:2 'at Salem was his tabernacle, and his dwelling in Sion'; the first temple was at Salem, identified with Jerusalem. This is rewritten Bible in a Jerusalem form, adapted to a Greek-language environment by Josephus or his forerunners, or both.[113] Hebrew names are excluded, and the Greek name Hierosolyma, in Gentile use in Josephus' time and long before, is explained so as to give the utmost antiquity to the city, the temple and its cult.[114] It has been suggested that he simply knew biblical stories like this at the time of the *Jewish War*, gaining real knowledge only when he prepared the *Antiquities*.[115] He no doubt then deepened his biblical study, but, as Philo shows, his allusions to rewritten Bible need not preclude the awareness of the books themselves which is claimed in the *War*.

In the *Antiquities* Josephus states that he is giving the Jewish history and constitution by translation 'from the Hebrew writings' (*grammata*), presenting accurately the content of 'the records' (*anagraphai*) and following their own order (*Antiquities* 1.5, 17); he claims the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch

112 On Josephus' Greek competence, and the purposes of his statements on the subject, see Rajak, *Josephus*, pp. 46–64; Barclay, *Against Apion*, p. 36.

113 It is perhaps affected by Greek-language Jewish–Samaritan controversy, as suggested by C. Gianotto, *Melchisedek e la sua tipologia*, Supplementi alla Rivista Biblica 12 (Brescia: Paideia, 1984), pp. 267–9. Melchizedek appears as king and priest of Mt Gerizim in Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.17.5–6, quoting Alexander Polyhistor, who ascribes the passage to Eupolemus; but the identification of Salem with the holy Mt Gerizim, not simply with a place in the district of Shechem, suggests a Samaritan source, despite contrary arguments summed up by Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, pp. 147–8. For the text, see Holladay, *Fragments*, vol. 1, pp. 157–87, and on Samaritan Greek authors see n. 20, above.

114 Eupolemus had less ambitiously derived Hierosolyma from *hieron Solomonos*, 'the holy place of Solomon' (frag. 2, in Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.34.11).

115 This view is stimulatingly argued by S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 23–35, 43–5.

as an antecedent of his work (*Antiquities* 1.9–13; cf. *Antiquities* 12.11–118, a paraphrase of the Letter of Aristeas). He adds and omits nothing, a statement which seems surprising when compared with his expansions and abbreviations, but can be understood in the light of his aim to give the essential 'force' of the biblical texts (*Antiquities* 20.265, quoted above).[116]

He is indeed often very close to scripture, but it remains unclear which texts and versions he used.[117] He mentions the Septuagint, but he can give a Hebrew-derived rendering which differs from the Septuagint as now known, as when Abel offers 'milk' (*Antiquities* 1.54, cf. Gen. 4:4 LXX 'fat'); from 1 Samuel to 1 Maccabees he has been thought to use an antecedent of the Lucianic recension of the Septuagint.[118] It is also held that he worked directly from a Hebrew text, as his own claim suggests; he accepted sacred books, perhaps including texts in Hebrew, from captured Jerusalem by Titus' favour (*Vita* 417–18).[119] Again, his own retelling seamlessly combines text with expansion and omission, and suggests that he had before him a combination of the same kind, probably in Aramaic, like the Genesis Apocryphon or an early form of Targum. He perhaps used both Semitic-language and Greek sources; the idea that he worked from a Semitic-language text deserves consideration in view of his own claim, even when that is taken with a pinch of salt, but sometimes at least he seems to draw primarily on a Greek translation which has been revised towards a form of the Hebrew.[120]

The result in the *Antiquities* is a large-scale interpretation, uniting exegesis adapted to the Greek-speaking world with Judaean tradition. It accepts that Moses may speak in allegory (1.24, cited above), but with rewritten Bible remains within the sphere of the literal sense; Josephus is in the line of Greek Jewish historical interpreters, as appears again in *Contra Apionem*, which includes his classified enumeration of the biblical library (*Contra Apionem*

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116 S. Inowlocki, '"Neither Adding nor Omitting Anything"': Josephus' Promise not to Modify the Scriptures in Greek and Latin Context', *JJS* 56 (2005), 48–65.

117 Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, pp. 183–7.

118 Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, p. 233.

119 So E. Nodet, with S. Bardet and Y. Lederman, *Flavius Josèphe. Les antiquités juives. Vol. II: Livres IV et V* (Paris: Cerf, 1995), pp. xi–xvi; Nodet, *La Bible de Josèphe*.

120 Thackeray, *Josephus*, pp. 75–100 (he used at least two texts, one in a Semitic language, one in Greek); similarly Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, pp. 23–36 (use of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, varying from book to book); but E. Ulrich, 'Josephus's Biblical Text for the Books of Samuel', in L. H. Feldman and G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), pp. 81–96, and P. Spilsbury, 'Josephus on Daniel', in C. T. Begg and P. Spilsbury, *Flavius Josephus. Judean Antiquities 8–10* (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), pp. 265–7 (cf. 311, n. 1153), incline to the view that for the books of Samuel and for Daniel, respectively, Josephus worked simply from a Greek text.

1.37–41). At the same time he is concerned with prophecy, as shown in the autobiographical passage from the *War* quoted above (*B. J.* 3.352); thus he notes that Daniel not only prophesied future events, but also fixed the time when they would come to pass (*Antiquities* 10.267).

In the body of the *Antiquities* his topical summary of the laws (*Antiquities* 4.196–308) foreshadows the Mishnah in attending to topics rather than biblical contexts, and differs from Philo's scriptural scheme.[121] When he adapts narratives in the Hexateuch to mention a national council (*gerousia*) he is close to Eupolemus in constitutional concern, but closer to Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* in advocacy of the council.[122] His portrayal of biblical characters as exemplars of the virtues, seen above in miniature in the righteous Melchizedek, is close to Philo, Wisdom and Jewish piety, and to the combination of Jewish law with Greek maxims (*Contra Apionem* 2.145–286) which he shares with Philo and Pseudo-Phocylides.[123]

Josephus rivals Philo in long-term influence, but the whole Greek Jewish exegetical tradition has been influential, partly through its double continuation in the church and among Jews in the Roman empire, partly through the fresh attention to its earlier stages evoked by Christian biblical study in Antiquity.[124] References above to the minor Greek biblical versions, to Paul, Acts, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius, have hinted at these points. Then through Jerome and Ambrose, and Latin versions of Philo, Josephus and works from the extended biblical library, Greek Jewish exegesis was mediated to the West.

This exegesis has a broad range, despite its patchy attestation. Like Greek literary scholarship in general, it embraces debate on the literal sense and philosophical allegory together with historical exegesis and attention to the text. Yet it also touches the ancestral Jewish themes of Semitic-language literature, most obviously in rewritten Bible, varying treatments of the laws, and analogical interpretation, but also in biblical allusion which highlights

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121 On thematic arrangement as vying in rabbinic literature with commentary arrangement see A. Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature and Thought. An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 8–13.
122 For example *Antiquities* 5.55–7 (substituting high priest and council for the tribal princes of Jos. 9:15–21), considered with other passages and further literature in Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians*, pp. 168–73.
123 Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, pp. 74–131; Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew*; n. 96, above.
124 Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*; H. Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter*, Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Schreckenberg, 'Josephus in Early Christian Texts', pp. 51–85.

prophetic interpretation, typology and a concern for fulfilment. Chronologically, it complements a Semitic-language tradition which is also less than continuous, despite the Qumran finds. Greek Jewish exegesis is a rich source for *halakhah* and *haggadah* before the time of the Mishnah, and a vital witness to the interpretative tradition which accompanied the biblical books from the Persian period onwards.

Scripture in the Jerusalem temple

C. T. R. HAYWARD

Introduction

Biblical Hebrew has no expression which might obviously be translated as 'scripture': the phrase 'the holy writings', כתבי הקדש, is post-biblical (see, e.g., m. Shab. 16:1; 'Eruv. 10:3; Sanh. 10:6), attested after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, when the extent and content of Jewish 'holy writings' had been agreed and defined. Greek equivalents of this Hebrew phrase, however, were used towards the end of the Second Temple period in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, who dubs the last chapter of Deuteronomy 'the end of the holy writings', τὸ τέλος τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων (*V. Mos.* 2.290; see also *Spec. leg.* 2.159; *Praem.* 79). The similar expression αἱ ἱεραι γραφαί, 'the holy writings', he employs in *Op. M.* 77; he can also speak of 'the writings' without further qualification (*Abr.* 236). Writing after the destruction of the temple, Josephus used the same range of expressions (*Antiquities* 20.264; *Contra Apionem* 2.45; *Antiquities* 3.38). With reference to the last days of the second temple, we might reasonably offer a working definition of 'scripture' as a body of holy texts whose authority to determine public life and private conduct had been agreed and accepted by the various groups that made up the Jewish people. As the Qumran scrolls have made plain, there were differing answers among Jews to the question of precisely which books constituted scripture, but the conviction that some books certainly could be called 'the holy writings' appears to have been very widely accepted among the Jewish people.

Matters were different, however, in First Temple times. The Bible states repeatedly that during the monarchy many Israelites were involved in non-Israelite cults, often with the encouragement and connivance of their kings (see 1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 16:10–18, 17:7–18, 21:1–16). The prophets, who acted as protagonists of the God of Israel and attempted to bring monarch and people back to his service, could effectively appeal for such a return to God only on the basis of known, traditional Israelite beliefs about the character

of �𝖸ʜᴡʜ, and traditional notions of the kind of conduct which God deemed acceptable or unacceptable inside and outside the sanctuary. These prophets did not appeal explicitly to written documents; but they did announce their concern for Torah (e.g. Isa. 1:10, 5:24, 8:20; Hos. 4:6; Amos 2:4; Mic. 4:2), of which the priests in particular were guardians (Jer. 2:8, 18:18). A picture of ideal priestly behaviour is given in the praise of the priestly ancestor Levi preserved in Deut. 33:8–10, recording that the priestly tribe kept God's command and covenant. Their duty included teaching God's judgements and Torah to Israel, and only then offering of sacrifice. The mention of command, covenant and judgements in association with the Torah suggests some written documents enshrining these things; as we shall see, such documents almost certainly existed. They cannot, however, be termed 'scripture' in the sense defined above; and throughout this discussion of the First Temple period we shall speak rather of 'traditional sacred writings', which no doubt claimed the allegiance of many in Israel, but were ignored by others and accorded little or no authority in public or private life.

First Temple period

The Hebrew Bible records as ancient tradition the formal constitution of Israel as a people under divine governance, inaugurated through a covenant solemnly ratified by a ritual in a holy place (Exod. 19–24). The covenant is enshrined in a book, ספר הברית (Exod. 24:7), containing stipulations of the agreement determined by God; and the holy place where Israel assembled to accept that covenant is Mt Sinai, depicted as a sanctuary with an altar for sacrifice (Exod. 24:4–5) and priests in attendance (Exod. 19:22, 24:5), which may only be approached by lay Israelites in a state of purity (Exod. 19:10–15).[1] Prominent in the Bible's description of these events at Sinai is God's granting to Moses the two tablets of the testimony written on stone by the Almighty himself (Exod. 31:18; cf. Exod. 24:12, 32:15–16, 34:1), which were destined to be placed in the ark of the testimony (Exod. 25:16), both sacred items finding their resting place first in the most holy room of the portable tent-sanctuary constructed by Moses in the desert (Exod. 40:20–1), and finally in the permanent sanctuary constructed by King Solomon, the Jerusalem temple (1 Kings 8:6–9). From the outset of Israel's formation as a royal, priestly people (Exod. 19:6), the Bible points to a fundamental symbiosis of the written words

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1 On Sinai as a sanctuary analogous to the later Jerusalem temple, see Jub. 4:26, 8:19.

of the Almighty and Israel's sanctuary, where priests and Levites conduct that holy service which God commands.

The covenant ceremony of Exod. 19–24, however, is not the first event related in the Bible to indicate a link between sacred writing and holy place. Somewhat earlier, Exod. 17:8–16 had told of Amalek's attack on Israel, which had been thwarted with divine help. Following Israel's victory, God instructed Moses to write as a memorial in a book, for recitation to Joshua, that God would blot out Amalek's memorial from under heaven (Exod. 17:14). Moses responded immediately by building an altar which was given a name, YHWH *nissi*, accompanied by a mysterious saying, 'For a hand is upon the throne of Yah, a war for the Lord against Amalek from every generation'.[2] The book, the altar with its cryptic name and the strange, oracular-sounding formula combine to create a mighty sense of the numinous around this, the first occurrence together in the Bible of the Hebrew words for 'write', כתב, and 'book', ספר, with the repeated references to memory and the altar. The holiness of the place represented by the latter reinforces the extraordinary character of the written words, possibly implying that their meaning or meanings may be accessible only to authorised, holy persons.[3]

As if to underscore the close relationship between books, writing and the sphere of the holy, the two remaining verses of Exodus which deal with these things introduce the reader to the heavenly realm itself. Having witnessed the matter of the golden calf, Moses shattered the two tablets of the testimony (Exod. 32:19), before praying to God on sinful Israel's behalf, begging for their forgiveness. Otherwise, he asks that God blot him out 'from your book which you have written' (Exod. 32:32), to which God replies that whoever sins against him, he will blot out from his book (Exod. 32:33). These verses indicate that God has his own book in heaven; that he himself has written it, just as he wrote the tablets of the testimony given to Moses; and that this heavenly book may therefore have some relationship to the only other book so far recorded in Exodus, namely, the book of the covenant. The sanctuary, in whose inmost recess the tablets of the testimony will be lodged, is itself fashioned according to a heavenly pattern, תבנית, which God revealed to Moses (Exod. 25:9). This shrine is thus in some measure an earthly replica of a heavenly reality, a

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2 Exod. 17:16, the Hebrew reading: כי יד על כס יה מלחמה ליהוה בעמלק מדר דר. Conventional analysis ascribes the verse to the pre-exilic source E; this, and the complexities and difficulties of the expressions used, is surveyed by Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, pp. 615, 620–2, and the interpretative possibilities discussed by Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, pp. 189–90.

3 On the numinous character of writing in ancient societies, along with its capacity for 'institutionalizing unintelligibility', see Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 10, 76, 79–80.

dwelling place for the Lord (Exod. 25:8; 29:44–5); and in both his heavenly and earthly residences, God has books which he has written.[4]

The oldest references to writing and books recorded in biblical tradition, therefore, focus strongly on Moses, God's covenant with Israel and his fighting for his people, and holy places. The one earlier reference to a book (Gen. 5:1) describes a genealogical list; but it says nothing of a sanctuary, nor writing, which first makes its appearance with Moses in the book of Exodus.[5] Leviticus is silent about books or writing. Numbers, however, offers two verses which confirm the picture emerging from material in Exodus. The first concerns the law of the suspected adulteress, who is to be brought to the sanctuary, where oaths must be administered to her. These the priest must *write* in a *book* (Num. 5:23): their exact wording is given, accompanied by precise regulations for their use (Num. 5:19–25). A formula whose wording is carefully specified, evidently commanding immense authority, is here formally written and applied in the sanctuary. The second verse (Num. 21:14) alludes to and quotes from 'the book of the wars of the Lord', and recalls the matter of Amalek described above.[6]

The last book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, is explicitly self-referential. It entitles itself 'this book' (Deut. 28:58, 29:19, 26), more closely defined as 'this book of the Torah' (Deut. 29:20, 30:10) or 'the book of this Torah' (Deut. 28:61, 31:26): it includes 'all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the Torah' (Deut. 29:20). Its significance in respect of the covenant is heavily emphasised, for Moses commanded that the Levites, who carried the ark of the covenant, take charge of 'this book of the Torah', and place it alongside the ark of the covenant as a witness (Deut. 31:24–5). The ark had been made by Moses at God's command, to contain the tablets of stone inscribed with the Ten Words (Deut. 10:1–5), explicitly identified with the covenant at Deut. 4:13. These priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant, are commanded to read 'this Torah before all Israel' every seven years at the feast of Sukkoth, when the nation is assembled at 'the place which the Lord will choose', that is, at the sanctuary (Deut. 31:9–11). While the general ingredients of the traditions already found in Exodus in respect of divine commands to Israel reappear in Deuteronomy – the prominence of Moses;

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4 For recent analysis of the first temple's architecture and furnishings, see Hurowitz, 'YHWH's Exalted House', pp. 63–110.

5 See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 202–6, for association of writing with earlier biblical personalities, especially the scribe Enoch, among particular groups in Second Temple times.

6 See above, p. 323. On 'the book of the wars of the Lord', see Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, pp. 91–4.

the covenant and the stone tablets associated with the ark; the language of witness or testimony; and the holy place or sanctuary – differences between the two books are evident. Two of these must be noted at once, namely, Deuteronomy's requirement that any future king must write for himself 'a copy of this Torah' משנה התורה הזאת (Deut. 17:18), and that the Torah be read publicly on a regular basis at the sanctuary. In other words, Deuteronomy commands what Exodus does not, that the Torah be *copied*, to however limited a degree; and that it be regularly *read* at the sanctuary, even if only once in every seven years. The Torah of Moses concludes, therefore, with the expectation that copies will be made of it, and that it will be publicly proclaimed in the sanctuary.

Modern study of these traditions is best approached through scholarly analysis of Deuteronomy, whose present literary form and structure is generally acknowledged as owing much to ancient Near Eastern forms of treaties or covenants well known outside Israel.[7] Hittite and Assyrian treaties required that the documents enshrining the covenants be deposited in a temple, and be periodically read out in public, provision being made also for the production of duplicate copies of the texts. If Deuteronomy, or at least the core of its text which critical study often identifies as consisting of chapters 4:44–28:68, was composed in the period of the first temple, then it might reasonably be expected that a (possibly) official version of 'this book of the Torah' was not only located in the temple, but also publicly read from time to time.[8] Given the claims which 'this book' makes to authority, it might then qualify as a traditional sacred writing whose rightful place was the temple. Several considerations support this picture. First, Deut. 17:14–20 assumes that Israel has a king, who will play a part in ensuring that the Torah and its commandments are known and practised. Second, the book is emphatically associated with the ark of the covenant. Both monarch and ark disappeared at the exile, never to be replaced.[9] Third, a copy of 'the book of the Torah' was reportedly found in the Jerusalem temple by the high priest Hilkiah in the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8). Following this discovery, the king ordered that 'the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord' be publicly read in the presence of the whole people (2 Kings 23:2), and that non-Israelite cult

7 Most clearly explored by Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, pp. 59–157, with convenient summary (p. 66) of the elements common to Deuteronomy and Hittite and Assyrian treaties.
8 On the composition and structure of the book, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, pp. 9–13.
9 For the end of the monarchy, see 2 Kings 25:1–7, 27–30; 2 Chron 36:11–21. The ark was likely a casualty of the Babylonian conquest of Judah: see the analysis of theories about its end in Day, 'Whatever Happened to the Ark of the Covenant?', pp. 250–70.

objects be destroyed, while the priests responsible for them were removed from office (2 Kings 23:4–14). At the same time, the policy of a single Israelite sanctuary for the sacrificial service, unambiguously demanded by Deut. 12:5, was rigorously implemented (2 Kings 23:8, 15–16). All this suggests that at least the core legislation of Deuteronomy was known in the time of King Josiah (c. 640–609 BCE), and that the bonds tying together temple and traditional sacred writings noted earlier were already established in First Temple times.[10]

Not all students of Deuteronomy, however, agree that the book belongs in the period of the first temple. The account of Josiah's reform in 2 Kings seems so heavily indebted to deuteronomistic language and terminology that it has aroused suspicions of being a fiction, designed to give a patina of verisimilitude to the impractical utopian dreams of Deuteronomy itself, dreams which could not be, and never were, initiated or implemented in the time of the first temple.[11] Rather, the idealistic portrait of Israel painted by Deuteronomy and the changes established by Josiah are best understood as pious retrojections into First Temple times of programmes devised in the exile and succeeding generations. Against this, however, one must consider the markedly didactic, 'wisdom' traits of Deuteronomy, whose scribal character has been carefully delineated by Weinfeld.[12] Its gathering together of many different kinds of Israelite tradition into a collected work, and its affinity with material in the book of Proverbs, recalls the activity of 'the men of Hezekiah', king of Judah (c. 715–687 BCE), in collecting proverbial sayings from earlier times (Prov. 25:1).[13] Furthermore, David Carr has noted the increasing evidence for literacy in the late monarchical period, along with a marked decline in the appearance of divine images or figurines in the archaeological record, a likely signal that Deuteronomy's polemic against images was beginning to have an effect.[14] He also points out that texts like Jer. 8:8, 18:18 and Isa. 5:21, 29:14 provide evidence for a combination of Torah and scribal wisdom of the very kind envisaged in Deuteronomy.[15] Taken as a whole, the evidence suggests

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10 Affinities between Deuteronomy and the Torah book found in Josiah's reign are discussed by Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp. xix–xxiv.
11 See, for example, Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, pp. 93–100.
12 See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, pp. 244–319.
13 See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, pp. 151, 161. A similar, almost contemporary, collecting of traditions may be discerned in King Aššurbanipal's foundations of great libraries at Nineveh: the seventh century BCE seems to have generated a number of antiquarians and collectors.
14 See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, p. 141. For discussion of archaeological evidence for divine images, see Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, pp. 12–43.
15 See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, p. 141. For judicious assessment of the historicity of biblical material about Jeremiah, see Reimer, 'Jeremiah before the Exile?', pp. 207–24; and for Isaiah, see Williamson, 'In Search of the Pre-Exilic Isaiah', pp. 181–206.

that the reign of King Josiah was a time of religious revival in Judah, when requirements set out in 'the book of the Torah' were put into effect.

That book was a public, written text, some of whose characteristics we have briefly considered. Yet there is a strongly emphasised oral aspect of this text, indicated by its insistence that its contents be talked about, repeated, taught, learned and held before the mind for meditation (Deut. 4:9–10, 6:6–8; 11:18–20). This book is not only the standard determining Israel's public life, the norm which the king himself must observe; it is also the guide for each individual Israelite, who must know its commandments and statutes and be careful to observe them. The public aspects of the book focus not only on the king, but also on the priests of the tribe of Levi: a notable example of this is Deut. 17:8–13, which rules that cases too difficult for local courts must be taken to the single sanctuary and referred to 'the priests, the Levites, and to the judge who shall be there in those days' (Deut. 17:9). Their decision is binding; and any one refusing to obey 'the priest who stands to minister there to the Lord your God or the judge' shall die (Deut. 17:12). At the same time, the day-to-day lives of the people of Israel centre on this single sanctuary and its priests. Offerings of first fruits are regularly to be brought to the priest in the sanctuary (Deut. 26:1–4), and the offerer must make a formal declaration (Deut. 26:3) and recite a solemn formula whose words are recorded at Deut. 26:5–10. Every third year, the Israelite farmer must tithe produce for the Levite, the resident alien, the orphan and the widow, and utter yet another solemn formula 'before the Lord', that is, in the sanctuary: the words for this, too, are explicitly prescribed (Deut. 26:13–15). In these instances, the specific demands of the book are given external embodiment in a liturgical form, where ritual act and prescribed words together give physical and oral expression to the commands of an authoritative writing.

We should note other aspects of the Deuteronomic legislation which later, liturgically minded generations could develop. The Israelite who brings first fruits to the temple publicly acknowledges that his ancestors were slaves in Egypt (Deut. 26:5–6). At Deut. 16:12, the lawgiver commands that Israelites 'remember' that they were slaves in Egypt: the setting is the feast of Shavuʿoth (Weeks), one of three occasions when all the men of Israel are to be present at the sanctuary (Deut. 16:16). Might this 'remembering' have involved the public or private recitation at the sanctuary of words recalling Israel's history and God's actions for the people? Again, Deuteronomy brings into prominence the festival of Pesach, with the avowed intention of ensuring that the individual 'remember' the exodus (Deut. 16:3). The intention might most simply have been fulfilled in a form of words regularly recited ('all the days of your

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life', Deut. 16:3), given the legislator's affection for oral instruction and the repetition of instruction. We have no direct evidence on these particular matters; but Deuteronomy certainly represents an authoritative document which urges as a necessity the use of solemn, carefully defined formulas at critical points in the life of the nation and the individual. As examples of this tendency even outside the confines of the sanctuary, we may cite the words required of city elders during the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken in a valley (Deut. 21:7–8), and the curses on covenant breakers uttered by the Levites to which the people answer 'Amen' (Deut. 28:14–26).[16]

The recitation of authoritative texts as part of the temple service, texts which later can properly be considered 'scriptural', was envisaged by the deuteronomic legislator as a significant element in the worship of God: later writers could, and would, develop this insight. We may note, for example, how the Deuteronomistic Historian puts into Solomon's mouth at the inauguration of the temple a formal blessing constructed out of material ascribed to the days of Joshua, and which the historian evidently considered theologically normative (1 Kings 8:56–7; cf. Josh. 21:25, 1:5; 1 Sam. 12:22). The same historian did not hesitate to locate in the sanctuary significant documents about the king's role in Israel (1 Sam. 10:25). But what might be said of writings which may be older than Deuteronomy? Is it possible to discern in the verses from Exodus and Numbers noted earlier traditional, sacred writings associated with the sanctuary? About the Amalek tradition and the book of the wars of the Lord (Exod. 17:14–16; Num. 21:14) we should again note their mysterious, even oracular character, and recall that priests from ancient times gave oracular utterances in the sanctuary, and were the guardians and interpreters of ancient tradition.[17] Both verses may ultimately hint at traditional writings associated with the sanctuary from a remote past, but of this there can be no certainty. The book of the covenant (Exod. 24:7), however, is presented as a text read out to all Israel, whose agreement to it is publicly proclaimed (Exod. 24:3–7). The covenant itself is sealed with sacrificial blood (דם הברית 'the blood of the covenant', Exod. 24:8), half sprinkled on the altar, the rest on the people (Exod. 24:6, 8).

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16 Attention should be paid to the persuasive arguments advanced by I. Wilson, 'Merely a Container?', pp. 212–49, indicating that the framers of Deuteronomy continued to associate the ark with the presence of God, before whom the worship of the sanctuary is offered. Any action or speech 'before the Lord' in the place which he has chosen is likely to be formal, especially if God is understood as a king whose earthly palace is the temple.

17 See above, pp. 321–2; Deut. 33:8–11; Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, pp. 165–74; and the role prescribed for the priest in war by Deut. 20:2–4, involving yet another prescribed form of words.

This covenant, and the book associated with it, is quite unlike anything to be found in Deuteronomy, where we hear nothing of sacrifice, altar or manipulation of blood of the covenant in relation to Israel's acceptance of covenant stipulations. Accordingly, scholars have held that rituals described in the Exodus accounts of the inauguration of the covenant might date from a time earlier than Deuteronomy, and that the laws associated with them and recorded in Exod. 20:22–23:33, separated out by source critics and spoken of as the Covenant Code or the book of the Covenant, represent a pre-deuteronomic legal corpus which the compilers of Deuteronomy had known, drawn upon and often modified.[18] Against this, John Van Seters has argued that the Covenant Code was, in reality, a post-deuteronomic writing, produced during the exile as a supplement and response to deuteronomic law, and influenced in form and content by the laws of the ancient Babylonian king Hammurabi which had become familiar to Jews during their exile, in the Neo-Babylonian period.[19] His arguments, however, have been painstakingly evaluated and convincingly challenged by Bernard Levinson, such that a pre-exilic and pre-deuteronomic date for the Covenant Code may still be upheld.[20] That said, the Covenant Code in its present form includes no requirement that it be preserved in a sanctuary and publicly recited, even though all Israelite males are commanded to appear in the sanctuary three times each year (Exod. 23:17), and an opportunity for public reading and exposition of the laws would then have been available. But on this matter, there is silence.

Silence leads us to consider here the priestly legislation in the Pentateuch. While it has been most often associated with exilic or post-exilic times, evidence for a pre-exilic matrix and milieu for this material is plentiful, and cannot easily be disregarded.[21] The priestly legislator, like the book of Deuteronomy, is aware that Israel's covenant documents belong together with the ark (Exod. 31:18; 25:22). The documents are regularly designated the 'Testimony', עדות, whose presence within the ark serves to unite the key notions of holiness and divine command which are fundamental to the priestly

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18 The Covenant Code is generally assigned to the E source of the Pentateuch, and to the J source elements from Exod. 19 and 24 are assigned: for a classic example of such source criticism, see Fohrer, *Introduction*, pp. 146–58, 172–4.
19 See Van Seters, *A Law Book for the Diaspora*.
20 See Levinson, 'Is the Covenant Code an Exilic Composition?', pp. 272–325.
21 For the extent and complexity of the priestly material, and reasons why the documentary hypothesis dated it late, see for instance Fohrer, *Introduction*, pp. 178–86; for its pre-exilic character, however, see Rendsburg, 'Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of "P"', 65–80; Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study*; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, pp. 3–13.

understanding of the temple service, a service conducted in silence.[22] Unlike Deuteronomy, which provides specific formulas for lay persons to recite in the sanctuary and outside, the priestly laws do not prescribe prayers, psalms, music or other forms of words. This may be a deliberate ploy, to distinguish the priestly approach to Israel's God from the cults of surrounding nations with their incantations, ritual chants and recitals of divine exploits; or it may have originated in a concern to distance the Almighty from anthropomorphic imagery.[23] Nonetheless, the priestly legislation does, in fact, refer to three solemn formulas uttered in the sanctuary, one relating to non-priests, another restricted to priests and a third allotted to the high priest. The last of these is the confession in which the high priest acknowledged (והתודה) Israel's sins on Yom Kippur (Lev. 16:21). No words for this confession are provided. The first of the trio consists of oaths which the priest is to administer to a woman suspected of adultery (Num. 5:19–23), which the woman ratifies with a double 'Amen': these oaths must be written in a book. The formula restricted to priests is the priestly blessing (ברכת כהנים) recorded in Num. 6:22–7. There can be little doubt that this, or a very similar formula, was used in First Temple times, following the discovery at Ketef Hinnom of pre-exilic silver plaques engraved with a version of the blessing.[24]

This last item suggests that the priestly legislation also envisages written formulas for use in the temple service which in their utterance serve to bind Israel to the written commandments of God and to impress upon the people their holy status. If Deuteronomy insisted that the sanctuary was the place where the Lord had caused his name to dwell (Deut. 12:5, 11, 16:6), it was equally clear that the Lord's name was 'called over Israel' (Deut. 28:10), and the priestly legislation, too, explicitly describing the sanctuary as a place for the Lord's dwelling (Exod. 25:8), understood that the priests in blessing the people were engaged in placing the Lord's name upon them (Num. 6:27). Here, as in Deuteronomy, we appear to be faced with the combination of writing and oral recitation: an authoritative written document, 'the Testimony', is deposited in the inmost recess of the sanctuary with the ark, while particular elements of that document are 'applied' orally to the people Israel on attendance at the shrine.

Such evidence as might reasonably be ascribed to the period of the first temple is fairly unambiguous in associating the sanctuary with authoritative

22 As noted by Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, pp. 150–1.
23 For the first suggestion, see Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 108–10; for the second, see Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, pp. 148–9.
24 See Milgrom, *Numbers*, pp. 360–2; Lemaire, 'Hebrew and West Semitic Inscriptions', p. 378.

written documents, whether they be the deuteronomic 'book of the Torah', the priestly 'Testimony', the mysterious book recording the oracle about Amalek, or quite possibly even the terms and conditions of Saul's kingship (1 Sam. 10:25). Other nations besides Israel regularly stored important writings in their temples: in Israel's case, writings determining the relationship between the people and their God are placed in the most holy area of the sanctuary, where other nations would normally place representations of their deities. Both Deuteronomy and the priestly writings bring these authoritative documents into the sphere of the non-priest, in their differing ways. Deuteronomy orders that the 'book of the Torah' be copied, at least by the king; that non-priests repeat, learn, teach, observe and meditate upon its commandments; that the book be publicly read once every seven years; and that portions now preserved within it be recited in the sanctuary at regular intervals by non-priests. The priestly writings, whose substance we have here accepted as reflecting the period of the first temple, bring the authoritative 'Testimony' to non-priests by word of mouth as well. They envisage the priests regularly reciting a formal blessing in the course of the sacrificial service (see Lev. 9:22–3; Num. 6:22–7); and the place where the Testimony is lodged is the place from where the divine voice issues forth in commands to Israel's leaders (Num. 7:89; Exod. 25:22).[25] Most notably, the regulations for the priests and Levites in their conduct of the temple service are addressed through Moses to all Israel, not simply to a sacerdotal clique; the non-priest, as well as the officiant in the sanctuary, is to be familiar with them.[26] The sanctuary and the traditional sacred writings housed and enunciated within it are means of instruction for Israel, reinforcing her identity as a holy people (Deut. 7:6, 14:2; Lev. 11:44–5; Exod. 19:6) and her relationship to her God.

With these remarks, the educational and cultural implications of what we have described so far cannot be overlooked. David Carr has recently redirected scholarly attention to the central role of temples in ancient societies outside Israel as the repositories of 'classical' writings which in some measure defined and expressed the cultures which revered them. The priests of the sanctuaries not only preserved those culturally significant texts, but might also ensure that they were regularly recited and known.[27] Temples were

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25 Moses, according to the priestly legislation, never enters the Holy of Holies, but stands outside, receives guidance and communicates the words to Israel; on this, see Milgrom, *Numbers*, pp. 365–6.

26 For the implications of this, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, pp. 143–4, and his preceding discussion of priestly theology, pp. 42–57.

27 See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 28–30 (on Mesopotamian texts); pp. 52–6 (for 'educational' texts in temples at Ugarit); pp. 79–83 (for Egyptian practices). He also adduces

thus central in the formation of an educated cadre of persons, the scribes, who were 'enculturated' into the traditions and values of their class by the learning and repetition of ancient writings stored in temples. The texts might include epic poetry, wisdom instruction, ancient royal laws or any other genre deemed culturally significant; and, while the apprentice scribe acquired the means to master the writing system in which the texts were recorded, at the same time he needed to be able to recite them orally; this oral repetition, indeed, being an indispensable element in the scribe's gradual acquisition of the degree of literacy necessary for comprehending (in every sense of the word) the 'classical' texts which his society held in highest regard. It is not unlikely, Carr argues, that a similar state of affairs came to exist in Israel, although the central and public role of both sanctuary and texts was prominent in Israel to a degree unmatched among the surrounding nations.[28] It was during the eighth century BCE, when Assyria had come to dominate the political life of the kingdom of Judah, Carr suggests, that great prophets like Isaiah developed a 'countercurriculum' to the traditional literature and its wisdom hitherto studied by Judah's scribal class; and when Deuteronomy was adopted the book itself was presented as a prophetic enterprise, Moses being portrayed as the greatest of all the prophets (Deut. 34:10–12), his Torah and teaching separating Israel from other nations and marking her out as especially wise (Deut. 4:6). From Deuteronomy onwards, therefore, Israel's entire educational curriculum was portrayed in prophetic terms, sacralised in a thoroughgoing manner not attested in other contemporary cultures, and transformed into scripture proper.[29]

Carr's cross-cultural study is illuminating and suggestive; yet it may strike some students as perhaps a little over-systematic.[30] He rightly avoids speaking of 'schools' in pre-exilic Israel in the sense of large educational establishments

evidence from Greece (see especially pp. 99–104) which is not, however, entirely consonant with the ancient Near Eastern material he discusses.
28 See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, p. 152, for Israelite priests as keepers of books and teachers, noting Deut. 31:9–11; Num. 5:23; Hos. 4:6; Deut. 17:9–12; and p. 161 for the storing of books with respect to the priestly legislator's account of the עדות in the ark (Exod. 25:16), as well as its Deuteronomic counterpart (Deut. 31:9–13) and the Deuteronomistic Historian's use of the latter tradition (1 Kings 8:9, 21; cf. 2 Kings 22:3–8).
29 See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 166–7.
30 Those who date Deuteronomy or the Covenant Code to exilic times or later (see above, pp. 325, 329) will naturally not find Carr's thesis at all convincing: see further Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, p. 87, on the exceedingly limited extent of scribal work in monarchic Judah, and his characterisation of scholarly views that canonised writings might have originated then as 'no more than a hunch'.

and buildings, preferring instead to envisage small-scale, mainly family-based house-groups as providing tuition and training for future scribes.[31] He offers no detailed account, however, of how these training establishments were related to the sanctuary, and this is not, perhaps, surprising: the Hebrew Bible in its portrayal of First Temple times has nothing directly to say about the training of scribes, the place of such training vis-à-vis the sanctuary, or its possible association with family groups. Neither does the Bible provide direct evidence for what pre-exilic scribes may have studied as part of their 'curriculum'. Certainly scribes are shown as holding high positions in the royal administration (2 Sam. 8:16–17; 1 Kings 4:3; 2 Kings 18:18, 37; 22:8–10, 12), and no doubt were trained for high office along lines not dissimilar to those in the surrounding nations which Carr describes. Indeed, in alerting us to what can be known about the transmission of high culture and the preservation and fostering of literacy among non-Israelite peoples, he has gone some way to creating a viable model for our appreciation of how traditional texts, scribes and sanctuaries may have interrelated in ancient Israelite society. But gaps in our knowledge remain; and the fact that the Pentateuch includes a number of different 'voices' like the Covenant Code, Deuteronomy and the priestly material, to say nothing of the differing opinions handed on in the name of prophecy, should warn us against placing too exclusive an association with sanctuary and priesthood texts which themselves not only proclaim that they have a public dimension, but also insist that non-priests and non-scribes should assimilate their content. A similar reserve should be applied also to Karel van der Toorn's thesis that the Levites in their capacity as temple scribes were largely responsible for the preservation and transmission of the Hebrew Bible, and that the present Hebrew Bible came about through the transformation of their specifically scribal tradition, from the time of Ezra onwards, into what was to become effectively a 'national library'.[32] While a case can be made for the Levites as 'specializing in the transmission and interpretation of scripture, and, by extension, in jurisdiction, liturgy, and administration', especially in the time of the second temple, they were not the only people in Israel with a keen interest in such matters.[33] At the same time, however, van der Toorn's work tends to confirm Carr's observations about temples as places of education, scholarship and text production; and his detailed exploration of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian temples as centres of scribal life and activity

31 See Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 16–18, 113–15, 134–6.
32 See van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*.   33 See van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 92.

the nature of things, this pattern is likely to be a written plan, no doubt with instructions, measurements and notes about materials to be employed in the building.[35] A similar notion is expressed by Ezekiel. The prophet is ordered to describe the temple to the Israelites, so that they may measure the 'pattern', תכנית; he is to make known to them the plan, צורה, and the arrangement, תכונה, of the house together with all its ordinances and its Torah, and he is to *write* it in their sight, וכתב לעיניהם, so that they may observe its form and ordinances (Ezek. 43:10–11). These orders are given to guarantee the holiness of the sanctuary (Ezek. 43:12), and to give it a particular definition in terms of Torah.[36] Ezekiel himself may have expected these plans for this temple to assume some constitutional form;[37] but the visionary aspects of his programme are clear to the reader, and plainly represent an ideal which, in truth, was never accomplished.[38] Noteworthy here is the confluence of prophetic vision and the pattern for the temple expressed in writing, in unambiguous association with divine ordinances and Torah. The heavenly dimension of all this recalls another piece of exilic writing, in which a prophet declares how God has engraved Zion upon the palms of his hands, such that the city's walls are continually in his presence (Isa. 49:16). The bond between heaven and earth expressed in these verses is most intimate, the earthly temple and city of Zion having affinity with their designs and patterns in heaven, designs which can be written for Israel to contemplate, and which are even inscribed on the hands of the Almighty. What the two exilic prophets make clear is that such designs *can be made known to prophets other than Moses*, a matter which will be of the utmost importance when we come to consider the work of the Chronicler.

Second Temple period

Torah read in Temple as state constitution and guide for the individual

The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah talk about the rebuilding of the Jerusalem sanctuary, but are not informative about sacred writings in relation to it. The prophecy of Zech. 1:4 refers to 'the former prophets', הנביאים

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35 See above, p. 323; and for the definition of תבנית, cf. C. Houtman, *Exodus*, pp. 345–6, although, contrary to his observations on this point, we would include the sense of 'archetypal model' in any definition of the word at Exod. 25:9, along with V. Hurowitz, 'The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle', *JAOS* 105 (1985), pp. 21–30, at p. 22.
36 See Joyce, 'Temple and Worship in Ezekiel 40–48', pp. 155–7.
37 See Tuell, *The Law of the Temple*.
38 On the ideal character of Ezekiel's scheme, see Schaper, *Priester und Leviten*, pp. 122–9.

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הדאשנים, perhaps hinting that their words might have been preserved in writing (Zech. 1:6), but this is not certain, and the construction of the second temple is not associated by either Haggai or Zechariah with written ordinances. With the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, however, the picture changes substantially. The Aramaic portions of Ezra (Ezra 4:8–6:18, 7:12–26) include documents which are clearly out of order chronologically.[39] If their present position in the text is considered, however, they offer a crafted theological narrative, in which concerted opposition to the rebuilding of both Jerusalem and its temple was slowly overcome with the help of God and the Persian government, so that the temple was rebuilt for worship. The narrative culminates in the work of Ezra, 'the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of Heaven' (Ezra 7:12), granted authority by the Persian monarch to ensure the ordering of the temple service with its offerings and personnel (Ezra 7:13–24). All this he must carry out according to the will of his God (Ezra 7:18), appointing judges and magistrates who know the laws of his God (Ezra 7:25): the Persian king sets penalties for those who will not obey the law of Ezra's God and the law of the king (Ezra 7:26). The extent of influence exercised by the Persian king and his officials in the people's adoption of the law promulgated by Ezra is disputed;[40] what is certain is the message of the last Aramaic document quoted by the book, that a properly functioning temple service with authorised priests, and the observance of the Torah's commands for the daily life of the Jewish people, cannot be separated without peril.

The outcome presented in the surviving record is clear. To ensure that the populace was aware of the obligations enshrined in the law of the God of heaven, Ezra presided over a great assembly, which met on the first day of the seventh month (Neh. 8:1–2) to hear this law publicly proclaimed.[41] The narrator repeats circumstantial details. Thus the assembly met in the square in front of the water gate (Neh. 8:1, 3, 16). The location of this square is unknown; although some have linked it with the temple, this must remain unproven.[42] What was read was 'the book of the Torah' (Neh. 8:1, 3, 8). The audience consisted of all the people, men and women and those who could understand,

39 The history of the early Second Temple period bristles with difficulties: for two contrasting recent assessments of the evidence, see Grabbe, *A History*; Allen and Laniak, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*.
40 For a range of different opinions, see the collection of essays edited by Watts, *Persia and Torah*.
41 A balanced discussion of the question of what writings made up the law is given by Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, pp. xxxvii–xxxix, who argues for a law similar to the present Pentateuch.
42 See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, p. 287.

המבינים (Neh. 8:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9). Ezra was assisted in his task by other named individuals (Neh. 8:4, 6), and not only was the Torah read, but the people were instructed in it (Neh. 8:7–9), the Levites (Neh. 8:7, 9, 11) taking charge of that teaching. The great assembly concluded with a celebration of the feast of Sukkoth, during whose seven days the reading of the Torah continued (Neh. 8:18); according to Neh. 8:16, some who kept this feast had set up their *sukkoth* in the temple courts.

Certain aspects of this account require comment. First, the continual reading of the Torah during the feast of Sukkoth is likely to have been carried out on the basis of Deut. 31:9–11. The assembly which met before the feast may or may not have been close to the temple; the feast itself, however, cannot be divorced from it, and it is unlikely that discussion of Torah did not take place in the temple courts. The Levites are temple personnel, expounding the Torah. The repetition in the account suggests a liturgical element in the assembly; thus, a blessing preceded reading of Torah, the people answering with a double Amen and prostration (Neh. 8:7). Indeed, later versions of the Torah reading at Sukkoth according to Deut. 31:9–11 stress its liturgical and temple aspects. Deut. 31:9–13 LXX, compared with the masoretic text, shows signs of liturgical precision: Moses wrote 'the words' of the Torah 'in a book' which he gave to the priests (Deut. 31:9), and commanded them 'on that day' (31:10), when the whole of Israel 'came together to appear before the Lord', that they should read this Torah before the men, women, children and proselytes within their cities (31:12), so that they should 'hear/obey' all the words of the Torah (Deut. 31:13).[43]

Josephus regarded the event as part of the temple service: he reports that at Ezra's great assembly the Torah was actually read in the temple court (*Antiquities* 11.154–5), where Josephus envisaged that the septennial reading of Torah took place (*Antiquities* 4.209–11), as also the reading of the Torah in the days of King Josiah (*Antiquities* 10.58–63). Probably reflecting the practice of his own day, Josephus tells how the septennial reading was undertaken by the high priest, standing on a raised platform, like Ezra centuries before (*Antiquities* 4.209). The Mishnah (Sotah 7:8) relates the reading of the king's scriptural portion (Deut. 17:14–20) by Agrippa I, probably in 41 CE. The king sat on a specially prepared platform in the temple court; the Torah scroll was taken by the synagogue *hazzan*, who gave it to the head of the synagogue. He in turn gave it to the *segan*, who passed it to the high priest. From the high priest, the king received it standing, and normally sat down to read it.

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43 See further Dogniez and Harl, *La Bible d'Alexandrie*, pp. 313–15.

Such was Agrippa's piety, however, that he stood to read; and he read several sections from the scroll: the Mishnah (Sotah 10:2) notes that the king's section had to be read in Hebrew, and that he uttered standard *berakoth* of the kind said by the high priest when he read from the Torah on Yom Kippur.

Scripture and temple liturgy

Whether the narrative in Neh. 8 of Ezra's assembly provided a liturgical model for future septennial readings of the Torah, or whether it has been formed in the light of later liturgical practice, is not clear.[44] What is not disputed, however, is the liturgical use of Psalms in the second temple, attested in the Chronicler's writings. Dating perhaps from the latter part of the fourth century BCE, the Chronicler's work presents the Jerusalem temple and its furnishings as the realisation of a plan or pattern, תבנית, which King David had received in writing from God (1 Chron 28:19): the Chronicler's perception of David as a counterpart to Moses is much in evidence.[45] This pattern included regulations for the courses of the priests and Levites (1 Chron 28:13), the latter featuring prominently as singers and musicians. As well as playing musical instruments (e.g. 1 Chron 15:19–23, 23:5; 2 Chron 5:12, 7:6), the Levites sing; when the Chronicler provides texts of what they sang, the words are almost identical with psalms extant in the psalter. Thus 1 Chron 16:7–36 includes 'quotations' of Pss. 105:1–15; 96; 106:47–8 along with allusions to other psalms; indeed, the singers' duties are listed (1 Chron 16:4) as 'to invoke, to thank, and to praise' (ולהזכיר ולהודות ולהלל) the Lord, language which echoes the headings of Pss. 38, 70, 100 and others. Most significantly, this psalmody is represented by the Chronicler as a form of prophecy, ordered by David himself (1 Chron 25:1–7; cf. 2 Chron 20:14–19). Their service of praise, moreover, is prescribed twice daily, and the regular accompaniment of sacrifice by psalms and praise is ordered by David's authority; levitical song is to mark Sabbaths, new moons and festival days continually (תמיד) before the Lord. The Pentateuch gives no such orders. Why, then, did the Chronicler ascribe such orders to David?

Several strands of tradition seem to unite in the work of the Chronicler (or his sources). First, Ezekiel had demonstrated how prophets other than Moses might receive divine instruction about the temple service.[46] Next,

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44 See Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 21, 501 (on the term 'liturgy' in discussion of Jewish worship); and pp. 40, 88, 126, 395, 412 for investigation of the relationship between temple and synagogue practices implied in m. Sotah 7.
45 Discussion of the Chronicler's date may be found in S. Japhet, *I and II Chronicles*, pp. 25–8. The sanctuary's pattern given to Moses is noted above, p. 334; see also Japhet, *I and II Chronicles*, pp. 497–9 for the affinities drawn between Moses and David.
46 See above, pp. 334–5.

David's reputation as a poet and composer of psalms, already highlighted by the Deuteronomistic Historian (2 Sam. 22:1–23:7), had been expressed in prophetic terms, and attributed to the spirit of the Lord and God's word (see especially 2 Sam. 23:2). The Chronicler, therefore, could combine these traditions, and conclude that David, as a prophet, had received written, divine instruction for the temple service. Even so, how might David's ordering of Levites to perform music and psalms be justified, when the Pentateuch was silent about any such duties for them? Two brief items in the Pentateuch might lead to such a view. First, Num. 10:35–6 told how Moses recited Ps. 68:1–2 whenever the ark went forward: from this, it could be deduced that psalmody was appropriate in the presence of the ark, and that its bearers, the Levites, might therefore sing psalms. The Chronicler brought the ark into prominence precisely in respect of levitical singing (1 Chron 16:37–43; 2 Chron 5:10–13), and recorded the ark as the place where Moses placed the covenant tablets (2 Chron 5:10). Second, Lev. 9:24 reported how heavenly fire consumed Aaron's sacrifice after his consecration as high priest, whereat the people gave a ringing shout, וירנו. The stem of this word, רנן, occurs only here in the priestly legislation, but is very common in the psalms, especially those which refer to the sanctuary (Pss. 20:6; 63:8; 84:3; and 96:12 quoted at 1 Chron.16:33). Levites, psalm-singing, ark and Torah thus belong together in the temple, and the Chronicler was happy to indicate this.[47]

For the Chronicler, therefore, certain psalms, by virtue of their place in the temple, are implicitly in the same theological realm as the tablets of the covenant. The Levites who sing them either know the words by heart, or have access to written copies of them: this observation finds a certain confirmation in the Chronicler's presentation of Levites as authorised teachers of Torah (2 Chron 17:8–10) and as members of the Jerusalem high court (2 Chron 19:8), where their duties would necessarily involve written documents. But the Chronicler seems to limit quotation of psalms to poetry sung on particular occasions, such as the day of David's transferral of the ark to Jerusalem, or the day when Solomon inaugurated the temple service: we are not explicitly told what words were sung at the daily sacrifices. It is therefore impossible to determine the full extent of the psalmody used in the temple service in the Chronicler's day. The Qumran documents in their many Psalms

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47 Levitical psalm-singing was probably an ancient institution: most ancient near Eastern temples employed singers. But if Levites sang psalms in Israel in First Temple times, the sources are silent about them. The Chronicler may be both acknowledging their ancient though unsung privileges, and offering a legal basis for their activity.

scrolls have revealed what James VanderKam and Peter Flint have called 'different Psalters';[48] and the Chronicler leaves open the possibility that Levites, whose ministry had been determined by David acting under divine guidance, were in possession of Davidic compositions which were not accessible to the uninstructed. Equally, the Chronicler's presentation of levitical singing as a type of prophecy plays a key part in what we have described. The authority inherent in this mode of revelation permitted the historian to present David's legislation as virtually on a par with that of Moses; and the psalms which the Levites sang soon became scripture if, indeed, the Chronicler did not already consider them so.

The decree of Antiochus III on the Jews cited by Josephus (*Antiquities* 12.142) dates from around 200 BCE, and speaks of Jewish political institutions in accordance with ancestral law and temple personnel together, naming the Gerousia, priests, scribes of the temple, and the temple singers (οἱ ιεροψάλται).[49] This makes striking reference to temple scribes, while alluding to the significant status of singers; and the near-contemporary Ben Sira not only assumed the latter's central role in the temple service (Sir. 50:18), but also indicated their inextricable links with continuing idealisation of David as a pious man and poet.[50] Which particular psalms were sung in the course of the daily service Ben Sira does not record; nor, indeed, do any other writings dating from before the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. Tradition preserved in Mishnah Tamid 7:4 does, however, ascribe to the Levites a particular psalm for each day of the week.[51] This may preserve liturgical practice from the last days of the temple; even so, it is also possible that the redactors of the Mishnah were more concerned to legislate for an ideal restored temple service of the future, or to oppose liturgical practice known to them (but now lost to us), than to hand on historical information.[52] In fine, we have no *certain* knowledge of what the Levites sang during the service. Not even Hallel (Pss. 113–18), which according to the Mishnah the Levites sang on festivals (e.g., Pes. 5:7, 9:3; Sukk. 4:1; Ta'an. 4:4, 5), is mentioned as part of the temple service in writings composed before 70 CE. The Mishnah is thus the oldest source to name specific scriptural texts

48 See VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 120–8.
49 On the authenticity of the decree, see Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, pp. 246–7, and bibliography there cited.
50 Note particularly Sir. 47:8–11.
51 The list is as follows: Sunday, Ps. 24; Monday, Ps. 48; Tuesday, Ps. 82; Wednesday, Ps. 94; Thursday, Ps. 81; Friday, Ps. 93; Sabbath, Ps. 92.
52 Trudinger, *The Psalms*, presents a case for the historicity of the Mishnah's tradition, while acknowledging that rabbinic authorities may have had their own agenda in allocating the psalms as they do.

sung by Levites and, while its information may represent historical reality, we must exercise a degree of caution in accepting its statements precisely as they stand.

The Mishnah, however, enables us to understand the growing sense of importance which levitical singers attached to their psalmody throughout the last three centuries of the second temple. Thus Josephus noted with disapproval their successful attempt to persuade Agrippa II to permit them to wear priestly vestments; and this appropriation of priestly privilege was accompanied, for 'a part of the tribe which officiated liturgically in the temple', by permission to 'learn the hymns', which must surely indicate that up to this point the Levites had sung from written texts.[53] We must inquire what this might mean.

The temple as repository of holy writings

A famous *baraita* describes how three scrolls of the Torah were to be found in the temple court, and that they were consulted in cases of doubt about correct readings.[54] Josephus also reports that, while the temple stood, sacred writings were deposited there. Relating God's gift of water to Israel in the desert (*Antiquities* 3.38), he noted that a document deposited in the temple (ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀνακειμένη γραφή) foretold the event to Moses. He uses similar phraseology in *Antiquities* 5. 61 of the poetic account of the miracle recorded in Josh. 10:12–14; and in *Antiquities* 10.58 he tells of 'the holy books of Moses' deposited in the temple and found in King Josiah's reign.[55] The notice that Samuel wrote the law of Saul's kingship and placed it in the sanctuary (1 Sam. 10:25) is represented by Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.66) as Samuel's writing 'the things which were destined to happen': these Samuel read in the king's hearing, and then placed the book in the tabernacle, as a testimony to later generations of what he had predicted. This last recalls his words in *Antiquities* 4:303 about the Song of Moses (*Hȧazinu*) set out in Deut. 32. Josephus describes this as a poem in hexameters, preserved in a book in the temple: it, too, foretells future events. His mention of the metre of this poem, however, is suggestive, for some of the earliest known Hebrew fragments of

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53 See Josephus *Antiquities* 20.216–18; and cf. the note in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Exod. 29:30, forbidding Levites to wear priestly vestments. The date of Agrippa's permission was 64 CE. On the request to learn the hymns, see Trudinger, *The Psalms*, p. 31.

54 See yer. Taʻan 4:68a; and discussion in Talmon, 'The Three Scrolls', pp. 14–27.

55 According to *Antiquities* 4.302–4, Moses entrusted all the books he had written to priests with the ark where the Ten Commandments were preserved.

Ha̓azinu, preserved among the Dead Sea scrolls, set it out very clearly in poetic form.[56] Later rabbinic tradition lays down precise rules for the written presentation of the poem (Massekhet Sopherim 12:8–9), and also states that sections of it were sung by the Levites during the additional sacrifice on Sabbath (b. Rosh Ha-Shanah 31a; yer. Meg. 3:74b). Indeed, Josephus himself may intimate that the text was sung as part of the temple service in his day, for his only other reference to biblical material 'in hexameters' is found in *Antiquities* 2:346, describing the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15:1–21), a poem sung by the Therapeutae, that ascetic group described by Philo whose worship was consciously modelled on the temple service.[57]

This evidence of Josephus suggests that not only the books of Moses, but also prophetic and poetic parts of scripture were preserved in the temple in his day. This would concur with his remarks in *Contra Apionem* 2.184–9 that the administration of Torah and its affairs was in the hands of the priests and high priests; that priests administered the constitution; and that the administration of the state resembled a τελετή, a sacred ceremony or celebration of mysteries. He further explains that priests, under the high priest's leadership, offer sacrifice, 'preserve the laws', offer judgement about disputed cases and mete out punishments (*Contra Apionem* 2.192–3). Elsewhere in the same writing (*Contra Apionem* 1.29) he states that the Jews entrusted the keeping of their records to the high priests and prophets; and he enumerates the twenty-two books whose prophetic pedigree guarantees their authenticity, noting how carefully they have been preserved (*Contra Apionem* 1.37–43). Prophets are those who record tradition; and the temple appears to be the centre where records were kept, and where reference could be made to them.

Now the scriptures Josephus listed were written for the most part in Hebrew; and we may ask why, in the years separating the Chronicler's work (probably) in the late fourth century BCE from Josephus in the mid-first century, the temple came to be such a focus for the scriptures and their study. The religious and cultural chaos which erupted in the reign of Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE), the subsequent victories of Judah Maccabee and the establishment of the Hasmonaean monarchy encouraged the Jews to rejoice in their identity, to celebrate its chief symbols, the Torah and the temple, and to cherish the language in which their laws and records were preserved, classical Hebrew.

56 So 1QDeut^b frags. 16–19 = 1Q5 and 4QDeut^q = 4Q44, where the poetic structure of the composition is set out plainly.
57 See Philo, *V. contempl.* 85–7 for the singing of the Song; also 73, 80 (note the mention of hexameters here), 81–82 for Therapeutic imitation of the temple service. On the 'musical prophecy' of the Therapeutae, see Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers*, pp. 322–34.

Seth Schwartz has suggested that the priesthood in the temple was responsible for the continuing use of Hebrew in this period as an 'idiolect', that is to say, a specialised tongue conveying specific cultural, symbolic, historical, and religious values and acting as both source and resource for a specific Jewish identity.[58] Scripture in the temple, therefore, became a powerful symbol of the continuity of Jewish tradition; and the perpetuation of Hebrew in the sphere of the temple from the mid-second century BCE onwards, to which Schwartz has drawn attention, is likely to have involved those 'scribes of the temple', as they are called in the decree of Antiochus III, and their successors. Was it, perhaps, from among their ranks that the teachers with whom the child Jesus conversed in the temple were drawn?[59] Their importance in the period before Antiochus IV may also be deduced from Ben Sira's famous eulogy of the scribe (39:1–11), whose study of Torah is central to his learning. Ben Sira identified Torah with Wisdom (24:23), depicted as resident in the Jerusalem temple (24:1–12): the implication that the temple is the best place for Torah study, because that is where the Torah dwells, is overwhelming. But in this matter, the sage was simply expounding a traditional Jewish view of the world, rooted in ideas centuries older than his times.

Epilogue

The fully developed bond between temple and sacred writings in Judaism to which Josephus attests is the product of a long and varied history. The biblical tradition itself first speaks of writing and holy place in the mysterious, divine prediction about Amalek: significantly, at the very end of the temple's existence, Josephus mentions how sacred writings telling of the future were deposited in the temple. The oracular aspects of sacred texts; the entrusting of their preservation and interpretation to the priests; and the prophetic character of the same writings have made themselves known with increasing vigour as this survey has progressed. The centrality of the Torah both as state constitution administered by priests and as guide to the life of the individual looms large from the days of Deuteronomy onwards: if we have said little about (for example) Ben Sira's further exposition of these matters, it is only because space forbids. In matters of scriptural texts used in liturgy, the temple tends to keep its secrets to itself; but we can trace throughout Second Temple times a developing interest in David, whose prophetic status is more and

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58 See especially his 'Hebrew and Imperialism in Jewish Palestine', pp. 53–84.
59 Luke 2:46.

more associated with levitical psalm-singing in the service of the temple. The storing of sacred texts in the sanctuary, an ancient practice throughout the ancient Near East, continued during the period of the texts we have surveyed, and served to prove for sages like Ben Sira that wisdom was resident in the temple, from where her teachings flowed forth to instruct not only the Jewish people, but the whole world.

The Hebrew Bible is reticent about how the scribes who wrote it were trained; what lessons they received in letters and culture; and how they transmitted their learning. That the temple played a significant role in all these activities is likely, and recent research tends to confirm that likelihood. Yet sacred texts from early times did not remain tied to the temple.[60] Non-priests were expected to know them, and to be able to express in solemn liturgical formulas laid down by those same texts the realities which so powerfully bound together temple, text and worshipper in solemn bonds of obligation to and service of the Almighty. Constructed and ordered according to a divine plan, the temple housed divine writings deposited in its most holy place: thus sacred writing and temple on earth embody heavenly realities, preserved indeed by priestly guardians, but made present in time and space for all Israel to know, observe and repeat. Nor is the future forgotten in these things: the preservation in the temple of texts which foretell what God intends has its own dynamic – but that would take us beyond the limits set for this chapter.

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60 The implications of this observation for the continuing vitality of Judaism after 70 CE should be considered in tandem with the essay of Goldenberg, 'The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple', pp. 191–205.

The political and legal uses of scripture

JAMES W. WATTS

The Pentateuch, the five books at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible, was the first text to be treated as scripture in ancient Judaism. Though debate continues regarding whether and the extent to which all or part of Deuteronomy had normative authority in late seventh-century Judah, there is much evidence that by the fifth or fourth century BCE, the Pentateuch functioned essentially as scripture. The traditional name of this collection, the Torah ('instruction' or 'law'), implies the normative textuality that has distinguished it and subsequent scriptures (the Christian Bible, the Qur'ān, etc.) from other important texts in western religious and cultural traditions.

The Torah's precedence as scripture raises the question of how and why it accumulated such unique authority. The question of the origin of scripture is not just a question of canonisation,[1] of which books became authoritative when and under what circumstances. It is also a question of social function, of what practices, beliefs and social situations motivated elevating the Torah to such normative status. Addressing the social function of scriptures requires consideration of the political interests behind their publication and ongoing use, and it may also involve their role as law.

Ancient law and scripture

The name Torah might suggest that the Pentateuch's normative authority developed out of its legal functions. However, the notion that scripture's authority derives from its status as law does not correspond to the likely use of ancient law collections. Collections of laws dating from the third and second millennia BCE have survived from ancient Sumer, Babylon, Assyria and

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1 See Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64.

Anatolia.[2] This Mesopotamian tradition of drafting collections of casuistic laws influenced the earliest biblical legal collection, the Covenant Code (Exod. 21–3), and through it most of Israel's other legal traditions.[3] There is no evidence, however, that texts containing such legal collections were ever cited or used in other ways to regulate the practices of law courts in any of these societies. The abundant documentation from Mesopotamian courts contains no references to texts such as Hammurabi's Code, even during that king's reign in the eighteenth century BCE. Scholars of ancient law continue to debate the purpose and function of ancient legal collections, but it is clear that these collections did not function, like modern laws, as norms regulating courts of law and other social institutions.[4] Therefore written civil laws had no normative legal function from which the Torah might have gained its authority. Only in the latter half of the first millennium BCE did several cultures around the Mediterranean begin to use public recitation and inscription to promulgate legal revisions and innovations.[5] The participation of the Torah in this cultural trend does not, however, explain the trend's origins or the motivations behind the Torah's authority in Judah, Samaria and elsewhere.

The Bible's portrayal of Israel's society confirms that legal function does not explain the origins of the Torah's authority. Pentateuchal laws and instructions receive little attention in the biblical accounts of Israel's history after settlement in the land (Joshua). Descriptions of legal proceedings make no references to written law, whether they reflect the legal contents of the legislation or not (2 Sam. 14:5–17; 1 Kings 21:8–13, 19–24; 2 Kings 8:1–6; Jer. 26:8–24; Ruth 4).[6] More broadly, stories of ritual and moral transgressions such as the corruption of Eli's sons (1 Sam. 1:12–17, 27–36) or David's adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11–12) do not quote or refer explicitly to relevant pentateuchal prescriptions. Nor do Israel's judges and kings buttress their edicts by citing Torah. Only in the late seventh century, according to the Deuteronomistic History

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2 For an anthology of ancient legal collections, see Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, SBL Writings from the Ancient World 6 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995).
3 Cf. Schaper in this volume, pp. 105–44.
4 See the essays in Levinson, *Theory and Method*, and Raymond Westbrook, 'The Character of Ancient Near Eastern Law', in R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 16–21.
5 See LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 18–23; Gary N. Knoppers and Paul B. Harvey, Jr., 'The Pentateuch in Ancient Mediterranean Context. The Publication of Local Lawcodes', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 105–41; and Joachim Schaper, 'The "Publication" of Legal Texts in Ancient Judah', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 225–36.
6 See Dale Patrick, *Old Testament Law* (Atlanta, GA: Westminster John Knox, 1985), pp. 191–8; and LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 34–6, 55–95.

(Deuteronomy to Kings), or a hundred years earlier, according to Chronicles, do these histories tell of kings using a 'book of the law' to justify their changes to ritual practices (2 Kings 22–3//2 Chron. 34–5) or sponsoring public education in the written Torah (2 Chron. 17:7–9).[7] One other text (2 Kings 14:5–6) justifies the mercy shown by an eighth-century king to the children of his father's assassins by referring to the law of Moses and quoting it (Deut. 24:16), but it does not explicitly say that the written Torah was cited by the king himself.[8]

Critical scholarship has taken the almost total absence of the Torah from the storyline of the Deuteronomistic History as an indication that the pentateuchal sources did not begin to be composed until near the end of the history of the kingdom of Judah.[9] That is likely the case, but the rarity of even fictional projections of Torah use into earlier stories also shows that our assumptions about how scriptures *should* be used were not shared by the writers of the Hebrew Bible.

Pentateuchal instructions for using pentateuchal texts

Some pentateuchal passages explicitly state how the Torah should be used. Of course, the Pentateuch frequently exhorts its hearers and readers to obey its injunctions, but Deuteronomy also describes appropriation of the *text* of Torah both by households and by Israel as a whole. Though these passages originally referred only to Deuteronomy itself, their pentateuchal context soon made them apply to the Torah as a whole.

Deut. 6:20 anticipates interpretative discussion and commentary on Torah within households. The chapter also requires people to memorise the commandments (verse 6), to recite them within their households as well as during travels (verse 7), and to 'bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates' (verses 8–9; also Deut. 11:18–21). Verses 8–9 can be understood metaphorically to re-emphasise the internalisation of Torah depicted in verses 6–7. Since Antiquity, however, they have been taken literally as mandating that texts of Torah be worn as phylacteries (*tefillin*) and placed in containers

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7 Cf. Bernard S. Jackson, *Studies in the Semiotics of Biblical Law*, JSOTS 314 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 115–41; and LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 37–9.
8 Because its citation of the Pentateuch is so unusual, some scholars consider the passage a later gloss: so James A. Montgomery, *Books of Kings*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951), p. 439; the contrary view is maintained by T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC 13 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), p. 179.
9 See Schaper in this volume, pp. 105–44.

(*mezuzot*) on the door frames of houses and gateposts of towns.[10] Torah texts thus replaced divine images which, in many ancient cultures, were carried as amulets and displayed at the entrances to houses and towns.[11]

Comparative study of the function of scriptures in various religious traditions shows that Deuteronomy's mandates are not unusual. Scriptures are typically ritualised in three dimensions: along an iconic dimension by manipulating and displaying the physical text, along a performative dimension by performing the words or meaning of the text through recitation, song, theatre and art, and along a semantic dimension by ritualising textual interpretation in sermon, lecture and commentary.[12] Deut. 6 anticipates and mandates the ritualisation of Torah in all three dimensions. That observation has relevance for understanding the political and legal force of Torah. Ritualising the three dimensions conveys authority on those who interpret scriptures, inspiration on those who perform them and hear them performed, and legitimacy on those who handle them. Thus the activities mandated in Deut. 6 tend to generate the kinds of claims to scriptural authority, inspiration and legitimacy that have characterised the Torah's history.

Deut. 31:9–13 makes the performative dimension central to Israel's experience of Torah. Moses commands the priests to preserve 'this torah' in the ark of the covenant and to read it aloud every seven years to all Israel during Sukkoth (the festival of booths). Though oral performance gets the most attention here, the passage also mandates iconic ritualisation by enshrining the Torah in the ark that is kept in the heart of Israel's central sanctuary (also Deut. 10:1–5). Karel van der Toorn points out that the Torah in the ark functioned like divine images found in ancient temples:

> Like the divine image in other Near Eastern civilizations, the ark served as the focal point of the divine presence . . . When it became a shrine for the revealed Word of God, its new function did not diminish its holiness; the written law had, in effect, taken the place of the image . . . Like the icon, the Book is both a medium and an object; as medium it refers the reader to a reality beyond itself, whilst as an object it is sacred in itself.[13]

Synagogues usually reproduce Deuteronomy's mandate by making the cabinet containing the Torah scrolls ('*Aron haQodesh* 'the holy ark') the central focal point of the synagogue's internal architecture. In contrast to the Torah's

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10 For discussion of figural versus literal interpretations and ancient evidence for the latter, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, pp. 341–3; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 441–4.
11 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', p. 241.   12 Watts, 'Three Dimensions', pp. 135–59.
13 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', p. 242.

regular performance and iconic enshrinement, Deut. 31 does not explicitly mention the semantic dimension of interpretation and commentary, though it may imply it in the motivation for the public reading that Israel may 'observe diligently all the words of this law' (verse 12).

A political concern for shaping communal identity governs much of Deuteronomy. Its instructions employ the iconic and performative dimensions of Torah to instruct and remind Israelites of their obligations under the covenant with YHWH. David Carr has described the ways in which many ancient societies used instruction in classic texts to enculturate an educated elite and distinguish them from everyone else by their erudition.[14] Deuteronomy makes such textual enculturation a universal ideal in Israel and a distinguishing feature of YHWH's people (see Deut. 4:5–8).

Public law readings

While the iconic and semantic uses mandated by Deut. 4 and 31 have direct reflexes in later Jewish practices, the command to read the Torah aloud every seven years at Sukkoth has not usually been observed in that way. Instead, the Torah has been divided into weekly sections (*parashot*) to be read sequentially in Sabbath services through the calendar year. (In rabbinic times, some synagogues used a three-year cycle instead.) The books of the Pentateuch, however, contain no indications of being composed or shaped for such episodic readings intended for homiletical expansion.[15] The Hebrew Bible's few references to using Torah scrolls focus exclusively on readings to public assemblies of the entire text, as mandated in Deut. 31.[16]

In the late seventh century BCE, King Josiah had 'all the words of the covenant book' read aloud to the assembled people of Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:2). The book had recently been discovered during renovations of the temple. Reading its contents provoked distress on the part of the king and his advisers and led them to make a covenant to abide by its provisions (23:3–4). Then Josiah purged the religion of Judaea of practices he now regarded as inappropriate in light of the book's provisions (verses 4–20, 24). The story associates the book's contents most closely with Josiah's command to keep Passover properly and asserts that it had not been observed in this way, or maybe at all, by any of his predecessors among the judges or kings of Israel and Judah (verses 21–3).

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14 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*; see further below.
15 Contra Anthony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Rethinking the Pentateuch. Prolegomena to the Theology of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).
16 For further discussion of these texts, see Watts, *Reading Law*, pp. 15–31.

Approximately two hundred years later, the priest and scribe Ezra brought 'the book of the law of Moses' from Babylon to Jerusalem. He read it to the assembled people of Jerusalem with great ceremony (Neh. 8), so that the book was visually displayed (he 'opened the book in the sight of all the people', verse 5), its contents were recited ('he read from it from dawn until noon', verse 3), and its words translated or interpreted ('the Levites helped the people understand the law', verse 8; cf. verse 13). The public reading once again produced ritual reform: the people celebrated Sukkoth correctly, as had not happened since the time of Joshua (verse 18).

In both stories, public reading of Torah advanced a political agenda of ritual change, especially involving pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Sukkoth) and support for the Jerusalem temple.[17] In 2 Kings, it also involved sacred objects and space; in Ezra–Nehemiah, it affected the boundaries on membership in the community. Both Josiah and Ezra used public readings of Torah to bring about ritual changes in situations of considerable social conflict. They had other tools as well, not least military power (obviously in King Josiah's case, but also in the case of Ezra who, according to Neh. 8:9, was supported by Nehemiah, the Persian governor who commanded the local troops). The stories do not emphasise force, however, but rather depict the display and reading of Torah as a powerful form of persuasion to gain the compliance of the Jerusalem population. Other cultures also made use of authoritative texts to change ritual behaviour. Their examples cast light on the persuasive use of texts in ancient Israel and Judah.

Political legitimacy from ritual texts

Many ancient Near Eastern cultures used old texts to legitimise ritual changes. There is a striking contrast between ritual and legal texts in this regard: whereas collections of criminal and civil law do not seem to have been cited or used as norms for courtroom procedures, ritual texts were frequently cited as norms for changing ritual practices. For example, a Hittite king followed the instructions in old texts to restore forgotten rituals and treaties to avert a plague.[18] A Samnite priest revived a ceremony recorded in an old linen scroll

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17 Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*, pp. 209–12; LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 142–3.
18 E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), p. 382; see also www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/CTH/. Translated by Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2002), p. 83. For more detailed discussion of these examples, see Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*, pp. 199–208.

to coerce conscripts to serve in a war against Rome.[19] In Rome itself, senators consulted anthologies of Sibylline oracles to find ritual solutions to military crises.[20]

Ritual texts were often employed more broadly to legitimise rites, whether innovative or not. Egyptian 'lector priests' displayed and read from papyrus scrolls to authorise funerary rites and processions of divine images, among other things.[21] Mesopotamian kings justified their temple restoration projects on the basis of old foundation texts, sometimes claiming divine inspiration for their discovery centuries after they were lost.[22] Ugaritic lists of deities and former kings preserve the cuneiform equivalent of check marks in the margins confirming that rituals were performed for the proper entities and in order.[23]

There is sufficient evidence, then, from across the ancient Near East and Mediterranean to confirm that texts were frequently employed to authorise rituals and legitimise those officiating. Though kings and priests can be expected to have sufficient authority to preside over rituals, they seem to have sometimes felt the need to buttress their authority by appealing to old texts. The persuasive power of written texts comes from their appearance as speaking from the past in a voice independent of their readers. Though modern and post-modern theories of textuality cast doubt on such common views of textual meaning, they should not be allowed to obscure the rhetorical power of appeals to textual authority. In antiquity, such appeals were first used to legitimise rituals and ritual innovations and to buttress the power of those presiding over them. In Samaria and Judah, appeals to the Torah's ritual instructions legitimised the temples and their priesthoods which, in turn, enhanced the authority of Torah.

Official temple law in the Persian empire

Persian rule over Judah/Yehud (538 to 322 BCE) seems to have reinforced the authoritative use of ritual texts in the Jerusalem temple with official

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19 Livy, *History of Rome*, ed. E. Rhys, trans. C. Roberts (New York: Dutton, 1912), 10:38.
20 See Eric M. Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 76–115.
21 David Lorton, 'The Theology of the Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt', in M. Dick (ed.), *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth. The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), pp. 123–210, at p. 149.
22 E.g. the sun-disc tablet of Nabu-Apla-Iddina, translated by Victor Hurowitz in *Context of Scripture*, ed. W. W. Hallo (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 2.135.
23 Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2002), pp. 12–13, 200.

imperial sanction. Various pieces of evidence suggest that Persian imperial agents officially recognised the legitimacy of some local temple laws in Egypt and Anatolia, as well as Judah (Ezra 7:11–26). Scholars have often concluded therefore that the Persian emperors actively encouraged the codification of ethnic law codes and their promulgation with the status of imperial law. Peter Frei argued that this system anticipated the federal legal arrangements of some modern states.[24] Pentateuch scholars suggested that Persian pressures may have motivated the inclusion of diverse legal collections (the Covenant Code in Exod. 21–3; the Holiness Code in Lev. 17–26; and the Deuteronomic Code in Deut. 12–26) in one large document, the Pentateuch.[25] Most recent evaluations of the issue have concluded that the Persians did not actively codify local laws or incorporate them into imperial law.[26] Persian imperial policy was content to let local officials conduct their own affairs so long as they continued to collect taxes for the emperor and did not threaten the internal peace of the empire.[27] As a result, the theory of Persian imperial authorisation of the Torah has fallen into disfavour.

The scattered ancient evidence for Persian official recognition of local or regional law collections nevertheless suggests some interesting parallels with the depiction in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah of Ezra's legal mission on behalf of the empire with the book of 'the law of the God of Heaven' in his hands (Ezra 7). Though it is now clear that Persia did not require or even encourage its dependencies to submit their laws to the empire for ratification, the evidence shows that some local authorities in various places did request Persian recognition of local temple laws so that their temples and communities would gain legal status in the empire. Like modern governments giving a particular company, product or item 'official' status, the Persians probably granted official recognition to temple laws as a token favour to local elites, without giving any attention to the contents of those laws.[28] The communities who received such recognition, however, stood to benefit by gaining official status, as did individuals who could plausibly claim

24 Peter Frei, "Persian Imperial Authorization. A Summary", in Watts (ed.), *Persia and Torah*, pp. 5–40.
25 E.g. Blum, *Studien*, pp. 333–60; Crüsemann, *The Torah*, pp. 329–65.
26 See the other essays in Watts, *Persia and Torah*.
27 Anselm C. Hagedorn, 'Local Law in an Imperial Context', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 64–9.
28 Watts, 'Introduction', in *Persia and Torah*, pp. 3–4; Konrad Schmid, 'The Persian Imperial Authorization as a Historical Problem and as a Biblical Construct. A Plea for Distinctions in the Current Debate', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 23–38, at p. 31; and David M. Carr, 'The Rise of Torah', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 54–5.

membership in an officially recognised temple community by, for example, paying a temple tax (Neh. 10:32).

The desire to apply for imperial recognition of Jerusalem temple law may have motivated the arrangement of Israel's diverse legal collections within one narrative sequence in the Pentateuch. It more obviously accounts for the central position in the Pentateuch of the ritual instructions and regulations usually assigned by source critics to P, the priestly source (Exod. 25–31, 35–40; Lev. 1–16). The Torah's normative authority in the Persian period arose from its status as officially recognised temple law governing the ritual and financial affairs of the Judaean and Samaritan temples. It should cause no surprise, then, that its core is dominated by extensive regulations concerning precisely such matters.

The Aaronide hierocracy

P's emphasis on ritual should not be allowed to obscure the fact that its ritual regulations place a heavy emphasis on personnel. They are just as concerned with *who* performs a ritual as they are with *how* it gets done. They mandate a monopoly by the descendants of Aaron over all priestly sacrificial service at the sanctuary altar. All the animal, vegetable and incense offerings brought by Israelites to the sanctuary must pass through their hands. The texts exalt the Aaronides through elaborate descriptions of their ordination for this office (Exod. 28–9; Lev. 8–9). They glorify the priest's job as essential for Israel's welfare and also dangerous for those who perform its duties (Lev. 10:1–3). In a personal divine oracle, the Aaronide high priest receives the authority to rule definitively about correct ritual practice and to teach the regulations in Israel (Lev. 10:10–11).[29] Though priests are less prominent in Deuteronomy, that book also gives interpretative authority to 'levitical priests' (17:8–13, 18, 18:1–8, 31:9–13, 24–26) rather than to a king (17:14–20) or prophets (13:1–5, 18:15–22).[30] Overall, then, the Pentateuch exalts priests much more than any other institutional authority and celebrates the high priest as the single most important individual in Israel's polity.[31]

29 See further Nihan, *Priestly Torah* and Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*.
30 On the priestly character of both Deuteronomy and the editing of the Pentateuch, see Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch*, FAT 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 243–63.
31 Moses is depicted as supreme, of course, but Moses represents no later Israelite institution. The Pentateuch harnesses Moses' prophetic authority not to institutionalise prophecy (though see Deut. 18:15–22), but rather to legitimise the Aaronide priesthood (Exod. 29; Lev. 8, 16; Num. 16–17).

The Deuteronomistic History, however, does not portray priestly domi-
nance in Israel's society, much less Aaronide pre-eminence. Apart from the
figure of Moses, who combines priestly activities with the roles of prophet,
scribe, warlord and judge but remains inimitable and unequalled in subsequent
Israelite history (Deut. 34:10–12), the Deuteronomistic History depicts Israel's
leaders as warlords ('judges') and kings, with the principal political opposition
coming from some prophets. It portrays priests as royal appointees who qual-
ified for their positions by their political loyalties as much as their family lines.
Priests and Levites get more mention in Chronicles, but nevertheless remain
supporting characters in comparison with kings. They rarely occupy the
attention of the biblical narrators (one exception is 1 Sam. 2–4, which splits its
attention between Samuel on the one hand and Eli and his sons on the other).

Priests do not seem to have achieved the pre-eminent position assigned
to them by the Pentateuch until after the Babylonian exile. In c. 535 BCE, the
returning exiles were led by the priest Jeshua son of Jozadak and Zerubba-
bel, the grandson of the last king of Judah (Ezra 3:2). For the following two
centuries under Persian rule, leadership in Judah/Yehud seems often to have
been shared between a hereditary high priest and an imperial governor.[32] But
by the end of the period, governors disappear from the record (as preserved
by Josephus). Hellenistic rulers recognised the high priests as the supreme
representatives of the Jewish people. Though the history of the Second Tem-
ple priesthood is not very clear, Jeshua's dynasty (called the Oniads in the
Hellenistic period, after a series of high priests named 'Onias' in the third and
second centuries) seems to have controlled the Jerusalem high priesthood for
three and a half centuries, until being deposed in the turmoil preceding the
Maccabean revolt (167–164 BCE).[33] During the Hellenistic period, according

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32 Historians debate whether governors continued in Judaea to the end of the Persian period or
not: compare VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, pp. 107–11 with Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus
to Hadrian*, p. 192.

33 See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*. Historians regularly term Jeshua's dynasty the
'Zadokites' because they traced their descent through Zadok, who was David and Solomon's
high priest. 1 Chronicles claims Aaronide descent for Zadok (24:3) within the broader tribe of
Levi. However, the dearth of references to Aaron in pre-exilic or even exilic literature suggests to
many interpreters that the Aaronide and Levite genealogies are fictional. Debate continues over
the relationship between Zadokites, Aaronides and Levites in the exilic and Persian periods. For
example, Eckart Otto (*Deuteronomium im Pentateuch*, pp. 248–61) maintains that Jeshua's Zadokite
dynasty championed Deuteronomy's views and then combined it with the P material of their
rivals, the Aaronides, to form the Pentateuch. By contrast, Joachim Schaper (*Priester und Leviten*,
pp. 26–42) argues that P's Aaronide claims were written to advance the interests of Jeshua's
dynasty by bringing non-Zadokite priestly families into alliance with it. The latter view better
explains acceptance of the Torah by Samaritan priests who, regardless of their actual descent,
could not be expected to rally to the party of the Jerusalemite Zadok.

to Josephus, Aaronide priests related by marriage to those in Jerusalem also reigned as high priests over the Samaritan temple on Mt Gerizim.[34] After being deposed from the Jerusalem high priesthood, a scion of the Oniads founded a Jewish temple in Leontopolis (Egypt) that lasted for three centuries.[35] The Hasmonaeans, another family claiming Aaronide descent (1 Macc. 2:1), came to power as a result of the Maccabean revolt and seized the high priesthood in Jerusalem for themselves.[36] A later generation of that family added the title 'king'.

Thus the returning exiles rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple under the leadership of priests claiming Aaronide descent. The high priestly family of Jeshua governed temple operations and gained increasing political power through the Persian period until being recognized by the Hellenistic kingdoms as pre-eminent in Judah and among Jews. The same family governed temples on Mt Gerizim and at Leontopolis as well. It seems that Jeshua's dynasty enacted P's doctrine of an Aaronide monopoly over the conduct of cultic worship wherever it might take place more than they did Deuteronomy's doctrine of the centralisation of cultic worship in only one place.

The hierarchical rhetoric of the Pentateuch, and especially its priestly source, therefore best matches the political situation of the Second Temple period. The Torah and the Aaronide dynasties of high priests both came to prominence in the early part of the period. Depending on when one dates the composition of the Pentateuch's P document, it was either written beforehand to lay the basis for the Aaronide's post-exilic monopoly or else it was composed in the Persian period to reinforce their growing power.[37] The

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34 Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.302–3, 321–4.

35 Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.397, 13.62–73; *B. J.* 7.426–32.

36 Historians commonly argue that the Hasmonaeans were not of Zadokite descent and that the dynasty's lack of genealogical legitimacy drove sectarian opposition to it; see e.g. Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 492–3; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, AB 41 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 71, 75; Geza Vermes, *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), pp. 130–1; Deborah Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs. The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 255–6, 280–2. The evidence for their non-Zadokite lineage and for ancient criticism of them on that basis is not clear, however, as pointed out recently by Allison Schofield and James VanderKam, 'Were the Hasmoneans Zadokites?' *JBL* 124:1 (2005), 73–87. Whether or not they claimed Zadokite standing (which was perhaps equivalent to descent through Jedaiah (1 Chron. 24:7) as Ezra 2:36 claims for the first post-exilic high priest, Jeshua), the Hasmonaeans according to 1 Macc 2:1 claimed Aaronide descent through J(eh)oarib (cf. 1 Chron. 24:7; Neh. 11:10).

37 Scholars continue to debate the dating of P's composition, which has usually been dated by historical criticism to the exile or thereafter in the Persian period. For arguments for a pre-exilic date, see e.g. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, pp. 3–35. A recent argument for a post-exilic dating can be found in Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, pp. 383–94, who has also argued that the Pentateuch was

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Babylonian conquest had disrupted cultic worship in Jerusalem for two generations and thus threatened the ritual continuity usually ensured by priestly oral tradition. The Torah, claiming origins in thousand-year-old divine revelations to Moses, served to guarantee the accuracy of priestly practice. Like ritual texts deployed in other ancient cultures, the priests probably employed the Torah to legitimise not only their positions but also their conduct of the temple rites. Conversely, the Pentateuch gained influence from its public display and recitation and its official status as temple law. Aaronide priests and Torah scrolls legitimised each other's authority. As the Second Temple period progressed, the Torah's explicit grants of ritual authority were apparently used implicitly to buttress the Aaronide dynasty's political power as well.[38]

Growth of the Torah's authority

The normative influence of the Torah was originally restricted to Jewish and Samaritan temples, their personnel and their ritual practices, as one would expect of temple law. Just as in other ancient cultures, the normative determination of practice on the basis of texts developed first in ritual contexts (see above). Of course, from the earliest stages of literary history,[39] classic literary texts also exerted normative influence to enculturate the scribes who read and memorised them (see below). The notion of texts as independent norms for particular practices, however, developed first around ritual texts.

The sparse evidence for normative application of Torah in the late monarchic and Second Temple periods suggests that it was originally restricted to temple affairs dominated by priests. As already noted, King Josiah's reform extended only to sacred sites, objects, personnel and festivals. Though the reform was presumably prompted by an early form of the book of Deuteronomy, which contains much criminal and civil legislation, the accounts in Kings and Chronicles make no mention of its enforcement. Even the so-called 'legal reform' credited to King Jehoshaphat only mentions 'teaching' from the 'book of Torah of YHWH' (2 Chron. 17:7–9). While the inclusion of court officials along with priests and Levites could indicate that the group taught a broader range

written to serve priestly interests in Samaria as well as Judah (Christophe Nihan, 'The Torah between Samaria and Judah. Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 187–223).

38 This conclusion has been challenged by Rooke (*Zadok's Heirs*, pp. 243–65). Her argument, however, rests on a distinction between religious and political authority that does not account for contradictory and competing forms of authority, especially in a context of imperial domination. Cf. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, pp. 179–81.

39 See Schaper in this volume, pp. 105–44.

of subjects than just ritual practice, the text does not specify the contents of the lessons.

After the exile, Ezra 3:2–5, 6:18 portrays cultic worship and then the temple itself being restored in accordance with written Torah. The priestly scribe Ezra also cited 'the book of the Torah of Moses' to enforce endogamous marriages in Judaea (Ezra 9:11–12). This use of the normative text to enforce community boundaries might seem to go far beyond a concern with just temple and ritual, but other indications in Ezra–Nehemiah suggest that was not the case. Temple personnel continued to be the primary focus of attention: priests and Levites head the list of those required to divorce 'foreign' wives (Ezra 10:18–23) and one priest from the high priestly family was forcibly expelled because of his marriage (Neh. 13:28). Purity concerns, a vital issue for priesthoods, motivated enforcing the Torah's ban on Ammonites and Moabites (Neh. 13:1–3, 9). The fact that the Pentateuch does not clearly describe foreigners as impure does not contradict this observation, but only emphasises the essential role of interpretation – and interpretative disagreements – in these controversies.[40] Thus perceived ritual necessity, in this case keeping the temple pure, seems again to have been a major motivation for the draconian marriage policies of Ezra and Nehemiah.[41]

Clear indications of Torah being applied to situations unrelated to temple rituals and concerns appear only in texts reflecting events of the second century BCE and later. They cite written Torah for the proper performance of marriage contracts (Tob. 1:8, 7:12–13), battle plans (1 Macc. 3:48), Sabbath observance (1 Macc. 2:34–41) and criminal executions (Sus. 62), as well as reflecting more typical ritual concerns for temple purity and offerings (1 Macc. 2:21, 27, 4:47, 53).[42] LeFebvre has demonstrated the influence on Jews in Egypt and, possibly, in Judah of Hellenistic administrative practices that emphasised citation of written laws. Originating in Athenian political reforms at the end of the fifth century, they were extended to regions under Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule in the third and second centuries.[43]

LeFebvre noted, however, that these imperial administrative mechanisms were internalised in the Hasmonaean period through a 'cultic impetus' to distinguish law-abiding Jews from lawless (Greek) tyrants, which is

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40 On the politics of Ezra's marriage policy, see Saul M. Olyan, 'Purity Ideology in Ezra–Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community', *JSJ* 35 (2004), 1–16.
41 LeFebvre, *Collections*, p. 129.
42 For a similar dating of the Torah's spreading authority based on different historical reasoning, see Reinhard G. Kratz, 'The Legal Status of the Pentateuch between Elephantine and Qumran', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 77–103.
43 LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 18–23, 146–82.

exemplified in the narratives of the books of Maccabees.[44] Our understanding of the nature of that ritual motivation can be expanded by examining the legal reasoning that appears in late Second Temple period texts. For example, the sectarian legal interpretations of the Qumran community explicitly expanded the temple boundaries, and therefore its purity requirements, to the entire city of Jerusalem and to their own communities as well.[45] The second- and first-century texts listed above seem to reflect a similar line of thinking, if not the same practical results. Even applications of Torah to military tactics and criminal law depended on ritual thinking that extended the concerns of temples to other places and issues. The Torah's normative application grew as Jews and Samaritans extended the boundaries of holiness and purity beyond the temple to the whole city, to other settlements, to their homes and even to themselves as a 'holy nation', wherever they might be (Exod. 19:6). Of course, purity and other ritual concerns were part of common life long before this time, and their importance is reflected in the Pentateuch's rhetoric. The conceptual extension of the temple's boundaries in the late Second Temple period, however, provided the internal logic that allowed the application of *written* temple law far beyond the temple, in accord with Hellenistic ideals of rule by written law. Thus written Torah came to govern wider swathes of everyday life than it ever had before.

A curriculum of Jewish resistance

This evidence for the Torah's growing political and legal authority, meagre as it is, is far greater than is the evidence for the use of the rest of the Hebrew Bible in Antiquity. Before and during the Second Temple period, there is very little explicit description of how the books that eventually came to be grouped and labeled *Nevi'im* 'Prophets' and *Ketuvim* 'Writings' were being used. Hints do appear, however, in materials dealing with the second century BCE and later that may indicate how additional books beside the Torah were used politically in Judaea.

Several texts from this time period (e.g. the prologue to Ben Sira, 1 and 2 Maccabees, sectarian texts from Qumran) refer to 'the Torah and the Prophets'. The category of 'the Prophets' was not yet strictly demarcated

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44 LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 183–240.
45 Especially the Temple scroll (11Q19), the Rule of the Community (1QS), and the Halakhic Letter (4QMMT) from Qumran, and the related Damascus Document and Jubilees. See Hannah K. Harrington, *The Purity Texts*, Companion to the Qumran Scrolls (London: T&T Clark, 2004), pp. 11–18.

and probably included some books, such as the Psalms, that would later be categorised among the Writings. References to this two-part collection of Hebrew books coincide in time and place with the rise of the Hasmonaean dynasty of priest-kings. As a result, scholars of canonisation have long regarded Hasmonaean influence as key to the development of the second division of the Hebrew Bible, and probably the third as well.[46]

This historical context indicates that official endorsement of a larger collection of distinctively Jewish texts may have served the anti-Hellenistic political efforts of the Hasmonaean dynasty. After the Maccabean revolt, Judas Maccabee tried to collect books in Jerusalem, according to 2 Macc. 2:13–14. This effort may have been intended to counter Hellenistic cultural imperialism. David Carr argues that as Hellenistic culture spread through the Near East in the last few centuries BCE, traditional temples and their priesthoods became cultural bulwarks preserving the indigenous rituals, customs, languages and literatures of Babylon and Egypt. This also occurred in Jerusalem under the Oniad high priestly dynasty. Carr argues that when the Hasmonaeans seized the high priesthood for themselves, they broadened the Jerusalem temple's traditions of scribal enculturation into an effort to enculturate a wider elite. The phrase 'Torah and Prophets' refers to the curriculum they deployed in this effort: The Jewish Hebrew Scriptures were defined and functioned within the regional empire of the Hasmoneans as part of a project of specifically Hebrew (and non-Greek) education-enculturation to create a 'Jewish' identity. This identity was analogous yet opposed to the emergent, transnational 'Hellenistic' identity of the Hellenistic educational system.'[47] Carr argues that this anti-Hellenistic programme explains why the contents of the nascent Jewish Bible were limited by language (Hebrew, only a little Aramaic, but no Greek) and time of apparent origin (only texts that portray themselves as pre-dating the Hellenistic kingdoms). These limits were reinforced by the Hasmonaean-era doctrine that prophecy had ceased in the Persian period (1 Macc. 4:44–46, 9:27; 14:41). Carr maintains that, as the Hasmonaeans expanded their territorial control, they used the 'Torah and Prophets' to enculturate non-Jerusalem elites in these territories into their self-consciously Jewish kingdom. From Hasmonaean times onwards, mastery of this wider curriculum distinguished elite educated Jews, whether they lived in and around Jerusalem or not.[48]

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46 E.g. Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, pp. 138–66; van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 248–62.
47 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, p. 262.
48 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 260–72.

Carr's circumstantial argument depends on correlating the very brief references in late Second Temple texts cited above with the Hasmonaeans' anti-Hellenistic policies and with characteristics of the Hebrew Bible itself. As he readily admits, it rests on his broader observations about the use of curricular texts throughout the ancient world, including Greece, not just to educate literate scribes but also to enculturate powerful elites into the mores of their class. Carr nevertheless presents a plausible reason why Jewish scriptures (in contrast to the Samaritan Pentateuch) grew beyond the highly prized priestly Torah at their centre to include a wider selection of pre-Hellenistic Hebrew texts.

Priesthood and canon

Carr finds the source of scriptural authority to be the temple and its priesthood, even if the Hasmonaean priests extended scripture's curricular role to other, non-Jerusalem and even non-priestly elites. It might appear, however, that the canonisation of Torah actually constrained priestly power by making the authoritative text available publicly to competing interpreters.[49] The potential for priests to be displaced as the leading interpretative authorities by rabbinic scholars did become a reality in post-Second Temple Judaism, but despite historians' frequent assertions to the contrary there is little evidence for similar developments in earlier periods.[50] Leviticus (10:10–22), Deuteronomy (17:18) and Nehemiah (8:7–8) agree on placing interpretative authority in priestly and levitical hands. Their persuasive force is attested by the variety of Second Temple period texts, such as Ben Sira, Jubilees, *Testament of Levi*, and Aramaic Levi, that echo and extend the Pentateuch's glorification of the

49 For discussion of how particular pentateuchal texts engage the issue of textual interpretation and priestly authority, see Watts, *Reading Law*, pp. 116–21; Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*, pp. 59–61, 116–18.

50 So Stephen Fraade, 'The Early Rabbinic Sage', in J. G. Gammie and L. G. Purdue (eds.), *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 420–3; Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, pp. 194–204; and Risa Levitt Kohn and Rebecca Moore, 'Rethinking Sectarian Judaism. The Centrality of the Priesthood in the Second Temple Period', in Shawna Dolansky (ed.), *Sacred History, Sacred Literature. Essays . . . in honor of R. E. Friedman* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), pp. 195–213. For the common view that Levites and/or scribes in the Persian and Hellenistic periods took interpretive authority away from priests and laid the basis for the development of rabbinic traditions, see e.g. Elias Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees. Foundations of Postbiblical Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1962), pp. 67–71; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1, pp. 78–83; M. Hengel, '"Schriftauslegung" und "Schriftwerdung" in der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels', in M. Hengel and H. Löhr (eds.), *Schriftauslegung im antiken Judentum und im Urchristentum*, WUNT 74 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), pp. 1–71; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987), pp. 75, 101–2, 160–2; and Schaper, *Priester und Leviten*, pp. 305–6.

high priest, the priesthood and the Levites.[51] Even the Qumran community, though polemicising against priestly practices in the Jerusalem temple by citing and interpreting pentateuchal texts (e.g. 4QMMT), nevertheless legitimised their own community and its interpretive positions on the basis of their leadership's priestly lineage.

In the first and second centuries CE, however, that situation changed suddenly in two communities that claimed to be heirs of Second Temple Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism dispensed with Aaronide leadership, replacing priests with rabbinic sages. These scholars filled the power vacuum left by the catastrophic Jewish wars against Rome in the first and second centuries. The rabbis, however, did not justify their position by historical necessity. They instead derived their authority from an unbroken chain of interpreters that they traced back through Ezra all the way to Moses, who could credibly be claimed as a paradigm of the halakhic sage. Aside from Ezra himself, however, the chain of authority includes only one high priest of the Second Temple era, Simon the Just.[52]

The early Christians dissociated themselves from the Aaronide priesthood even more radically. They blamed the high priest Caiaphas for arresting Jesus of Nazareth and arranging his execution (Matt. 26:57–68, 27:1; John 18:13–14, 19–24), and they reinterpreted the Pentateuch's celebration of the Aaronide priesthood to subordinate it and replace it with Christ's eternal priestly office (Heb. 3:1–6, 4:14–5:10, 6:19–10:14). Christians thereby separated themselves from the institutional centre of Second Temple Judaism and, soon thereafter, from Judaism itself.

Thus after hundreds of years of supporting Aaronide priesthood, Jews and Christians dissociated the Pentateuch from the institution that had elevated it to unique prominence. Unlike the priestly dynasties and temples that disappeared in Antiquity, the Torah's scriptural authority survived in its new political situations. These circumstances, however, required new literary contexts to cement the changes in leadership. As Hebrews succinctly puts it, 'When there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well' (7:12 NRSV). The Christian gospel modified and relativised the demands of Torah, and eventually made it just the 'Pentateuch', the first five books of an Old Testament canon now decisively shaped by the New Testament's elevation of Jesus as messiah and high priest. Jews, on the other

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51 James Kugel, 'Levi's Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings', *HTR* 86 (1993), 1–63; and Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 202–7.
52 m. ʾAbot 1:1–3; Fraade, 'Early Rabbinic Sage', p. 420.

hand, surrounded the Torah's interpretation with an 'oral Torah' that was eventually textualised as the Mishnah and the Talmud. The latter's semantic authority often overwhelmed that of the written Torah by celebrating the interpretative virtuosity of rabbinic disputations. By contrast, the Samaritans resisted expansions to their canon in the form either of an oral law or of additional written books: they recognize only the Torah as scripture. They also retain hereditary leadership by an Aaronide high priest to this day. Comparison of the scriptural canons and the histories of priesthood in these three traditions illustrates clearly the tight connection between the pre-eminence of the written Torah and the Aaronide line.[53]

The three dimensions of Torah

The growing interest in interpreting and applying the Torah's semantic dimension in all these communities did not overshadow its other dimensions. The Torah's iconic status had clear political consequences at various times. Karel van der Toorn argues that Israel's substitution of Torah scrolls for divine images may have strengthened the priests' monopoly over worship and interpretation. A complicated text like the Torah was probably more expensive and difficult to use than were many divine images. So substituting the text for an image may have actually had the effect of limiting access to its divinatory powers.[54] By the second century BCE, at any rate, Torah scrolls had become widely recognised symbols of Jewish religious practice, so much so that the Seleucid persecution attacked scrolls as well as people (1 Macc. 1:56–7).[55] By the end of the Second Temple period, the Torah scrolls were equated with divine wisdom itself (Bar. 4:1) that was transmitted by angels (Acts 7:53). They thus functioned just like icons believed to mediate a heavenly reality.[56] Jews have preserved the Torah scroll's unique ritual status at the centre of worship.

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53 Later political challenges often left their mark on scriptural canons as well, though in different ways. See Moshe Halbertal, *The People of the Book. Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 72–81, 129–34; and George Heyman, 'Canon Law and the Canon of Scripture', *Postscripts* 2 (2006), 209–25.

54 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', p. 248.

55 Book-burning became an increasingly frequent method of suppressing religious groups in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods; see Daniel Sarefield, 'The Symbolics of Book Burning. The Establishment of a Christian Ritual of Persecution', in Klingshirn and Safran (eds.), *Early Christian Book*, pp. 159–73.

56 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', pp. 246–7; he also summarises the iconic function of Torah scrolls in rabbinic and later Judaism. See also William Scott Green, 'Romancing the Tome. Rabbinic Hermeneutics and the Theory of Literature', *Semeia* 40 (1987), 147–68.

Deprived after 70 CE of the unifying symbols of the Jerusalem temple and its high priest, the Torah survived as the sole Jewish icon of divine presence and favour. When Christians appropriated the Hebrew Bible within the interpretative context of the New Testament, they replaced the Torah scroll's iconic display at the centre of worship with similar veneration of elaborately decorated Gospel books.[57] Christianity's distinctive preference for the codex rather than the scroll served, among other things, to distinguish Christian worship visually from Jewish practices, at the same time as it imitated other Jewish liturgical forms. Christians also used Gospel books to represent physically Christ's authority in Roman and Byzantine courts of law.[58] The iconic form of their scriptures thus served to distinguish these communities religiously, but also politically and legally in Late Antiquity and thereafter.

The performative dimension of scriptures was likely ritualised widely as well, though we have very little specific information from the Second Temple period as to how Torah and other scriptures were read or recited. At Qumran, the sectarians not only heard law read aloud (perhaps their own laws as well as the Torah), they also expected public readings to feature prominently in the eschaton (1QS^a 1.5–6). The Mishnah reports that kings such as Agrippa were accustomed to reading Torah aloud at the Sukkoth festival in the first century CE (m. Sotah 7.8). Luke 4:16–17 portrays public reading of the scroll of Isaiah in a first-century synagogue on the Sabbath.

Comparative study of scriptures shows that their scriptural status is maintained and their persuasive uses are enhanced by ritualisation of a text's performative and iconic dimensions, as well as ritual interpretation of its semantic dimension.[59] Modern Bibles, Torah scrolls and Gospel books are used iconically as ritual objects, as symbols of Jewish, Samaritan and Christian tradition, as emblems of clerical authority and learning, and (if old) as cherished heirlooms and valuable treasures. Their words are performed in the form of hymns, chants and cantatas, and their stories inspire scripts for films, plays and pageants.[60] Of course, their contents are also the subject of semantic interpretation and debate in social contexts, ranging from synagogue and church classes and sermons to academic monographs and commentaries.

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57 Dorina Miller Parmenter, 'The Iconic Book. The Image of the Bible in Early Christian Rituals', *Postscripts* 2 (2006), 160–89.
58 Caroline Humfress, 'Judging by the Book. Christian Codices and Late Antique Legal Culture', in Klingshirn and Safran (eds.), *Early Christian Book*, pp. 141–58.
59 Watts, 'Three Dimensions', pp. 135–59.
60 On the role of performance in scripturalisation across multiple religious traditions, see William Graham, *Beyond the Written Word. Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Their contents have regularly been cited to claim divine authority for legal and political, as well as religious, agendas.

Religious and academic traditions since Antiquity have usually assumed that the latter function, the Bible's semantic authority, came first and that its performative and iconic uses developed secondarily because of the power of its verbal message. However, close attention to the history of the Pentateuch's use in Israel during the periods of monarchy and of the Second Temple suggests otherwise. In the case of the Pentateuch, mandates for its ritual performance and iconic veneration appear in the text itself. Evidence for such practices appears in the narrative record just as early as does any concern for its semantic interpretation. The Torah was used from the start to reinforce the growing power of priestly dynasties. As Jews and Samaritans in the Second Temple period increasingly and more frequently ritualised the three dimensions of Torah, the Pentateuch's status became pre-eminent. Its legal influence flowed from the expansion of the temple's ritual sphere, which it governed as temple law, to cover more and more aspects of social and domestic life. From the first evidence of its influence and use, the Torah was already being ritualised along its iconic and performative as well as its semantic dimensions to enhance its religious and political impact, and eventually its legal force as well. In this way, the Torah became the first 'scripture' in the sense of that term that later traditions still recognise and use.

Modern editions of the Hebrew Bible

emanuel tov

Background

The hundreds of different Hebrew scripture editions and thousands of modern translations in various languages are more or less identical, but they differ in many large and small details. Yet, in spite of these differences, all these sources are known as 'the Bible'. The differences between the Hebrew editions pertain to the following areas: (i) the text base, (ii) exponents of the text presentation and (iii) the overall approach towards the nature and purpose of an edition of Hebrew scripture. In this chapter, we will review the philosophies behind the various text editions.

Behind each edition is an editor who has determined its parameters. Usually such editors are mentioned on the title page, but sometimes they act behind the scenes, in which case the edition is known by the name of the printer or place of publication.

The differences among Hebrew editions pertain to the following areas:

1. The text base, sometimes involving a combination of manuscripts, and, in one case, different presentations of the same manuscript. Codex Leningrad B19[A] is presented differently in the following editions: *BH* (1929–51), *BHS* (1967–76), Dotan (1976), Dotan (2001) and *BHQ* (2004–) – *BH*, *BHS*, and *BHQ* will be referred to as 'the *BH* series'. These differences pertain to words, letters, vowels, accents and *Ketiv*/*Qere* variations. Usually the differences between the editions are negligible regarding scripture content, while they are more significant concerning the presence or absence of *Ketiv*/*Qere* variations. Equally important are differences in verse division (and accordingly in their numbering). In the case of critically restored texts ('eclectic editions'), differences between editions are by definition substantial. In addition to these variations, most editions also introduced a number of mistakes and printing errors, reflecting an additional source of divergence.

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2. The exponents of text presentation, partly reflecting manuscript evidence: the presentation of the text in prose or poetry (in the *BH* series often against codex L), details in the chapter division, the sequence of the books, the inclusion of the Masorah and details in the masoretic notation (*inter alia*, *Ketiv/Qere*, sense divisions).

3. Editorial principles pertaining to small details in the text, as well as to major decisions: the inclusion of the traditional Jewish commentators, of ancient or modern translations, and of a critical apparatus of variants. Editorial principles are also reflected in liberties taken in small changes in the base text(s) or the combination of base texts. Some of these conceptions are closely connected with the intended readership (confessional/scholarly). The major decision for a modern editor pertains to the choice of base text, which could be a single manuscript, a group of manuscripts or the adherence to 'tradition', which implies following in some way or other the second rabbinic Bible (RB2). The principle of accepting a base text of any type is considered conservative when compared with 'eclectic' editions in which readings are deliberately chosen from an unlimited number of textual sources, and in which emendation is allowed (see 'Addition of an apparatus of variants to the text of critical editions' below). With most editions being either of a Jewish confessional or a scholarly nature, one's first intuition would be to assume that the difference between the two would be that the former adhere to tradition, and the latter to scholarly principles, among them the precise representation of a single source. However, precision is not necessarily a scholarly principle, just as adherence to tradition is not necessarily linked with religious beliefs. Thus, not only Jewish editions but also several scholarly editions (among them the first edition of the *Biblia Hebraica*, ed. R. Kittel, Leipzig, 1905) follow RB2, while among the modern Jewish (Israeli) editions several are based on a single codex: Dotan (1976) and Dotan (2001) (both codex L). See also below regarding the editions of Breuer and the *Jerusalem Crown*.

As a result of these divergences, there are no two editions that agree in all their details. Some editions differ from each other in their subsequent printings (which sometimes amount to different editions), without informing the reader (Letteris and Snaith). On the other hand, photographically reproduced editions or editions based on the same electronic (computer-encoded) text usually present the same text. Such computerised versions of Hebrew scripture, usually accompanied by a morphological analysis of all the words in the text, are almost always based on codex L or *BHS*. When using L or *BHS*, in principle

these editions should be identical, but in practice they are not (among them: Accordance, Bible Works, Jewish Classical Library, Quest, Logos, Word-Search, Gramcord, Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible). Two electronic editions are based on the Aleppo Codex (*Tokhnit 'HaKeter' –Ma'agar HaTanakh*, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan; part of the *Miqraot Gedolot 'HaKeter'* Project).

Modern translations differ from one another in many of the text-base parameters mentioned above and much more. These translations usually follow MT with or without a selection of readings from other sources.[1]

Development of editorial conceptions

Editorial concepts have changed over the course of the centuries. The following approaches are presented more or less in chronological sequence.

No exact indication of the source

Virtually all Jewish editions of Hebrew scripture, with the exception of eclectic editions, are based on manuscripts of MT, more precisely TMT[2] (the Tiberian MT). As the masoretic manuscripts differed from one another, the very first editors and printers needed to decide on which source(s) their editions should be based (see below). The perception that an edition should be based on a single manuscript, and preferably the oldest one, had not yet developed, as had not the understanding that the choice of readings from several manuscripts requires the indication of the source of each reading. When the first editions were prepared, based on a number of relatively late masoretic manuscripts, the earlier manuscripts that were to dominate twentieth-century editions (codices L and A) were not known to the editors or recognised as important sources.

The first printed edition of the complete biblical text appeared in 1488 in Soncino, a small town in the vicinity of Milan. Particularly important for the progress of subsequent biblical research were the so-called polyglots, or multilingual editions. The later polyglot editions present in parallel columns the biblical text in Hebrew (MT and SP), Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, Latin and Arabic, accompanied by Latin versions of these translations and by grammars and lexica of these languages, while the earlier ones present a smaller range of texts. The first polyglot is the Complutense prepared by Cardinal Ximenes in

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1 For an analysis, see Tov, 'Textual Basis'.
2 The term was coined by M. H. Goshen-Gottstein. See *Mikraot Gedolot. Biblia Rabbinica. A Reprint of the 1525 Venice Edition*, with introduction by M. H. Goshen-Gottstein (Jerusalem: Makor, 1972), pp. 5–16.

Alcala (in Latin: Complutum), near Madrid, in 1514–17. The second polyglot was prepared in Antwerp in 1569–72, the third in Paris in 1629–45 and the fourth, the most extensive of all, was edited by B. Walton and E. Castellus, in London, in 1654–7. The first polyglot edition was followed by the rabbinic Bibles (later to be called *Miqra'ot G^edolot*, 'folio edition'), which included traditional Jewish commentaries and Targumim. The first two rabbinic Bibles (RB) were printed at the press of Daniel Bomberg in Venice, the earlier one (RB1, 1516–17) edited by Felix Pratensis and the later (RB2, 1524–5) by Jacob Ben-Ḥayyim ben Adoniyahu.[3]

These editions were based on several *unnamed* manuscripts, to which the editors applied their editorial principles. The editors of RB1 and RB2 derived their base text from 'accurate Spanish manuscripts' close to the 'accurate Tiberian manuscripts' such as L and A.[4] In the words of Goshen-Gottstein, '[w]ith a view to the fact that this is the first eclectic text arranged in the early sixteenth century, it seems amazing that, until the twentieth century, this early humanistic edition served as the basis for all later texts'.[5]

Adherence to the second rabbinic Bible (RB2)

Because of the inclusion of the Masorah, Targumim and traditional Jewish commentaries in RB2, that edition was hailed as *the* Jewish edition of the Hebrew Bible. RB2 also became the pivotal text in scholarly circles since any text considered to be central to Judaism was accepted as authoritative elsewhere. Consequently, for many generations following the 1520s, most new editions reflected RB2, and deviated from it only when changing or adding details on the basis of other manuscripts, when altering editorial principles or when removing or adding printing errors.

Ever since the 1520s, many good, often precise, editions have been based on RB2. The most important are those of J. Buxtorf (1618), J. Athias (1661), J. Leusden (2nd edn. 1667), D. E. Jablonski (1699), E. van der Hooght (1705), J. D. Michaelis (1720), A. Hahn (1831), E. F. C. Rosenmüller (1834), M. H. Letteris (1852), the first two editions of *BH* (Leipzig, 1905, 1913), C. D. Ginsburg (1926) and M. Koren (1962). The influence of RB2 is felt into the twenty-first century,

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3 For a modern edition of the *Miqra'ot Gedolot*, see M. Cohen, *Miqra'ot Gedolot 'Haketer'. A Revised and Augmented Scientific Edition of Miqra'ot Gedolot Based on the Aleppo Codex and Early Medieval MSS*, parts I–VII (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1992–2007).
4 Thus J. S. Penkower, 'Jacob Ben-Ḥayyim and the Rise of the Biblia Rabbinica', unpubl. PhD thesis [Hebrew, with English summary], Hebrew University, Jerusalem (1982); J. S. Penkower, 'Rabbinic Bible', in J. H. Hayes (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), vol. II, cols. 361–4, at col. 363.
5 Goshen-Gottstein, 'Editions', p. 224.

as the edition of Koren, probably the one most frequently used in Israel, is based on that source.

The aforementioned polyglot editions, though influential for the course of scholarship in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, did not continue to influence subsequent Bible editions or Bible scholarship.

Adherence to the Ben-Asher tradition

RB2 became the leading edition because of its status within Judaism and the scholarly world, not because of its manuscript basis, which remains unknown (although its type has been recognised). The uncertainty regarding the textual base of these editions is problematic for precise scholarship, and therefore several new editions have tried to improve upon RB2 in various ways. Sometimes readings were changed according to specific masoretic manuscripts (e.g. J. D. Michaelis (1720) and N. H. Snaith (1958) following B. M. Or 2626–8). At the same time, since all these editions reflect the Ben-Asher text, the centrally accepted text in Judaism, the recognition developed that any new edition should involve an exact representation of that tradition. Thus S. Baer and F. Delitzsch attempted to reconstruct the Ben-Asher text on the basis of, among other things, Ben-Asher's grammatical treatise *Diqduqqê ha-Ṭᵉamim*, particularly with regard to the system of *ga'yot* (secondary stresses). C. D. Ginsburg (1926) tried to get closer to the original form of the Ben-Asher text on the basis of his thorough knowledge of the notations of the Masorah. At the same time, the edition itself reproduces RB2. Cassuto (1953) hoped to reach the same goal by changing details in an earlier edition (that of Ginsburg) on the basis of some readings in the Aleppo Codex that he consulted on the spot.

Only in later years did the search for the most precise Bible text lead scholars to use manuscripts presumably vocalised by Aaron ben Moshe ben Ben-Asher *himself* (the Aleppo Codex = A), or those corrected according to that manuscript (Codex Leningrad B19^A = L), or codex C, there being no better base for our knowledge of the Ben-Asher tradition.

The first single manuscript to be used for an edition was codex L from 1009, which was used for the third edition of *BH* (1929–37, 1951), *BHS* (1967–77), two editions by A. Dotan (Dotan (1976) and Dotan (2001)) and *BHQ* (2004–). The great majority of computer programmes using a biblical text are also based on this manuscript.

The second manuscript used for an edition is the Aleppo Codex (vocalised and accented in approximately 925 CE), used for the *HUB*. The lost readings of this manuscript (in the Torah) have been reconstructed on the basis of new evidence by J. S. Penkower, *New Evidence for the Pentateuch Text in the*

Aleppo Codex [Hebrew] (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1992) and had previously been included in the editions of Breuer (1977–82 and 1997 (Breuer, Horev)) on the basis of Yemenite manuscripts. The *Jerusalem Crown* (2000) follows the Breuer edition.

Representation of a single manuscript

The search for the best Ben-Asher manuscript involved the use of a single manuscript rather than a combination of sources. This development coincided with one of the leading ideas in *Editionstechnik* of producing a diplomatic edition on the basis of a single manuscript, not 'improved' upon by readings from other sources. Soon enough, the use of a single manuscript became a leading principle in Hebrew scripture editions, as in the case of some of the editions of the LXX, Peshitta and Targumim.

Addition of an apparatus of variants to the text of critical editions

The search for an exact representation of a single source (in this case: a Ben-Asher *codex unicus*) often went together with the presentation of a critical apparatus (*BH* series, *HUB*) containing inner-masoretic and extra-masoretic variant readings. However, the two procedures are not necessarily connected, as codex L in Dotan's editions (Dotan (1976) and Dotan (2001)) is not accompanied by a textual apparatus. These critical apparatuses became the centrepiece of the critical editions.

A critical apparatus provides a choice of variant readings that, together with the main text, should enable the reader to make maximum use of the textual data. Naturally, the critical apparatus provides only a selection of readings, and if this selection is performed judiciously, the apparatus provides an efficient tool.

'Eclectic' editions

In the course of critical investigation of the Hebrew Bible, it is often felt that the combination of a diplomatically presented base text (codex L or A) and a critical apparatus do not suffice for the efficient use of the textual data. Consultation of MT alone is not satisfactory since it is merely one of many biblical texts. By the same token, the use of an apparatus is cumbersome as it involves a complicated mental exercise. The apparatus necessitates that the user place the variants in imaginary (virtual) boxes that in the user's mind may replace readings of MT. Since each scholar evaluates the data differently, everyone creates in his/her mind a different reconstructed (original) text. In

other words, users of the *BH* series constantly work with two sets of data, a real edition (MT) that they see in front of them and a virtual one, which is composed eclectically from the apparatus.

Against this background, it is not surprising that a system has been devised to transform the fragmented and often confusing information of a critical apparatus into a new and stable type of tool, named an 'eclectic' or 'critical' edition. It is no longer necessary to replace in one's mind a detail of MT with a variant reading found in the apparatus, as these preferred readings have actually been incorporated into the running text. Thus, in MT in Gen. 1:9, the command 'let the water under the heaven be gathered into one place, so that dry land may appear' is followed by an abbreviated account of its implementation 'and so it was'. However, in the edition of R. S. Hendel[6] the detailed implementation is included in the text itself ('and the water under the heaven was gathered into one place, and dry land appeared'), following a harmonising plus in 4QGen[k] and the LXX. An edition of this type provides a very convenient way of using the textual data together with an expert's evaluation. This procedure is common in classical studies (see the many editions of Greek and Latin classical texts published by Oxford University Press and Teubner of Leipzig), and also has much to recommend it for the study of Hebrew scripture. As a result, a rather sizeable number of eclectic editions of biblical books or parts thereof have been published since around 1900. Eclectic editions probably influenced scholarship less than the *BH* series and the *HUB*, but their influence should not be underestimated because of the inclusion of eclectic editions in scholarly translations. A major exponent of this approach is the *Critical Edition* series edited by Haupt (1893–1904) and its English translation, by Haupt, *Polychrome Bible*. These editions are radical in their approach since they freely change the sequence of chapters according to the editor's literary insights. Thus, the book of Jeremiah in the series by C. H. Cornill (1895) is rearranged chronologically according to the dates of the composition of its components. In modern times this idea has been revived in several monographs, especially in Italian scholarship. Among other things, plans for a complete scripture edition are now under way, incorporated in the so-called *Oxford Hebrew Bible* (*OHB*), prefaced by R. Hendel's programmatic introduction.[7] By 2010 only individual chapters had been presented in this way, but the complete *OHB* will present an eclectic edition of the whole Bible. The *OHB* project does not present a novel approach when compared with the

6 R. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11. Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (Oxford University Press, 1998).
7 'The Oxford Hebrew Bible. Prologue to a New Critical Edition', *VT* 58 (2008), 324–51.

editions of around 1900, such as C. H. Cornill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1886), but the data on which the project is based are more extensive, including the Dead Sea scrolls, and the reconstruction of the source texts of the ancient translations is more sophisticated.

Evaluation of critical editions

The needs of various Bible users differ, but all users benefit from a precise representation of Hebrew scripture based on a single manuscript, be it L, A or any other source. Evaluations of textual readings as in the *BH* series are greatly welcomed by some scholars, but criticised by others for being intrusive and often misleading. Near-completeness as in the *HUB* is welcomed by some, but considered cumbersome by others because of the wealth of data. Finally, many scholars consider the eclectic system of the *OHB* too subjective, while others consider it helpful for the exegete. In short, there will never be a single type of edition that will please all users, partly due to the fact that these editions are used by the specialist and non-specialist alike.

Bearing in mind these different audiences, inclinations and expectations, we will attempt to evaluate the extant editions with an eye to their usefulness, completeness and precision, and to the correctness of their data. However, it should be understood that any evaluation is hampered by the fact that the *BH* series is constantly being revised, that only the Major Prophets have been published in the *HUB*, and that none of the volumes of the *OHB* has been published yet (2012). The use of these editions by scholars is uneven since most use the *BH* series, while the *HUB* is probably consulted mainly by specialists in textual criticism, authors of commentaries and specialists in the intricacies of the Masorah. Our evaluation of the *BH* series will bypass *BH*, focusing on both *BHS* and *BHQ* (five fascicles to date, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011).

HUB

The *HUB* edition is meant for the specialist. The *HUB* does not present an evaluation of the evidence, considered an advantage by some and a disadvantage by others. Most relevant evidence is covered, and in addition the edition focuses on Jewish and rabbinic sources, but is not matched by an equal amount of attention to biblical quotations in early Christian sources and in the intertestamental and Samaritan literature. However, the third volume published, that of Ezekiel, does cover the non-biblical Qumran writings. The technical explanations in the apparatus realistically reflect the complexity of the evidence (e.g. regarding the LXX) but, by letting the reader sense the variety of

possibilities, the edition is not always easy for readers to approach; in fact, it may be impossible to compose a user-friendly tool in this complex area. At the same time, many of these technical considerations and explanations are located in a special apparatus of notes rather than in the main apparatuses themselves. In fact, the reader who is well versed in the languages quoted in the first apparatus may use the more straightforward evidence of that apparatus also without these notes.

The exegetical and translation-technical formulaic explanations attached to translational deviations from MT in the *HUB*, an innovation by M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, were influential in the development of the *BH* series and the *OHB*. In this system, in a series of types of differences such as in number, person, verbal tenses and vocalisation of the Hebrew, the apparatus specifies neither the data nor its text-critical value, since in these cases such a decision is impossible according to the *HUB*. Instead, the apparatus describes the versional reading in general terms as, for instance, '(difference in) num(ber)'.

The *HUB* is hailed by all as a perfect tool for the specialist, albeit a little too one-sided in the direction of MT and Jewish sources, and less practical for the non-specialist who would like to be spoon-fed with evaluations.

BHS *and* BHQ

BHS improved much on *BH* in method, but several aspects remained problematic:

1. Every collection of variants presents a choice, but *BHS* often presents fewer data than *BH*, filling up the apparatus with less significant medieval variants from the Kennicott collection (1776–80) and the Cairo Genizah.
2. In spite of much criticism voiced against the earlier *BH*, the number of medieval Hebrew manuscripts attesting to a certain variant is still taken into consideration in *BHS* in such notations as 'pc Mss', 'nonn Mss', 'mlt Mss' (see, e.g., 1 Sam. 8–9).
3. Inconsistency in approach among the various books is visible almost everywhere. A glaring instance is the lack of evaluations in Samuel against the policy of *BHS* elsewhere.
4. Versional data are often presented as if unconnected to suggestions by *BHS*, and therefore create the impression of emendations for those who are not conversant with the ancient languages. This system resulted from the overly cautious approach by the editors of *BHS*, who preferred not to make a direct link between the text of a version and a Hebrew reading actually reconstructed from that version.

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5. As in the *HUB*, the *BH* series focuses on the Ben-Asher text and its Masorah. It would have been better had some or equal attention been paid to the Masorah of the Samaritans and the biblical quotations in the New Testament and in Second Temple literature.

The system of *BHQ* substantially improves *BHS*, as shown in the first published fascicle that includes a very instructive 'General Introduction' by the editorial committee:

Texts from the Judaean desert

The texts from the Judaean desert are covered in full by *BHQ* (see, e.g., the full coverage of the Canticles scrolls from Qumran). See 'Manuscripts from the Judaean desert' below.

Formulaic explanations

The apparatus contains a long series of formulaic explanations of the background of the deviations from MT in the versions that are explained as exegetical rather than pointing to Hebrew variants. Thus 'and she said to him' in S in Ruth 3:14 for 'and he said' in MT is explained in the apparatus as 'assim-ctext' ('assimilation to words in the context'). Amplifications found frequently in the LXX and Targum of Esther (e.g. 1:4) are described in the edition as 'ampl(ification)' or 'paraphr(ase)'.

These notes provide the reader with helpful explanations of the versions, and show the editors' intuition; at the same time they may be criticised as not belonging to a critical apparatus of a *textual* edition. In my view, this type of recording should be left for borderline cases in which it is unclear whether the translational deviation reflects the translator's exegesis or a Hebrew / Aramaic variant, and should not be employed when the editors themselves suggest that the translation reflects content exegesis.

The principles behind this system have been adopted from the *HUB* and they improve the information provided but, as in the case of the *HUB*, they make the edition less user-friendly. Besides, the apparatus of *BHQ* contains many instances of exegetical renderings in the versions, while the *HUB* only contains borderline cases between exegesis and the reflection of possible variants in the translation. The notation of *BHQ* is more complicated than that of the *HUB*, since in the latter edition the explanations are included in a separate apparatus of notes, while in *BHQ* the evidence is adduced *together* with its explanation in a single apparatus.

Textual and literary criticism

BHQ heralds a major change in approach towards textual data that, according to the editors, should be evaluated with literary rather than textual tools since they involve data that may reflect literary editions of a biblical book different from MT. *BHQ* now absolves such details from textual judgement.

The application of the principle of 'lit(erary)', although heralding a novel and positive approach, is admittedly subjective and by definition can never be applied consistently. Indeed, some features in the LXX of a book may be considered by its *BHQ* editor to be literary differences, while similar features in another book are not considered literary by the *BHQ* editor of that book. This issue can be examined in the *BHQ* fascicles of Proverbs and Esther. In Esther, the LXX and LXX^AT texts are considered by several scholars to reflect a different, even superior, Hebrew text. In *BHQ*, however, the major deviations of these two Greek texts, if adduced at all, are never described as 'lit(erary)'. The only elements that are described as 'lit' in the apparatus are details from the so-called Additions to Esther, also described as the non-canonical parts of the LXX (see, e.g., the notes in *BHQ* to Esth. 1:1, 3:13, 4:17). However, these Additions cannot be detached from the main Greek texts on the basis of their style, vocabulary or subject matter, and therefore at least some of the other major discrepancies of the LXX or LXX^AT could or should have been denoted as 'lit'. The practice of *BHQ* in Esther is not wrong, as the editor probably espoused a different view. But the editor's view is problematical in some instances in which the Greek deviations are based clearly on Semitic variants constituting a different literary edition of the book. Similar problems arise in the fascicle of Proverbs where the major deviations of the LXX (addition, omission and different sequence of verses), which in my view are literary (recensional),[8] are only very partially reflected in the apparatus. Once again, this procedure reflects a difference of opinion, so that *BHQ* is not intrinsically incorrect.

Cautious evaluation

BHQ presents reconstructed variants from the versions more cautiously than in the past, but stops short of making a direct link between a reconstructed reading, preferred by that edition, and the text of the version (this practice is carried over from *BHS*; see above). The reconstruction (mentioned first)

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8 See my study 'Recensional Differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs', *Greek and Hebrew Bible* (1999), 419–31.

and the versional reading are linked by the reference 'see', which leaves room for much uncertainty and does not reflect the real relation between the two elements. In an example given in the introductory material to *BHQ* as 'Figure 1' (p. lxxiii), in Jer. 23:17 MT *limena'aṣay dibber* ʏʜwʜ ('to men who despise me <they say:> "The Lord has said"') where the LXX reads τοῖς ἀπωθουμένοις τὸν λόγον κυρίου, reflecting *limena'aṣê devar* ʏʜwʜ ('to those who despise the word of the Lord'), the edition does *not* say 'read *limena'aṣê devar* ʏʜwʜ with G' or the like. As does *BHS*, *BHQ* separates the two sets of information, suggesting that the reading which is actually reconstructed from the LXX is to be preferred to MT: 'pref *limena'aṣê devar* ʏʜwʜ see G (S)'. In this and many similar situations, *BHQ* presents the preferred reading almost as an emendation, since the reference to the LXX (phrased as 'see') does not clarify that the suggested reading is actually based on the LXX. Users who are not well versed in the ancient languages do not know the exact relation between the suggested reading and the ancient sources. More seriously, by presenting the evidence in this way, injustice is done to one of the basic procedures of textual criticism. It is probably accepted by most scholars that equal attention should be paid to MT and the LXX, and that both MT and the LXX could reflect an original reading. If this is the case, preferable readings from the LXX ought to be presented in the same way as preferable readings from MT, even if the difficulties inherent in the reconstruction complicate their presentation and evaluation.

Manuscripts from the Judaean desert

The manuscripts from the Judaean desert are fully recorded in *BHQ*, including both significant readings – possibly preferable to the readings of MT and/or the LXX – and secondary variants. The latter type of readings does not contribute towards the reconstruction of the original text of Hebrew scripture, but merely illustrates the process of textual transmission. On the whole, due to the extensive coverage of the scrolls in *BHQ*, this edition can be used profitably as a source of information for the scrolls. On the other hand, the reader is overwhelmed with the large amount of information on secondary readings in the scrolls. Since *BHQ* provides value judgements on these readings, that edition could have differentiated between the stratum of possibly valuable readings and that of clearly secondary readings. From reading the apparatus of Esther, one gets the impression that the greater part of the readings belong to this second stratum.

The material from the Judaean desert is rightly recorded more fully than the medieval Hebrew evidence (see below). At the same time, the apparatus

will include all the material for the SP except for orthographic and linguistic variants, all the Cairo Genizah material prior to 1000, and select Tiberian manuscripts (see below).

Medieval manuscripts

Following the study of M. H. Goshen-Gottstein,[9] *BHQ* does not record the content of the individual manuscripts from the collections of medieval manuscripts by Kennicott and de Rossi. On the other hand, eight early masoretic manuscripts listed in the 'General Introduction', pp. xx–xxv, are covered. The reduction in the number of medieval manuscripts covered is a distinct improvement.

Textual commentary

The publication of a detailed textual commentary (part 18, 51*–150*) in which difficult readings are discussed, including an analysis of all readings preferred to MT, represents a great step forward from all other editions. The discussion describes all the relevant issues and is usually thorough and judicious. The readings discussed present textual problems, for all of which an opinion is expressed. One of the many advantages of this commentary is that it discusses conjectures regardless of their acceptance by the editors.

The strength of a commentary is in the relation between the generalisations and the remarks on details. Indeed, the authors of the commentary constantly deduced generalisations from details, and explained details according to what is known from comparable instances.

Conservative approach to evaluations

The textual evaluations in *BHQ* are very conservative when compared with earlier editions in the *BH* series. Thus, while in Canticles in *BHS*, thirty-two variants are preferred to MT, the editor of *BHQ* makes only three such suggestions (phrased as 'pref'). In all other cases, the text of MT is preferred.

Retroversions

The apparatus contains a rather full presentation of the textual evidence that is at variance with the main text, MT as represented by codex L. However, the presentation of this evidence in *BHQ* differs from that in all other critical editions in that the versional evidence is presented mainly in the languages of

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9 M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, 'Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts. Their History and Their Place in the HUBP Edition', *Bib* 48 (1967), 243–90.

the translations, Greek, Aramaic, Syriac and Latin. All other editions retrovert many versional readings into Hebrew, while some of them are described as readings preferable to MT (such preferences are not expressed for readings in the *HUB*). However, in the past many such retroversions in the *BH* series were haphazard, imprecise or unfounded. Probably for this reason, *BHQ* is sparing with retroversions, presenting only one type, as stated in the 'General Introduction', p. XIII: '[r]etroversion will be used only for a reading proposed as *preferable* (italics added) to that found in the base text'. While these retroversions are thus reduced to a minimum, other types of retroversions are nevertheless found in the apparatus, although for the editors of *BHQ* they are not considered 'retroversions':

1. Versional readings that present a shorter text than MT are presented as '<' or 'abbrev'. This is a form of retroversion, although in the case of an ancient translation the editor wisely does not tell us whether the shortening took place in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the translation or in the translator's mind.
2. Etymological renderings based on a certain Hebrew form ('via . . .') which is reconstructed in the edition, but not named 'reconstruction' in the *BHQ* system.

In their wish to record no retroversions other than those of preferred readings, the editors of *BHQ* may have gone a little too far, since the nature of the undertaking requires these retroversions. Thus, loyal to its principles, *BHQ* retroverts none of the many deviations of the Greek Esther from MT. However, *BHQ* accepts the idea of multiple textual and literary traditions in *Hebrew*. Therefore why should these traditions not be retroverted from time to time? *BHQ* records many secondary readings (see above, 'Formulaic explanations'), thus rendering in line with its principles to record, in Hebrew, readings that have the potential of being primary literary parallel traditions. It seems to us that, because of the lack of these reconstructions, the reader is often deprived of much valuable information.

On the whole, *BHQ* is much richer in data, more mature, judicious and cautious than its predecessors. It heralds a very important step forward in the *BH* series. This advancement implies more complex notations that almost necessarily render this edition less user-friendly for the non-expert. The juxtaposition in the apparatus of a wealth of exegetical readings and important variants as well as some of the complex explanations in the introduction will be grasped only by the sophisticated scholar. I do not think that *BHQ* can live up to its own ideal: 'As was true for its predecessors, this edition of *Biblia Hebraica* is intended as a *Handausgabe* for use by scholars, clergy,

translators, and students who are not necessarily specialists in textual criticism . . . specialists in textual criticism should also find the edition of use, even though it is not principally intended for them' ('General Introduction', p. VIII). The commentary and the introductions go a long way in bridging the gap for the non-specialists, but I do believe the specialist will grasp the finesses of the sophistication better than the non-specialist who will often be confused. Time will tell whether this assessment is correct.

OHB

The *OHB* presents critical reconstructions of an original text that, while imperfect, as editor-in-chief Hendel realises, still represent the best option among the various possibilities. The system chosen by the *OHB* editors can easily be examined in such an edition as Hendel's *Genesis*, and is well covered by the explanations in Hendel's 'Prologue'. This introduction describes in detail the notes accompanying the readings in the apparatus as opposed to the 'original' readings included in the text itself. It also describes at length the shortcomings of the other types of editions. However, what is lacking is a detailed description of the principles of the decision-making process relating to the very choice of these original readings. Hendel's own critical edition of Gen. 1–11 includes a discussion of 'types of text-critical decisions' (pp. 6–10) as well as valuable discussions of the relations between the textual witnesses. However, these analyses do not elucidate why the author earmarked specific details as 'original' in certain constellations. Probably much intuition is involved, as in all areas of the textual evaluation.

The older eclectic editions provided very little theoretical background for the procedure followed. It was supposed to be self-understood that scholars may compose their own editions, following a longstanding tradition of such editions in classical scholarship and the study of the NT. On the other hand, Hendel's 'Prologue' deals at length with the theoretical background of the eclectic procedure justifying the recording of the preferred readings in the text rather than an apparatus, as in the *BH* series. Nevertheless, the preparation of eclectic editions involves a difficult or, according to some, impossible enterprise.

In his theoretical introduction, Hendel says: 'The practical goal for the *OHB* is to approximate in its critical text the textual "archetype," by which I mean "the earliest inferable textual state"' (p. 3). He further cautions:

> The theory of an eclectic edition assumes that approximating the archetype is a step towards the 'original text,' however that original is to be conceived . . . In

the case of the Hebrew Bible it is difficult to define what the 'original' means, since each book is the product of a complicated and often unrecoverable history of composition and redaction. The 'original text' that lies somewhere behind the archetype is usually not the product of a single author, but a collective production, sometimes constructed over centuries, perhaps comparable to the construction of a medieval cathedral or the composite walls of an old city.

However, in spite of the problems encountered, the editors of the *OHB* believe that there *was* an original text (or in some cases two), since otherwise they would not have reconstructed such an entity. However, now more than ever it seems to me that there never was an 'archetype' or 'original text' of most scripture books. For most biblical books scholars assume editorial changes over the course of many generations or even several centuries. If this assumption is correct, this development implies that there never was a single text that may be considered *the* original text for textual criticism; rather, we have to assume compositional stages, each of which was meant to be authoritative when completed.

The point of departure for the *OHB* is the assumption that there was one or, in some cases, that there were two such editions that may be reconstructed. The *BH* series, and *BHQ* in particular, struggles with the same problems (see above), but in that enterprise the difficulties are fewer, since the edition itself always presents MT. In its apparatus, the *BH* series presents elements as original or archetypal, but it can always allow itself the luxury of not commenting on all details, while the *OHB* has to make decisions in all instances.

If the principle of reconstructing an original edition based on evidence and emendation is accepted, it remains difficult to decide which compositional level should be reconstructed. On a practical level, what is the scope of the changes one should allow oneself to insert in MT? Small changes are definitely permissible, but why should one stop at verses? An editor of the *OHB* may also decide to exclude the secondarily added hymns of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1–10) and Jonah (Jon. 2). If all scholars agree that these psalms are secondary, I see no reason why an editor of *OHB* should not exclude them. I am only using this example to illustrate the problems involved; I do not think that an *OHB* editor would actually exclude these chapters (although according to the internal logic of the *OHB* they should, I think). However, I can imagine that someone would exclude Gen. 12:6 'and the Canaanites were then in the land', considered secondary by all critical scholars.

In short, innumerable difficulties present themselves in places where complex literary development took place. In fact, the evaluation of the two editions

of Jeremiah (see below) seems to be a simple case in comparison with the problems arising from very complex compositional and transmission stages visible elsewhere.

On a closely related matter, the *OHB* proposes implementing a different, more advanced, procedure for 'multiple early editions' of biblical books from that used in the past by presenting them in parallel columns. This is an important step forward, but the problems in the details of the published reconstructions of these parallel editions (1 Kings 11 MT and LXX, Jer. 27 MT and LXX;[10] and 1 Sam. 17) jeopardise their existence: (i) presently each of the editions is not represented by MT and the reconstructed Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX, but by an eclectic version of these sources; (ii) the apparatuses of the two parallel columns refer mainly to each other.

The presentation of the orthography of the reconstructed original text poses an almost insurmountable problem. Hendel was aware of this issue, and decided to adhere to the spelling of Codex Leningradensis, together with its vocalisation and accentuation. Words differing from MT included in the eclectic text are presented without these two dimensions, but the reconstructed *Vorlage* of the LXX in 1 Kings 11, when agreeing with MT, is reconstructed together with the masoretic vowels and accents. Cornill's *Ezechiel* showed already in 1886 that the reconstructed text ought to be unvocalised.

As expected, all eclectic editions (including *OHB*) and the *BH* series are subjective in their textual evaluations. An *OHB* editor may include a long plus from a Qumran text, and he or she may exclude a whole verse or change the wording, language and orthography. All these decisions are acceptable within the discipline of textual criticism. Since these choices are the brainchildren of a scholar, they may be changed by the same scholar after further study or may be contradicted by the majority of scholars. These decisions are as subjective as the ones reflected in the *BH* series, but the difference between the two editions is that, with *BHS* or *BHQ* in one's hand, one continues to use the transmitted text (MT), with a reconstructed text in one's mind as recorded in the apparatus. On the other hand, in the case of eclectic editions one *has* to use the reconstructed text, while the transmitted text remains somewhere in one's mind. This mental exercise involves much manoeuvring, in my view, because the object of our study is the Bible, imperfect as Codex Leningradensis or any other source may be, and not the brainchild of a given scholar. If we should use an edition that is more daring than others, the basis of our study is even more unstable. Further, what should we do if two parallel eclectic

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10 For these see White Crawford, Joosten and Ulrich, 'Sample Editions'.

editions of the same biblical book were to be published? Should we read the Bible according to Smith or according to Johnson?

Some remarks on all existing editions

The centrality of MT

Despite statements to the contrary, all critical and non-critical editions of Hebrew scripture revolve around MT, which is more central than ever in everyone's thinking.[11] Non-critical editions present MT, or more precisely TMT (see n. 2), while all critical texts present MT together with an apparatus. Furthest removed from MT is the *OHB*, but even that edition uses MT as its framework, occasionally changing the base text to what is now a variant reading in one of the versions. Even when versions disagree with MT on small details, and possibly reflect superior readings, these readings have not been altered. Other critical editions (the *BH* series and the *HUB*) meticulously present the best Ben-Asher manuscripts, including their Masorah and open/closed sections. This precision is absolutely necessary for the study of Tiberian Hebrew and the history of MT, but somehow the readers' focus is moved away from the very important ancient material contained in the LXX and the Qumran scrolls. Readings from these sources are mentioned – in a way, hidden – in an apparatus to the text of MT rather than appearing *next* to it. The decision to structure editions around MT is natural; after all, MT *is* the central text of Judaism, and it is much valued by scholars. Besides, the Dead Sea scrolls are fragmentary, and the LXX is in Greek, not in Hebrew. Notwithstanding, I see a conceptual problem in the focusing of all editions on MT. I am afraid that the editions we use, despite the fullness of data in the *HUB* and *BHQ* apparatuses, perpetuate the perception that MT is *the* Bible. The systems employed in the present editions do not educate future generations towards an egalitarian approach to all the textual sources.

In my study 'The Place of the Masoretic Text', I tried to show in detail how the centrality of MT negatively influences research. Although critical scholars, as opposed to the public at large, know that MT does not constitute *the* Bible, they nevertheless often approach it in this way. They base many *critical* commentaries and introductions mainly on MT; occasional remarks on other textual witnesses merely pay lip-service to the notion that other texts exist. Many critical scholars mainly practise exegesis on MT. I have given examples from Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, Eissfeldt's

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11 See Tov, 'The Place of the Masoretic Text'.

Einleitung, the commentaries of Gunkel, Dahood, Noth, Westermann, Milgrom, Levine and so on, showing that important remarks and theories by these scholars were based on MT only, although all of them are aware of the LXX.

Since the focus on MT does not advance literary analysis and exegesis, one wonders whether the approach behind these editions can ever be changed. We believe it can, as we think that an edition should be devised in which all textual witnesses obtain an equal status. Details from the LXX and the scrolls are currently lost in the mazes of apparatuses, but, if they were to be presented more prominently, they would receive more attention. Under the present circumstances, scholars hold any one of the mentioned editions in their hands, and misleadingly call it 'the Bible'. All scholars know that our editions do not contain *the* Bible, but merely one textual tradition, but we often mislead ourselves into thinking that this tradition is *the* Bible. However, the text of the Bible is found in a wide group of sources, from MT, through the Dead Sea scrolls, to the LXX and the Peshitta. Accordingly, the *Biblia Hebraica* is not a *Biblia Hebraica*, strictly speaking, but a *Biblia Masoretica*. So far there is no *Biblia Hebraica* in existence, unless one considers the details in the apparatus of the *BH* series to stand for the larger entities behind them.

Explanations in an apparatus

In the last half-century, critical editions have developed through constant interaction with one another, much in the direction of the *HUB* system, which has been known since the publication of M. H. Goshen-Gottstein's edition of Isaiah.[12] *BHQ* and the *OHB* have been influenced by the *HUB* in including descriptions of types of readings in the apparatus itself, mainly in order to elucidate the *secondary* status of several Hebrew and versional variants. In *BHQ*, these explanations are even more extensive and diverse than those in the *HUB*, and they are juxtaposed with the evidence, while in the *HUB* most of them appear in an apparatus of notes under the text. The recording of admittedly secondary readings together with their explanations in the apparatus of *BHQ* itself is a novelty in biblical editions, and it may deter readers from using a critical edition rather than attract them to one. It should probably be noted that, in the extensive literature on the nature of editions and apparatuses, I have not found parallels for the listing of such notes in the critical apparatus *itself*. In my view, these notes disturb the flow

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12 M. Goshen-Gottstein (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah. Sample Edition with Introduction* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1965).

in an apparatus that serves as an objective source of information; rather, they should be relegated to a separate apparatus of notes, as in the *HUB*. I am afraid that with the attempt to explain these variants, the main purpose of the apparatus is lost, that of providing information about non-masoretic traditions to *be used in biblical exegesis*. This leads to the next point.

A multi-column edition?

The existing editions of Hebrew scripture present the following options:

1. MT only: all extant non-critical editions of the Hebrew Bible
2. MT + variants (and emendations) in an *apparatus*: the *BH* series and the *HUB*
3. MT + variants and emendations in the *text*: eclectic editions

In the preceding discussion we described the advantages and disadvantages of these editions, and one wonders whether a different type of edition will ever be devised, in which all the evidence will be presented in an egalitarian way in parallel columns. The purpose of a multi-column edition would be to educate users towards an egalitarian approach to the textual witnesses that cannot be achieved with the present tools. Such an edition would present MT, the LXX, the SP and some Qumran texts on an *equal* basis in parallel columns, with notes on the reconstructed parent text of the LXX, and perhaps with English translations of all the data. The presentation of the text in the parallel columns would graphically show the relation between the plus and the minus elements. Only by this means can future generations of scholars be expected to approach the textual data in an unbiased way, without MT forming the basis of their thinking. This equality is needed for literary analysis and exegesis, and less so for textual specialists.

The earliest example of such a multi-column edition, Origen's *Hexapla*, served a similar purpose when enabling a good comparison of the Jewish and Christian Bible. In modern times, scholars have prepared similar editions in areas other than the Hebrew Bible, when the complexity of the original shape of the composition made other alternatives less viable.

However, a close parallel is available also in the area of Hebrew scripture: the *Biblia Qumranica* records the complete texts found in the Judaean desert together with parallel columns containing other textual witnesses.[13] The reader learns more quickly and easily than in all other editions about the

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13 B. Ego, A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger and K. De Troyer (eds.), *Biblia Qumranica. Vol. iiib: Minor Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

differences between the texts from the Judaean desert and the other texts, including in matters of orthography. However, this specific edition provides only a fragmentary picture of the biblical text, as its coverage does not go beyond that of the contents of the scrolls and their counterparts in other witnesses. The use of this edition for the exegesis of the running biblical text is limited, but it does provide a paradigm for other editions.

It may well be the case that there are too many practical problems involved in preparing such an edition of the Hebrew Bible, but a future discussion of this option will help us better to understand all other editions.

PART III

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THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament canon

JOSEPH VERHEYDEN

The story of the formation of the canon of the New Testament is a fascinating one, not least because of the many paradoxes it presents. For one, it is a story with no clear beginning and apparently with no end. Also, it is the story of a struggle to promote unity and install or impose authority, which has caused much dispute. In short, it is the story of a project which had as its aim the arrival at uniformity and consensus, but finally ended in convenience and compromise.

The story has been told many times already and a good deal of it may be felt to be common knowledge,[1] but it is worth retelling it once more from the specific perspective of 'the paradoxical'. I will do this in four sections under the headings 'The canon', 'The facts', 'The factors', and 'The criteria'. I will limit myself to the earliest period, the one that proved foundational and that contains in it the germs of most of the discussions that will be raised later on, including also a good deal of current debate.

The canon

The word 'canon', which one might think to be a keyword, is itself not unproblematic, in part because it is polysemous, and perhaps even more so because the ancient authors failed to come up with a formal definition. Formed on the Semitic root *kane* 'reed', the Greek word *kanon* can refer to a 'measuring rod', as well as, in a broader sense, to what is regarded as the 'norm' or the 'standard' in a particular field or discipline. A further and less

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1 Apart from the monographs listed in the bibliography, see the recent survey by H. Y. Gamble, 'The New Testament Canon. Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 267–94. For an annotated bibliography, including works on the formation of the canon of the Old Testament, see J. A. M. Snoek, 'Canonization and Decanonization. An Annotated Bibliography', in van der Kooij and van der Toorn (eds.), *Canonization and Decanonization*, pp. 435–506.

obvious derivative meaning is that of 'list' or 'catalogue', including, though not primarily, that of 'a list of books'.[2]

For Paul, the first to attest use of the word in Christian literature, it signifies the gospel message, being the rule of Christian life (Gal. 6:16). But its meaning in 2 Cor. 10:13–16 is less clear, since here the word may also bear a geographical connotation ('the region allotted to Paul the missionary'). The same general meaning of 'rule for Christian life and praxis', both on the individual and on the communal level, is attested towards the end of the first century by the author of 1 Clement (1:3, 4:1, 7:2) and somewhat later by the most prominent authors of the late second century – Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.9.4, 1.10.1, 5.20.1; *Demonstratio* 3), Tertullian (*Praescriptio* 13.37) and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 7.15.90) – in a variety of formulations that seem to focus either on the way the essence of the Christian message can be summarised in some sort of credal form ('the rule of truth' or 'the rule of faith'), or rather on the regulating instance behind it ('the rule of the church' or 'the ecclesiastical rule').

The third meaning of the word canon ('a list of books') occurs only late in the story. In his *Decrees on the Synod of Nicaea* (shortly after 350), Athanasius excludes the Shepherd of Hermas as 'not belonging to the canon', while labelling the list of received books as 'canonical' (*kanonizomena*) in his famous Easter Letter of 367 (*Ep.* 39). A few years earlier the Council of Laodicea (363) had distinguished between 'uncanonical' (*akanonista*) and 'canonical' (*kanonista*) books. There is a clear relationship between 'canon' and normativity, but it remains open to debate how far it ever was meant exclusively in this sense. The issue has sometimes been presented as an alternative between 'a list of authoritative books' and 'an authoritative list of books', but this may not be the most appropriate way of looking at it.

Some books found their place on the list because they were already regarded as 'normative'. This is above all true for the Gospels and for some of the letters of Paul. Others were disputed for a very long time, but gained normativity because they made it into the canon. Moreover, normativity may be in itself too vague a concept to settle the issue. In these early years a number of books found themselves at times in and then again out of 'the canon'. 'Normativity' is not co-extensive with 'orthodox', or 'with 'useful' or 'accepted'. Some books have been formally excluded from the canon, while explicitly being praised for their 'usefulness' (the judgement of the Muratorian Fragment on

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2 See Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 11–18; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 289–93. Cf. also J. Z. Smith, 'Canons, Catalogues, and Classics', in van der Kooij and van der Toorn (eds.), *Canonization and Decanonization*, pp. 295–311.

the Shepherd). Finally, the story of the formation of the canon shows us that it actually consists in a series of stories of the formation of 'a canon' and also that it is in a large part the story of 'the formation', rather than 'the fixation', of such lists.

The facts

Sources

The ancient church has not itself produced a history of the formation of the canon. Such a history has to be put together from a variety of materials. Fragmentary elements of this story can be found in the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea, who has a special interest in the issue, but even he does not offer his readers a full survey. Among our sources are several of the most prominent theologians of this early period, both 'orthodox' and less 'orthodox' ones, but some valuable information can also be found in the decrees of local councils and even in quite obscure tractates, such as a writing opposing playing dice (*De aleatoribus*). The formation of the canon has thus been a matter of individuals treating specific aspects or promoting their personal opinion, or that of their community or church, and of more formal decisions by the (local) church. The issue has been treated in works against heretics (by Irenaeus and Tertullian), in scholarly works on the history of the church (Eusebius), in official documents of the church (councils) or of a member of its hierarchy (Athanasius' Easter Letter) and in private correspondence (Amphilochius of Iconium). Consequently, it has been dealt with in more or less polemical and argumentative ways and with more or less authoritative status, but hardly ever has it been the object of a separate treatment, except for a few instances and then mostly in the form of an (annotated) list of books.

Selection

Often these lists of canonical or accepted books are presented by the authors, explicitly or not, as the result of some sort of selection from a larger number of books. Not unfrequently, though this is by no means always so, these texts also contain some indication of what criteria may have played a role in the selection, but hardly ever have these been systematised.

Model

Since we do not possess a full account of the formation of the canon in the first centuries, its story is basically a modern construct and in assessing the

facts and the evidence much depends on which kind of history one wants to reconstruct. The story can be told as one of a continuing effort to achieve an ever more perfect unity and consent, where there is no place any longer for a dissenting voice. It can be told as the (perfect) illustration of history ruled by the mighty hand of a transcendent power, in which contingency has no role. It can be told as the story of the church aspiring at unity; or rather more chaotically, as the sum of many individual stories and plot lines that somehow have come together at the end. The evidence favours the more difficult view that what we have here is a series of attempts, involving various players, criteria and factors, time and again to settle an issue that is itself not clearly and also not uniformly defined. No doubt, there is progress in the process and in the story, but also a good deal of repetition and variation, and even on occasion regression. It is this mixture and complexity that is perhaps its most characteristic feature.

The story

In this section I will briefly present and assess some of the more important facts and characters of the story. For reasons that will become clear in reading the story, I will do this by combining into one a chronological, thematic and geographical approach.

Citing Jewish scripture and Christian writings

At the outset there is not canon but scripture, and not Christian but Jewish scripture. Christian authors began by citing works of Jewish origin, and by citing these as 'scripture', in other words as authoritative documents. This does not mean that the first Christian authors would have been familiar with the concept of a canon from the very beginning – the Jewish canon was still in the making[3] – but it illustrates that they did not just rely on oral tradition. It is the written word they were interested in.

Citations of Christian writings by authors of the second and third generation are the first evidence of the reception of these writings beyond their use in the liturgical sphere. These citations offer a distinctive but only an indirect type of evidence for the appreciation of Christian documents in these early years, and one, moreover, that for several reasons is most difficult to assess and to use. It is not only a matter of identifying the citation (is one citing

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3 On the formation of the canon of the Old Testament, see the various essays in van der Kooij and van der Toorn (eds.), *Canonization and Decanonization*; and Auwers and de Jonge, *The Biblical Canons*; cf. also especially McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 73–240.

Matthew or Luke?), but even more so of ascertaining that it is indeed a quote from a book, and not just an echo of oral tradition. In addition, it is necessary to establish the value that is given to these citations, and accordingly to the books from which they are taken. Citations are not always formally identified as such. Some should be labelled paraphrastic at best. And they are used in many different ways, some building the key of a theological argument, while others rather only seem to reflect the erudition of the author, or his rhetorical skills, or simply his fondness for embellishing his text in this way. All this has serious consequences for evaluating the status a book may have had for a later author, not to mention the question of what to make of the fact that some of our 'canonical' books are not mentioned at all by any author in these early years.

The Gospels

The formation of the canon of the Gospels[4] took only a relatively short time and was basically settled by the end of the second century, but the scanty evidence that has been preserved about it shows that it was quite a turbulent history.[5] The few fragments of the work of Papias of Hierapolis that have come to us, mainly through Eusebius of Caesarea (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4 and 3.39.14–15), are not easy to interpret, but they show, first, that this author knew at least two written Gospels (Matthew and Mark); second, that he claims to have valuable information on their origin and purpose; and third, that Papias nevertheless decidedly favours eyewitness account over written record: 'For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice.'[6]

Justin Martyr bears witness to the fact the Gospels had received a far more prominent status at about the middle of the second century.[7] He regards them as apostolic in origin, speaking of the 'memoirs' or 'reminiscences' of the apostles (*apomnemoneumata*; see his *1 Apol.* 66.3 and frequently in the *Dialogue with Trypho*), and adding that they are commonly read in services together with the 'compilations of the prophets' (*1 Apol.* 67.3). Unfortunately,

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4 Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 24–35; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 95–8.
5 Particularly difficult to assess, because of the lack of clear evidence, is the reception of Christian writings in the earliest decades of the second century. See Gregory and Tuckett, *The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*.
6 On the importance and impact of oral versus written tradition in the early church and its implications for the formation of the canon, see McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 246–50.
7 Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 143–8; G. N. Stanton, 'Jesus Traditions and Gospels in Justin Martyr and Irenaeus', in Auwers and de Jonge, *The Biblical Canons*, pp. 354–66; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 285–9.

Justin does not tell us whether that applies to all four of our canonical Gospels, and only to these. It remains debated whether he knew John and whether he did directly quote from the Gospels, or from a gospel harmony. And he was in any case also familiar with other traditions as well.

As a matter of fact, it was precisely the multiplicity of the gospels and of the 'voices' that seemed to pose a major problem. Two ways were open. Marcion, a native of Pontus who had established himself in Rome, went for the more radical option and kept to only one gospel, that of Luke. It was a logical decision when taking into account that this could be considered as the 'Pauline Gospel'. Paul was the second pillar of Marcion's New Testament and indeed of his Bible as a whole, since he had also done away with Jewish scripture, which for him represented an old and now foregone covenant. A variant form of this predilection for only one gospel is found in Gnostic circles that strongly, and maybe exclusively, favoured the Gospel of John, as is witnessed by the commentaries of Ptolemaeus and of Heracleon, and again in Montanism which heavily relied on the fourth Gospel in legitimating its founder as the incarnation of John's long-expected Paraclete. A different and rather more complicated path was taken by Justin's disciple Tatian, who used our four canonical gospels, and maybe also a fifth one, to concoct one new composition, which he called the *Diatessaron*, literally, 'that out of four', a project that was not without danger, because it completely disregarded the identity and literary structure of each of the individual gospels, but proved to be far more successful than Marcion's.

Irenaeus of Lyon put an end to all this when pronouncing that there are four, and only four, gospels (*Haer.* 3.11.8–9).[8] The passage is remarkable in more than one way. No other ancient author has offered such an extensive, and one should add strange, argumentation for including a book in the canon, an argumentation that consists of a mixture of scriptural evidence and observation of nature. At first some continued to have doubts about the Gospel of John because of its popularity in 'heterodox' circles.[9] But Irenaeus' position, which in its opening words sounds almost like an official decree ('It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are') and ends with some sort of anathema (those who do not accept this 'are vain, unlearned and also audacious'), has never really been challenged in

8 Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 153–6; Stanton, 'Jesus traditions', pp. 366–9; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 289–301.
9 On the reception history of John, see Hill, *Johannine Corpus* (the criticism of Gaius in Rome may have been overstated by his opponent Hippolytus).

mainstream circles. But then again, it did not prevent others from continuing to compose other gospels, some of them of a quite different genre.

Paul's letters

The story of the collection of Paul's letters[10] is quite different. Here one may detect a double paradox in the fact that such a disproportionately large place was given in the canon to one who was not even an apostle of the first hour, and moreover, that texts which by their literary genre were meant to address and serve a local community, or even an individual, nevertheless were readily granted a status that by far exceeded their original purpose.

The earliest stages of the reception of Paul's letters are clouded in darkness and whatever hypothesis is formulated in this respect must of necessity remain speculative. We simply do not have any good evidence. The evidence that can possibly be gained from the letters is inconclusive. That one or another letter may have been lost (1 Cor. 5:9) proves little or nothing for or against the way Paul's letters were dealt with in general. Paul himself might well have wished his letters to be circulated, though the only hard evidence for it comes from the deutero-Pauline letter to the Colossians.[11] And one can imagine the Thessalonians to have good reason to spread his message to them (1 Thess. 1:7–8, 4:10), but what about the Galatians or the Corinthians? The book of Acts may have given a boost to his character, although it never states that Paul wrote letters.

So whether one favours the idea that this process of (partially) collecting Paul's correspondence had already begun at a very early date, maybe even during his lifetime as some have argued, or on the contrary followed only towards the end of the first century, on the initiative of an admirer or of some group of 'Paulinists', and out of reverence for their author or because these letters contained valuable material to use against opponents, as others have thought, we can only observe that by the time our story really can begin – and that is with Marcion – there existed, in Rome at least, a collection of no less than ten letters, which in all probability did not originate with Marcion. Still missing are the Pastorals and Hebrews, the latter possibly for dogmatic reasons as will be the case later on in the West, the former maybe because

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10 Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 35–46; A. Lindemann, 'Die Sammlung der Paulusbriefe im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert', in Auwers and de Jonge, *The Biblical Canons*, pp. 321–51; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 41–7 and 98–100.

11 All this makes it hard to accept Trobisch's hypothesis and reconstruction of how Paul himself in redacting his own letters unintentionally ('ohne es zu wissen') contributed to the creation of a *corpus Paulinum*; cf. Lindemann, 'Sammlung der Paulusbriefe', pp. 328–32.

Marcion had rejected them as Tertullian claimed. At the turn of the second and third century, however, the author of the Muratorian Fragment lists the Pastorals as part of Paul's correspondence, together with the letter to Philemon. They constitute a second category of letters, those to individuals, but are clearly regarded as authentic. There is no reason to assume the Pastorals were specifically forged to save Paul from the 'heretics'.

Paul has been attacked in particular by those who subsequently came to be known as Jewish Christians, but his letters continued to be of genuine importance to significant ecclesiastical figures ranging from Clement of Rome to Clement of Alexandria. Evidence of ongoing and widespread use of the Pauline corpus, and this in spite of the fact that certain parts in the correspondence had only a limited usefulness and in spite of the obvious difficulty some encountered in reading the letters (see 2 Pet. 3:15–16), is proof that there was no need to revive interest in Paul among the orthodox.

This does not mean that there were no problems whatsoever with the status to be given to Paul's correspondence. This is reflected in the way his letters are arranged, as well as in some explicit comments. The order held by Marcion (as cited by Tertullian in *Adv. Marcionem* 5) may reflect an attempt at a chronological arrangement (Gal., 1–2 Cor., Rom., 1–2 Thess., Eph., which Marcion called 'Laodiceans', Col., Phil., Philem.). Variant arrangements seem to have been based roughly on the length of the letters, giving an order of either 1–2 Cor., Rom., Eph., 1–2 Thess., Gal., Phil., Col. (Philem.); or Rom., 1–2 Cor., Eph., Gal., Phil., Col., 1–2 Thess. (Philem.), with 1–2 Cor. and Thess. apparently taken as separate letters. The former of these may have been modelled on the idea that Paul wrote letters to seven churches, a clear sign of their universal aim and intent, as the author of the Muratorian Fragment explains when comparing Paul with the letters mentioned in Rev. 2–3 (lines 48–50). The argument is remarkable and would hardly have been compelling in the East, where the status of Rev. as a canonical text remained disputed for a very long time. A more direct and forceful argument that includes the letters to individuals was formulated by Tertullian: 'What significance have the titles? What he says to one, he says to all' (*Adv. Marcionem* 5.17).[12] The evidence from the second century shows that, all in all, neither the literary genre, nor the particular character of some parts of the letters really posed much of a problem

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12 The Muratorian Fragment also shows that the variation in the order of the letters may not have been much of an issue, or at least that this kind of argument was open to various interpretations, for first the author sets them out as Cor.–Gal.–Rom., but then gives the full list in the unusual order Cor.–Eph.–Phil.–Col.–Gal.–Thess.–Rom., for which no rationale is given. On Tertullian, see Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 157–60.

for accepting a body of Pauline correspondence as authoritative. Somewhat more problems were encountered in delineating the extent of this body, but that was to be definitely decided upon only much later, at least in the West.

Other writings

The ease with which (most of) Paul's letters were received stands in contrast with the difficulties there have been in introducing the letters by other foundational figures of Christianity. Only for two of the seven Catholic Epistles – 1 Peter and 1 John – is there good evidence that they were used, though sparingly, early on in the second century (Papias, according to Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17, knows both; Polycarp, according to Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.14.9, only 1 Peter). Maybe these letters were never circulated as widely as were Paul's, and, of course, one at least was of a more recent date (2 Peter), three were very brief indeed (2–3 John, Jude), and two looked almost like copies of the same text (2 Peter 2:1–18 and Jude 4–16). But all this only adds to the paradox that these letters ultimately were accepted in the canon, for some of these features apply to several of the letters that now figure in Paul's correspondence. By the end of the second century the state of affairs was still rather chaotic, Clement of Alexandria attesting knowledge of 1 Peter, Jude, 1 John, and probably one other letter of John (*Strom.* 2.15.66), the Muratorian Fragment listing two epistles of John but strangely ignoring 1 Peter, at least three authors showing acquaintance with Jude (Muratorian Fragment, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria) and perhaps most remarkably, the evidence for James being so scanty that it still remains debated whether this letter was known at all.[13]

The Acts of the Apostles and Revelation are both attested and positively received in wider circles of the mainstream church by the end of the second century. Of these two, Acts seems to have had the most difficulties being accepted.[14] Contrary to what one might expect, the link with the Gospel of Luke in Acts 1:1–2 counted for little. Justin seems to know the work (*1 Apol.* 50.12), but Irenaeus still had to 'defend' its authority on the basis that it was authored by a companion of Paul and, more pragmatically, by calling upon it to demonstrate the essential unity of the apostolic message, mission and preaching. Somewhat later, the Muratorian Fragment puts great emphasis on Acts being an eyewitness account and 'the' account of the teaching of

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13 On the Catholic Epistles in general, see von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 100–3.
14 Cf. J. Schröter, 'Die Apostelgeschichte und die Entstehung des neutestamentlichen Kanons. Beobachtungen zur Kanonisierung der Apostelgeschichte und ihrer Bedeutung als kanonischer Schrift', in Auwers and de Jonge, *The Biblical Canons*, pp. 395–429; and on the reception history of Acts in the second century, see Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts*, pp. 299–349.

the apostles (lines 34–9). Clearly, the circulation of other acts of individual apostles posed a greater threat to the authority of Acts than the existence of 'extra-canonical' gospels ever did to the four canonical gospels.

Revelation, on the contrary, did not need this sort of legitimation. Authority was not the issue. The Muratorian Fragment needed no special argument to include it in its list and could even build upon its authority in defence of Paul. Clement of Alexandria used it without further ado, and according to Eusebius it was even the subject of a commentary by Melito of Sardis, an honour no other New Testament writing received in this early period. But this was not the end of the story, as will be shown below.

On the other hand, dispute or uncertainty about its authority must have been a major reason why the Epistle to the Hebrews was largely ignored throughout the second century, but it cannot have been the sole reason. Clement of Alexandria's approval will have been a crucial factor in contributing to its recognition as a genuine Pauline letter in the East, ready to take its place in the earliest codex containing a collection of Paul's letters (Papyrus 46, early third century). No such support was available in the West. Clement of Rome knew the letter, but he did not identify it (1 Clement 36.1–2). Tertullian ascribed it to Barnabas, which was not strong enough a claim for a letter that, moreover, apparently also posed a problem by its rigorism with regard to repentance (Heb. 6:4). But even this cannot explain everything, and especially not its absence from the Muratorian Fragment, which does not refrain from also indicating which writings it excludes from its list, unless its silence should be taken as a telling sign that no decision had yet been reached.

A few other writings came close to being accepted in the canon.[15] Eusebius says Clement of Alexandria knew and valued the Apocalypse of Peter (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1) and his influence is seen long after in the East. The Muratorian Fragment, on the other hand, while favourable about the work, nevertheless also points out that it is disputed, and this view became the dominant one in the West. Irenaeus' defence of the apostolicity of *1 Clement* (*Haer.* 3.3.3) did not bring it into the canon, and neither did Clement's in the East (*Strom.* 4.17). But much later Eusebius offers proof that one kept reading it in church all the time (*Hist. eccl.* 3.16). In the Codex Alexandrinus it was transmitted along with the canonical books. Very similar was the fate of the Epistle of Barnabas, at least in the East.[16] But closest of all came the Shepherd of Hermas, which was

15 Von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 103–10.
16 See Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.6, 7.5; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1; Codex Sinaiticus, which also contains part of Hermas; and fourth-century canon lists. Didymus the Blind even refers to it in apparently the same way as he cites from Paul's letters (*Zech.* 259.21–4).

called scripture by Irenaeus, the young Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, and was highly respected by the Muratorian Fragment, which nevertheless relegated it to a separate and ambivalently defined category of writings that can be read in private but not publicly in church, because it is too recent (lines 73–80).

Maybe a double conclusion can be drawn from the above. It is evident that one cannot speak of a concerted effort all through the second century to establish a formal canon of authoritative books, let alone a firm concern to create one canon for the whole of Christianity. But one must nevertheless also acknowledge, quite paradoxically, that by the end of that century much of the canon is already in its place, if one takes into account the evidence of the major authors of that period, and especialy also of the Muratorian Fragment.[17]

After the second century

Let us turn to the period from the third to the early fifth century. One will note that we are rather better informed about this later period, when we are in a sense only observing the 'cleaning up' and finalising of the list, than we are about the earlier one, when all the crucial decisions appear to have been made. But it should be added that, even though far greater efforts were made in the later period to formalise the canon, no absolute agreement was ever reached. Fortunately, both of these observations also need some nuancing.

As with so many others issues, things were furthered, and decided, in some of the major centres of Christianity. This was already what happened to some degree in the second century. It would be even more the case in the third and fourth. The ways the issue was developed and solved reflect the specific concerns and traditions of the various centres and have contributed in maintaining some of the distinctions. Much of the discussion had to do with Hebrews and Revelation. These two books divided the East and the West, and were also a cause of dissent in the East and in the West. But it was not only about differences of opinion – it seems it was also a matter of differences in style.

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17 The latter is without any doubt the most singular document informing us about the formation of the canon in this early period, because of both its contents and its format (an annotated list of those writings that are to be accepted and of such ones that are not). Attempts to challenge the traditional view on its origin (Rome, *c.* 200), arguing for a fourth-century eastern origin (so Hahneman, *Muratorian Fragment*) have proven to be unfounded; see J. Verheyden, 'The Canon Muratori. A Matter of Dispute', in Auwers and de Jonge, *The Biblical Canons*, pp. 487–556. On the Fragment in general, see Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 191–201; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 73–6; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 369–78.

The most powerful voices were heard in Alexandria, though they were not in harmony with each other. Origen spoke out freely, but he did not bother much about establishing a formal list.[18] His comments were partly summarised by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25.1–14). They show his doubts about 2 Peter and his plea for Revelation, which he proposed to interpret allegorically, and for 1 John, because they were authored by the apostle, but then again also his doubts about 2–3 John, which he knew were not commonly regarded as genuine, as well as his flexible use of that same argument when concluding his discussion on Hebrews, which he himself did accept, with a mere, 'who wrote the epistle, in truth only God knows'. Eusebius did not go so far, however, as also to recall in this context Origen's favourable opinion of several of the Apostolic Fathers, let alone his appeals to extra-canonical gospels that occasionally can be found in his works.

The next generation had more problems with Origen's elegant solution for Revelation. When towards the middle of the third century, his approach came under attack, bishop Dionysius of Alexandria answered by giving in to the critics and bluntly admitted that much in Revelation was incomprehensible to him, while at the same time building a case against its apostolic authorship, so as to render the book virtually worthless as an authoritative source for those who would have wished to indulge in millenarian speculations (see the excerpts cited by Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.25). It would take more than a century for Revelation officially to regain its earlier status in Alexandria, and in fact in the East it never fully recovered from this blow. The episode also illustrates that, when at Alexandria respect for tradition clashed with a sense of pragmatism, and with the imposing figure of its bishop pursuing his centralising policy, it was the first of these components that had to yield. Later on, these very same factors combined smoothly to give Athanasius an opportunity to promote in his Easter Letter of 367 (*Ep.* 39) a list of books he wanted to be accepted and read in the churches all over Egypt, a list that is explicitly declared to be closed by the famous formula 'let no one add to them or take away from them', and that for the New Testament part is identical with our canon.[19]

At about the same time, the Synod of Laodicea (363) declared that 'only the canonical books can be read' (can. 59). This was further explained later on by adding the list of the twenty-six books (Revelation is missing) that can be read in church (can. 60). It is one of the earliest examples, or maybe the earliest one,

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18 Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 135–41; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 80–2; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 305–8.
19 Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 210–12; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 89–94; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 379–81.

of such a document, a genre that somewhat later is also attested for the West. It did not immediately put an end to all attempts by individuals to draw up their own list, with quite different results, such as that of Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium (d. *c.* 400), whose name is linked with the disputes on Hebrews (mistakenly rejected in his opinion) and Revelation (the majority regards it as non-canonical), and on the Catholic Epistles (seven, or only three: James, 1 Peter, 1 John); or that of Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 389), implicitly excluding Revelation ('You have all. If there is any besides these, it is not among the genuine'); or that of the author of the *Apostolic Canons* (*c.* 380), who equally omits Revelation but curiously includes 1–2 Clement and even, with some restrictions (not to be read in public), the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which may have been his own composition and would thus provide a strange example of 'self-canonisation'.

But no doubt the most remarkable and important development of this period is the growing awareness that the canon should be closed. Athanasius, the bishops gathering at Laodicea, and also Gregory all said this most emphatically. The same view had been formulated already somewhat earlier by Cyril of Jerusalem (*c.* 350), who concluded his list of twenty-six (Revelation is omitted) books with the following comment, 'But let all the rest be put aside in a secondary rank. And whatever books are not read in the churches, do not read these even by yourself' (*Catechetical Lectures* 4.36).

Cyril's position differs significantly from the one that was still held by Eusebius of Caesarea a few decades earlier.[20] Eusebius dealt with the issue of the canon at length in his *Church History*, not only by quoting relevant excerpts of various authors, from Irenaeus to Dionysius of Alexandria, but also by actually studying the topic for itself, speaking not so much as a bishop but as a scholar (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1–7). One indication for this is his interest in listing not just the books that are accepted but also various other categories. Another indication is the fact that he allows for a degree of uncertainty in a few instances. The number of categories Eusebius has divided the material into remains debated. Formally, he holds to a fourfold division into 'acknowledged' or 'recognised' (*homologoumena*), 'disputed' (*antilegomena*), 'spurious' (*notha*) and 'heretical books'. However, he does not clearly distinguish between *antilegomena* and *notha* (in general it would seem that the former of these two contain works that are accepted on a much wider scale) and finally just takes

20 Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 201–6; E. R. Kalin, 'The New Testament Canon of Eusebius', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 386–404; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 84–6; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 308–10.

them together under the one heading of *antilegomena*, but that may after all just have been his purpose, as I will explain below. There is no reason to think that the division he proposes would specifically reflect the state of affairs in Caesarea. It rather looks as if Eusebius is after some sort of compromise, based on the evidence of earlier generations as this was available to him, that would be acceptable in the East and in the West. That would explain why Eusebius does not explicitly mention Hebrews, but keeps to a general reference to Paul's correspondence ('the Epistles of Paul'), and why he has Revelation listed twice, once among the 'recognised' and once among the 'spurious', each time with the comment, 'if it seems desirable', which seems to allow for different positions on the basis of local tradition and custom. It would also explain why he even observes that some 'like' the Gospel of the Hebrews, which may have been not irrelevant in the broader Syro-Palestinian context of his own ministry. It would further explain why he creates this whole middle class of 'disputed' books, in which he combines the disputed Catholic Epistles, some of which at least were certainly received in particular churches in the East and in the West, with five or six (with Revelation) other writings that all at some time had been considered in one way or another as authoritative and occasionally had been listed among the 'recognised'.

As for the West, in Rome the story seems to have ended shortly after the Muratorian Fragment was published. Hippolytus (170–235) definitely secured John's Gospel as well as Revelation a place in the canon, against the criticism of Gaius, and also went beyond the Muratorian Fragment by formally relegating Hebrews to a secondary rank in the company of James, Jude and 2 Peter, and Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and, as a newcomer, the Acts of Paul.[21]

Northern Africa returns on the scene again only in the second half of the fourth century, but with two initiatives that would prove to be decisive for settling the issue in the West. The first is represented by the so-called Cheltenham canon (*c.* 360). It is not of importance so much for its content as for the fact that this is a formal list.[22] The second initiative is a series of synods

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21 See Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 149–51.

22 The list contains twenty-four books only (based on Rev. 4:10), omitting Hebrews, James and Jude, while twice adding 'una sola' for the letters of Peter and of John ('one only', i.e. 1 Peter and 1 John). Another example of such a list, this one from the sixth century, is found in the codex Claromontanus, a Greek–Latin bilingual copy of the Epistles of Paul that contains (in Latin) a list of Old and New Testament books, the model of which has variously been traced back to the fourth-century East or to North Africa, and that (mistakenly) has only ten letters of Paul (omitting Philippians, 1–2 Thessalonians and Hebrews) and four extra-canonical books that are marked (by a second hand?) by a dash (Barnabas, Hermas, Acts of Paul, Apocalypse of Peter). Cf. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 229–32.

held at Hippo (393) and Carthage (397 and 418) that, in two steps, decided on the reception of Hebrews, granting it Pauline authorship, and fixed the canon of twenty-seven books.

To these centres, possibly one other should be added that is hardly ever mentioned in this regard and has not formally published any list. Several of the major protagonists of the fourth century and early fifth century, such as Athanasius, Jerome and Rufinus, all lived (and met) for a while at Aquileia, and this may well have been instrumental in bridging the gaps between the East and the West.

Unfortunately, no such communication existed in the East, or it did not function sufficiently well to ascertain that a similar kind of consensus could be reached with (eastern) Syriac Christianity, which for a long time would go its own way, keeping to Tatian's *Diatessaron* instead of the four Gospels, remaining in discussion on the Pauline corpus (Hebrews came to be admitted only late, Philemon posed even more problems, and 3 Corinthians was a serious candidate for some time and would keep its status of canonical book in the Armenian church), and not initially receiving any of the Catholic Epistles (and eventually only three of them) or Revelation.[23]

Conclusion

By way of conclusion four things are worth noting:

1. On the subject of the canon, and this in contrast to doctrinal discussions, the West seems to have made as significant a contribution as the East.
2. By the beginning of the fifth century, East and West had finally met and a consensus had grown in large parts of the Christian world, but paradoxically no complete agreement was ever reached, and indeed never would be, on so crucial an issue as that of defining what constitutes authoritative and normative Christian literature, 'holy scripture'. Churches in the East kept to their own traditions, some, like the Ethiopian, clearly because it was living in isolation. But also in the West, and all through the Middle Ages, individual theologians and scholars begged to differ and would hold and promote 'dissident' views, until the question of the canon became a much more crucial issue in the sixteenth century than it had ever been before.
3. The paradox can only be explained by raising another issue. The imposing figures of Athanasius in the East, of Augustine in the West and of Jerome in both, contributed significantly towards this result, as did various other

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23 On the history of the canon in the eastern churches, see Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 218–28; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 134–8.

initiatives, from Bible production and synodal decisions, to more modest ones of drawing up lists, but the ancient church hardly ever seems to have been thinking about and dealing with this issue in truly 'universal' categories.

4. Finally, and maybe most paradoxically of all, the canon question never became a dividing issue in the ancient church in the way Christology was. It seems no one really was prepared to push it that far, in part perhaps because the areas on which there was disagreement were limited after all, but certainly also because the canon may have been less important as a boundary marker and as a means of building an identity for individual churches than we may think.

So much for the facts. The survey also already points to the factors that were involved in the formation of the canon.

The factors

Several factors have played a role in shaping the canon, but what one might spontaneously assume would have been a crucial factor apparently was not so important. The issue was not simply settled on one decisive moment and cannot be reduced to a mere struggle for power and authority. Scholars have variously assessed the impact of some of these factors. What has emerged from these efforts is above all that it seems impossible to establish a clear ranking and that maybe some more nuancing is needed in assessing how these factors have exercised their influence.

The (one) factor that perhaps contributed the most in preparing for a canon of Christian writings was a most natural one: the fact that various communities all read a certain number of texts, and did so recurrently, along with passages from books that were taken over from Judaism. However, there is no clear and early evidence that the 'canon' of Jewish writings, the history of which is itself a matter for debate, directly served as the model for the Christian canon. The Muratorian Fragment contains no indications that it ever included a canon of all biblical books. Irenaeus compares the fourfold Gospel to all kinds of things, but not to a basic list of Jewish writings. And no one tried to put the Pauline corpus side by side with a set of texts from the Jewish scriptures. Common usage of Jewish and Christian texts by an ever growing number of local churches – not simple imitation of an already existing model – was what gave some of these Christian texts an aura of authority that later on singled them out for special consideration. Hence it can be said that the first move

towards authority and normativity grew out of the daily praxis of the local churches.

But this is not the whole story. Several of the ancient sources come to speak of which sets of texts are accepted in the church while criticising similar lists that are in use among their opponents, or at least they show some concern towards distinguishing the sets they accept from those of others. Tertullian offers perhaps the best example when discussing at length Marcion's 'canon' of Paul's letters, but the Muratorian Fragment also takes care to warn the reader against certain other corpora of texts that circulate among the Gnostics, or the Marcionites, or the Montanists (lines 81–5). These three movements have traditionally been regarded as prime factors in pushing the church for clarity and uniformity about the writings it wants to promote as authoritative. However, scholars continue to differ about which of these three was the most influential, or feared as the most threatening, and about how this influence is to be assessed – utterly negatively, the canon of the church in all respects being the counterpart to that of the heretics, or perhaps also somewhat more positively, the church somehow modelling its canon after that of its opponents.[24] But they also differ regarding whether the 'heretics' factor really was so important after all.

Of the three groups, Marcion has often been said to have been the most prominent factor, since he was the most important character, but that has also been contested with some good reason.[25] Marcion may be our oldest witness for this concern about the authority of Christian books, but he is not for that reason the most influential one. The evidence that is cited in this respect is now thought by many most probably to be erroneous, or circumstantial at best. The so-called Marcionite prologues to the letters of Paul and the 'anti-Marcionite' prologues to the Gospels are now mostly considered to be either not distinctively Marcionite or too late. Marcion probably had few other options than to focus on the Gospels and on Paul, and the same was true for the church, since there was not much else to be read in the church. That the latter wanted to outplay the 'heretic' both in its veneration for the

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24 On the canon as a means of 'identity building', see R. Morgan, 'The New Testament Canon of Scripture and Christian Identity', in Barton and Wolter (eds.), *Die Einheit der Schrift*, pp. 151–93.
25 See Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 59–62; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 90–9; E. Ferguson, 'Factors Leading to the Selection and Closure of the New Testament Canon. A Survey of Some Recent Studies', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 295–320, at pp. 309–12; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 48–54; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 324–33. Cautioning against overstating the role of Marcion are, in particular, Gamble, 'Marcion and the "Canon"', pp. 195–213, and J. Barton, 'Marcion Revisited', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 341–54.

apostle and by expanding upon 'his' canon is not documented in any reliable
way in the sources. There is no evidence that the church or individual authors
formulated and assembled their canon (exclusively) in direct contradistinction
to Marcion's. The Muratorian Fragment seems to be concerned above all
about a certain book of Psalms that was composed 'for Marcion'. It is possible
that Marcion's initiative just speeded up a process that was already developing
in the main church, but again the sources offer no way for demonstrating this.
If there is perhaps one aspect in which Marcion may have been of some
influence – clearly only in a negative way – it would be the tenacity with
which the church has kept to the four-Gospel canon over against Marcion's
radical choice for the one gospel, but even here as elsewhere it is hard to cite
proof for this. All in all then, there is next to nothing to warrant Harnack's
famous dictum, 'The New Testament is an anti-Marcionite creation on a
Marcionite basis.'

More or less the same conclusion also holds with regard to Gnosticism and
Montanism. The canon is thought of as the weapon with which the church
went out to face Gnosticism with its appeal to a series of as yet unheard-of
'non-canonical' writings.[26] The church would have countered this claim in
a double way: by fixing the number of accountable books, and by closing
the option of introducing in the theological debate ever new books with new
revelations and unknown stories, traditions and sayings of and about the Lord.
Irenaeus offers proof that some at least in the church viewed the struggle in
this way. But the canon would have offered only a partial argument at best,
for the Gnostics did build as much on the same writings as their opponents in
the main church. The issue of countering Gnosticism was not solved merely
by limiting the number of books that could be accepted, it was as much
a battle over method in interpreting the very same books. On the positive
side, what the confrontation with Gnosticism may above all have brought
about in the Great Church is an awareness of the importance of cherishing
certain traditions in dealing with those books that were gradually coming to
be accepted in all the communities.

Montanism has been said to have posed a threat to the church's authority,
not just because of the uncontrollable character of the kind of 'prophetically
inspired' teaching it promoted, but much more because it threatened the

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26 Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 62–3; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp.
75–90; Ferguson, 'Factors', pp. 312–15; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 56–9; Ph. Perkins,
'Gnosticism and the Christian Bible', pp. 355–71; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 333–8.

authority of the past itself and of those who claimed to be its representatives.[27] The problem with this interpretation is, again, that it is not supported by the evidence. The church in any case did not attempt to close the canon in the wake of the Montanist crisis, or if it tried, it did not really succeed. The debate was rather more about the pretensions of an individual, and if in the end the crisis effectively contributed to the decline of the status of prophets and prophetism in the church, it was not fought in terms of respect for traditionally sanctioned books against novelty, an argument that would probably not have been very efficient anyway.

As with all controversies, the anti-heretical debates of the second century surely helped to focus on certain issues and to describe and formulate them in a better and more nuanced way than had been done before. One of these issues is that of the authority of the books that were read in church. The heretics had been sparring partners in this process, but they probably did not direct or guide it in so strong a way as many have been accustomed to thinking. This appears to be an instance when the old adage 'cum hoc ergo propter hoc' does not apply in its fullness.

A factor that in the past may have been neglected too much in favour of that of the heretics is the impact individual authors have had on the process. This is in any case better documented and indeed also proves to have been an effective factor in a good number of instances. Irenaeus' plea for the four-Gospel canon was never seriously questioned again later on, even if it was some time before it was formally accepted in Syria. What Origen had said about which books should and could be read in church survived the fate of its author, largely thanks to Eusebius. The impact of the Muratorian Fragment is more difficult to trace, but its presumed Roman origin may have brought it some influence, in Rome and probably also elsewhere in Italy. Jerome and Augustine played an active role, the one in his almost 'usual' capacity of bridging the East and the West, the other in helping to finalise the process in northern Africa. Athanasius likewise combined personal authority with prominence to decide the issue in Egypt and for the Greek part of the eastern Mediterranean. These personal efforts by individuals are no doubt by far the most important factor to have helped shape both the concept of a canon and its contents.

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27 Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 63–5; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 99–106; Ferguson, 'Factors', pp. 315–16; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 54–5; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 338–41.

Other factors that are sometimes cited have had only a secondary or subsidiary effect.[28] Official synodal initiatives are late and basically limited to technical matters and to confirming the consensus that had been growing. The persecutions of Christians and of Christian communities no doubt sharpened the sense of respect for 'the holy books', but they did not 'create' the canon. Likewise, the replacement of the scroll by the codex opened possibilities for collecting larger corpora of texts into one volume, and even for bringing together 'all the books' of the Bible into one manuscript, as in the Codex Alexandrinus or the Codex Sinaiticus, but these codices were not tailored to the size of the canon, which could easily have been enlarged by the addition of a couple of books. Yet such manuscripts must have contributed in a most visual way in 'materialising' the canon.

One may then conclude, again paradoxically as was said above, that a matter which obviously went beyond the scope of the local community was above all decided by the daily praxis of all those many anonymous Christians, faithful members of their community, and by the efforts and initiatives of individual theologians, some but not all of them members of the ecclesial hierarchy.

The criteria

As with the factors, what is surprising, and even paradoxical, is not so much that several criteria have played a role in defining which books should belong to the canon, but rather that the ancient church does not seem to have been overly concerned about systematising and reflecting on these criteria. The Muratorian Fragment does not contain a formal treatment of the issue, nor a ranking of which criteria should primarily or preferably be taken into account. Nor is Eusebius much interested in formulating in some detail the principles that rule his lists. This does not mean that these authors did not have any criteria at all and never cited any, but the way in which these have been formalised in scholarly literature might give the wrong impression that an equally formal treatment was already developed and commonly known in the ancient church. As a consequence, the criteria scholars like to identify were used in a much more flexible way than one might expect, and one sometimes wonders why a particular criterion was 'forced upon' the evidence. To this should be added a second paradox: the one criterion that later on would

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28 Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 65–7; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 106–12; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 310–14.

come to subsume and dominate all the others, the criterion of inspiration, was never used or applied to defend the canonicity of a writing, and some of the few writings that explicitly singled out this feature did not make it into the canon (see Hermas and the Apocalypse of Peter).[29] Inspiration probably never developed into a criterion of its own because it was not limited to writings and, if it was of some use in separating 'heretical' from 'orthodox' works, it could hardly be used for separating orthodox writings that could or could not be included in the canon.

Four criteria are commonly cited in the literature and are indeed also attested to various degrees in the sources.[30] The one that is often listed first, the criterion of apostolicity, could easily be misunderstood. The church naturally had an interest in the apostolic authorship of some of the writings it would receive in the canon, but this criterion could also be applied in a less strict way, so as to include Mark and Luke by making these authors the associates or spokesmen of apostles, as if there were no other criterion by which these Gospels could have been 'saved' for the canon.[31] The Muratorian Fragment tells a story of John who is being assigned by the other apostles to write down the kerygma. Apostolicity was not just a matter of individuals, it could be 'mediated' or exercised collectively. But in the end the criterion was not all-decisive. Some writings that could claim good credentials, circulating under the names of Peter and James, seem to have had difficulties getting accepted. Others were accepted, even though the apostolic authorship was never firmly established or sanctioned (Hebrews). And still others had all the appearances of being the work of a prominent apostle, yet did not make it into the canon (Gospel of Peter). Apostolicity then never was the sole criterion – as indeed none of the others were – and it bore with it a quite remarkable sense of flexibility.

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29 For several authors (among them Origen), Jewish scripture was regarded as being inspired, and there is evidence from the second century that some Christian writings received a similar status (see Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum* 2.22, 3.13–14). Cf. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 71–2; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 117–19 and 254–7; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 416–20.

30 On this issue in general, see Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, pp. 68–71; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 251–4; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*, pp. 110–16; M. Ludlow, '"Criteria of canonicity" and the Early Church', in Barton and Wolter (eds.), *Die Einheit der Schrift*, pp. 69–93; McDonald, 'Identifying Scripture and Canon in the Early Church. The Criteria Question', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 416–39; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, pp. 405–16.

31 On the issue of pseudonymity in relation to the authorship of the canon, see K. D. Clarke, 'The Problem of Pseudonymity in Biblical Literature and Its Implications for Canon Formation', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 440–68.

The criterion of catholicity was equally important, and equally flexibly applied. Probably very few books, if any, would have met this criterion if taken in its more strict formulation of what is both of importance for the whole of the church and also intended in this way by the author. The problem obviously is not with the first part of the definition, though one can imagine that some may have thought that certain parts of Paul's letters were hardly directly of interest to them or to their community. As for the second part, what evidence should one look for to conclude that the evangelists, let alone Paul, really intended their work to be read by the 'universal' church, whatever connotation such a concept could possibly have had in the middle and later decades of the first century?[32] It has been said that the criterion intends to exclude more esoteric or even private material from the canon, but in this it certainly did not succeed in each and every respect. Rather, the criterion of catholicity, not unlike that of apostolicity, seems to have been used in a flexible way. Writings that originally might not have been intended for a larger audience and that do contain passages that, if not utterly esoteric, were in any case not readily transparent, as some sections of the fourth Gospel certainly are, could after all be felt to meet the criterion. With Philemon, even what looks like some kind of private letter found a home in the canon. Catholicity was not a decisive criterion. The fate of Revelation shows that even writings which had finally come to be accepted by the larger part of the church could still be objected to locally. And as with apostolicity, this criterion too could be used inclusively and exclusively, as a way of both accepting and rejecting certain writings, but it was apparently used so only on the level of the writings as a whole, not to decide on particular sections within a writing.

More diffuse even than the two previous criteria, but of foremost importance for giving us a glimpse of how a sense of tradition was rapidly developing in the early church, is the criterion of orthodoxy, whether or not a writing is in agreement with the 'rule of faith' ('regula fidei') of the church.[33] The criterion was used selectively, and above all negatively, to exclude certain writings that lacked other obvious credentials. The four Gospels and most of Paul's letters never had to pass this test. It could, of course, easily be argued on chronological grounds that the tradition of the church preceded scripture and hence could function as a point of reference. But the relation between document and tradition was indeed a more complex and more dynamic one,

32 That such may have been the case, at least with the Gospels, has been argued, not without dispute, in a collection of essays edited by Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians*.
33 Cf. H. J. de Jonge, 'The New Testament Canon', in Auwers and de Jonge (eds.), *The Biblical Canons*, pp. 312–19.

for the same documents that were judged to capture this tradition inevitably also contributed to shaping or even modifying it.

Finally, there was the life and praxis of the church, a criterion far less 'theological' than the others, but certainly not the least in importance. What was read and used by the 'universal' church obviously had precedence over the tradition of the local community. And likewise usage in church services and liturgy took precedence over private reading and meditation. A writing might be allowed for private usage, but not permitted to be read out in church, a point made by the author of the Muratorian Fragment in relation to the Shepherd of Hermas. The modest community of Rhossus was also no longer allowed to read its gospel (the Gospel of Peter), which apparently it had been using for some time already, once bishop Serapion found out that this text was not what he read and heard elsewhere in his diocese.

There does not seem to have existed a primary criterion that proved to be decisive in each and every case. Most often two or more criteria could be put forward for or against a book. All these criteria were used in a more or less flexible way, and they all combined a sense of universality and tradition. Taken together, these features apparently made them most useful instruments for the purpose they had to serve.

Conclusion

Two conclusions can be drawn. First, this survey has shown that, if the facts are unfortunately only fragmentarily documented, this is even more the case for the factors and the criteria that played a role in shaping the canon. Second, 'paradox' might seem to be a rather strange way of approaching this subject, but it has proven to be quite an appropriate category to describe what went on within the church as it struggled to create a canon of authoritative and normative books which would regulate its liturgical and spiritual life, define its identity, and function as the source and criterion of much of its theologising.

The New Testament text and versions

DAVID C. PARKER

Introduction

The study of its text is of value to all students of the New Testament for two reasons: it provides an essential prerequisite for all users, namely a reading text selected from among the various ancient forms available; and it presents those various forms as a resource for studying its interpretation and use. These two contributions correspond to two aspects of text critical research: making an edition of the text, and the study of the history of the text's transmission. Each requires a different chronological approach. The first begins with the forms of text available at a late stage in the transmission of the text, and traces them backwards in time towards their origins. The second begins as close to the beginning as possible, and studies the development of the text, accounting for the ways in which readings were changed into new readings, and placing them in their historical context. In the context of this survey, the former approach covers too large a chronology, since the vast majority of the manuscripts date from the Byzantine period (the tenth century is the first from which there are more than a hundred extant manuscripts, while upwards of 2,400 date from the eleventh to the sixteenth century). But a distinction must always be drawn between the age of a manuscript and the age of the text it contains. Although so many manuscripts date from the tenth century onwards, they still provide evidence of ancient readings. It is thus impossible to ignore them, since they contribute to the reconstruction of the text in earlier periods. Interesting and important though the manuscripts are within their own times, our concern is with the first four to five hundred years of transmission. Within this, the most important period is the one about which we know the least, that is the one prior to the fourth century, and especially the second century.

Although these two aspects of textual study provide a general framework, each of the main sections of the New Testament (Gospels, Acts, Catholic Epistles, Paul's letters (together the Apostolos) and Revelation) requires studying

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differently. In fact, apart from the different genres and literary prehistory of the books from which the New Testament is formed, the textual histories of its main collections are different. Indeed, although the collected New Testament is a familiar concept to readers of a modern vernacular Bible, and in many cultures has been so for centuries, so far as the Greek New Testament is concerned, it is exceptional.

Of continuous-text manuscripts of the New Testament written in Greek, only sixty-one contain the entire New Testament. But even this number is inflated, since many of the Byzantine witnesses are actually composite manuscripts, typically with a copy of Revelation written in another hand, either as a separate manuscript then bound in with the rest, or intended in the late Byzantine period as a supplement to the rest of the manuscript. With regard to complete Greek Bibles (those consisting of the Septuagint and the New Testament), there are very few indeed. Of these few, four were superb de luxe codices produced in the fourth and fifth centuries, and appear to represent a phenomenon which was not sustained. The next extant complete Bible in Greek dates from the thirteenth century (MS 218), and there are only three other examples (205, 205[abs], 582). If we look for complete New Testaments, the oldest Greek copy after the fifth century was produced in the late ninth or early tenth century (1424). There are more manuscripts which contain the entire New Testament apart from Revelation – approximately 150, of which some are also composite manuscripts.[1]

Since the vast majority of manuscripts consists of only one of the four parts of the New Testament, it is not surprising that many of those which contain two or more are inconsistent in the character of their text in separate portions. This inconsistency reflects the character of the individual exemplars brought together for the purpose. For example, Codex Alexandrinus, an important fifth-century copy, is less valuable in the Gospels than in other parts of the New Testament. Some books even show variation within a smaller collection. For example, Codex Sinaiticus shows some variation within the Gospel of John, while the Freer Gospels shows a number of such changes throughout the Gospels.[2] The explanation here is more due to the likelihood that, at some point in the line of transmission, a manuscript (either the one we now have

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1 For further details on this and many other points throughout, see Parker, *Introduction*.
2 G. D. Fee, 'Codex Sinaiticus in the Gospel of John. A Contribution to Methodology in Establishing Textual Relationships', *NTS* 15 (1968–9), 23–44, reprinted in Epp and Fee, *Studies*, pp. 221–44; H. A. Sanders, *The New Testament Manuscripts in the Freer Collection. Part 1: The Washington Manuscript of the Four Gospels* (New York: Macmillan, 1912); L.W. Hurtado, *Text–Critical Methodology and the Pre-Caesarean Text. Codex W in the Gospel of Mark*, SD 43 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 86–7.

or one of its antegraphs) was copied from more than one exemplar, probably as a result of damage to one or more of them. A contributory factor may also be the circulation of the Gospels in separate codices, so that a copy of all four might have been made from separate ones from different sources.

It is therefore to be concluded that the text of the New Testament in Greek cannot be treated in an undifferentiated way. It will therefore be appropriate to present each of the four main sections (the Gospels, the Apostolos, the Pauline corpus and Revelation) separately. In fact the Apostolos itself will be treated as two sections, since the practice of treating Acts and the Catholic Epistles as a block begins only in the fourth century (their separation by the Pauline corpus was a Latin innovation). In literary character and early textual history the two are quite different. The examination of these constituent parts of the New Testament will be preceded by certain general observations, a description of the available resources and a discussion of the activities and goals of modern editors and the nature and purpose of editions.

General observations

The tradition, the copies and their survival

The significance of textual criticism for the history of the Bible and the daunting nature of this discipline have never been better expressed than in these words of Günther Zuntz:

> The tradition of The Book is part and parcel of the life of Christianity. It comprises all the manuscripts existing at any given moment throughout the world, with the notes and corrections added to them, the quotations drawn, the versions made from them. You try to visualize the welter of communities small and great everywhere; each of them, and many individual members, have their copies; they use, compare, exchange, copy, and gloss them; and this living process goes on for centuries – a broad stream of living tradition, changing continually and, at any one moment wide and varied beyond imagination. And against this rather overpowering notion of what the tradition really was, you put the comparatively tiny number of old manuscripts and other surviving evidence. Is it surprising that these survivals cannot be brought into a strictly rational relation? On the contrary: it would be surprising if they could. But they are all elements of this broad tradition – you may liken them to pieces of matter carried down by the stream.[3]

3 G. Zuntz, 'The Text of the Epistles', in *Opuscula selecta. Classica, hellenistica, christiana* (Manchester University Press, 1972), pp. 252–68, at p. 255f.

Zuntz's words highlight two points which have to be grasped. First, that the number of surviving copies represents a fraction of those that must have been produced in the second and third centuries, while the number of these that are more than fragments is even tinier. Second, the degree of variation which we may observe between the witnesses is due to two factors: the vital role played by the scriptures in Christian thought and the frequent number of copyings. An exploration of the significance of these two factors is essential for a right understanding of the topic.

The role of the scriptures in Christian thought is amply evidenced by the set of volumes to which this contribution belongs. More subtly, we are faced with an ambiguity in ancient Christianity's relationship to the Book. On the one hand, the popularisation of the codex form testifies to the close relationship between the development of Christianity and the type of book which much of the world has considered normative for close on two millennia. On the other, emergent Christianity often sat very loose to the written text: an attitude which is demonstrable by the frequency and extent of differences found in the oldest evidence. It is possible for humans to copy texts very precisely over many generations: the masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān (within the parameters of the 'readings') are examples of two texts where the degree of variation between copies is rather slight. The so-called K^r text of the New Testament, produced in the Byzantine period, is an example of a carefully controlled Christian biblical text. The line of transmission between P75's text of Luke and that found in Codex Vaticanus 150 years later is another. Since accuracy is possible, we must pay attention where it is absent, and seek the reasons. The strong traditional emphasis on accidental (unintentional) error in copying is a rather insufficient explanation for the high level of occurrence at the beginning of the tradition. It is not completely insufficient, since a text that is as well known as the New Testament writings had become by the fourth/fifth century will be preserved in a stable form by those who know that stable form well. But instability is the enemy of such careful preservation: a monastic scribe who knew the scriptures by heart and repeated them regularly will have been well placed to preserve those forms which he knew so intimately. But a scribe in early Christianity, confronted with a copy which differed frequently in appearance and text from other forms he knew, will have been in a very different situation. The problems that occurred are illustrated by the corrections in the first hand of P66 of John's Gospel, some of which show knowledge of other forms of text. The same is true of certain readings in the Pauline manuscript P46. Contemporary scholarship seeks an explanation which accepts the degree of variation between the

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manuscripts as the result of the kind of way in which the text was used by early Christians.

Differences between copies

The frequency of copying plays an important role in the explanation of the degree of variation and of the evidence from the manuscripts of textual alteration. It is at once obvious and difficult to prove that a more frequently copied manuscript tradition will have more variation than a rarely copied one. The difficulty in proving it lies in the difficulty of comparing two textual traditions, which may be due to different historical circumstances, the genre of the text and its function and use among its readership. But a glance at a few lines of a full list of variants found in any place makes the statement obvious. A study of the variant readings found in the *Text und Textwert* volumes, a series of analyses of test passages taken throughout the Gospels, Apostolos and Paul, illustrates just how much variation there is if one is dealing with nearly 2,000 manuscripts.[4] But look at almost any individual manuscript, and the number of corrections in it will be slight. (A rare exception is Codex Sinaiticus, which has frequent corrections in some parts.) It will be rare also to find corrections by more than one or at the most two secondary hands (exceptions here include Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Bezae and some other older majuscules). E. J. Epp has sought in vain for evidence of manuscript notation among the twenty-eight papyri and six parchment manuscripts of the New Testament from Oxyrhynchus available in 1997: 'critical signs indicating scholarly editing – those moving beyond the copying process – rarely if ever occur in the New Testament papyri at Oxyrhynchus or in other Christian literature there from the early period'.[5] This contrasts with the literary texts. Whence then the fact of variation? Once the very high frequency of copying has been recognised, it will be seen that only a very few annotations of the text by a reader (perhaps just one or two comments) may, if these are adopted by a copyist, lead to a high degree of variation between copies after a large number of copyings. One does not have to see scribes as editors, or to look for scholarly editors where there are none, to understand how, in the course of the second century, the degree of variation which is observable may have arisen, given

4 Aland et al., *Text und Textwert*.
5 E. J. Epp, 'The New Testament Papyri at Oxyrhynchus in Their Social and Intellectual context', in W. L. Petersen, J. S. Vos and H. J. de Jonge (eds.), *Sayings of Jesus. Canonical and Non-Canonical. Essays in Honour of Tjitze Baarda*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 89 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 47–68, at p. 67, reprinted in Epp, *Perspectives*, pp. 497–520, at p. 517.

the degree of freedom that the variation between copies shows to have been enjoyed.[6]

The introduction of conscious, purposeful readings into the text is undeniable. The influence of Atticism is a clear case in point. Its study is associated with the names of G. D. Kilpatrick and J. K. Elliott.[7] The desire to improve the Greek of the Gospels in accordance with the tenets of Attic grammar was responsible for the removal of a number of authentic grammatical features in some witnesses. The rougher reading is present in others. The last fifty years have seen a steady growth in the recognition of the influence of various more specific (specific to Christianity and its texts, that is) causes of variant readings. This process has served to show that New Testament manuscripts are not only witnesses to the earliest forms of the text, but also serve as 'windows' on the religious and social world of the developing church.[8] What is to be noted is the recognition that one cause of variant readings was the alteration of the text to conform to a theological interpretation of the tradition. To draw an analogy, just as grammatical features were altered to conform with the tenets of Atticism, so theologically charged features were emended to conform to readers' understandings of orthodoxy.

At present the evidence for such causes of variation is becoming recognised. But the mechanism by which such readings became a part of the text needs to be satisfactorily explained. That scribes played a significant role in this has to be proved. It has to be asked whether a copyist, already faced with the demands of transcribing an exemplar and beset with questions of layout and presentation, would also have engaged in textual revision. The suggestion made above, that the significant degree of theologically motivated alteration visible to us is due to the number of readings of manuscripts and copyings of those manuscripts that occurred, deserves serious consideration.[9]

There lies behind these questions an even greater challenge for the way in which the New Testament is edited and read. It has been generally assumed by some critical editors and by the majority of readers that only those readings

6 The context in which such variation was received has been discussed by B. Aland, 'New Testament Textual Research, Its Methods and Goals', in S. E. Porter and M. J. Boda (eds.), *Translating the New Testament. Text, Translation, Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 13–26, at pp. 24–6.
7 See their collected papers: Kilpatrick, *Principles and Practice*; Elliott, *Essays and Studies*.
8 B. D. Ehrman, 'The Text as Window. New Testament Manuscripts and the Social History of Early Christianity', in Ehrman and Holmes, *Text of the New Testament*, pp. 361–79.
9 See H. A. G. Houghton and D. C. Parker (eds.), *Textual Variation. Theological and Social Tendencies? Papers from the Fifth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Texts and Studies Third Series 5 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008).

chosen as part of the original text of the writings are significant. But this is to assume that early Christianity shared this concern. It has been argued that the text served as a living guide to its own interpretation, so that alterations to it were made in the belief that they would be more authentic to the meaning of the text than adherence to the letter could ever have been. It follows that the modern scholar is wilfully imposing an anachronistic attitude in claiming a greater significance for one form of text than for another. This is not to deny that at each place of variation one reading is older than the other, and that there is much to be learned from studying the sequence by which the text was changed. It is to challenge the claim that the oldest reading is intrinsically more important than the others.[10]

Early Christian books

The papyri have provided a very great deal of information about the gospel book as an artefact and about early Christian copying practices. The picture which emerges is of competent book production of a character which distinguishes the gospel book from sacred texts on the one hand and Greek literature on the other. It is with the fourth century that the situation changes when, after the accession of Constantine and the dramatic changes in the status of Christianity within the Roman Empire, some truly magnificent codices began to be produced. In particular Codex Sinaiticus stands as a milestone in the history of the book.[11] Its huge format (the open book measures about 76 by 43 cm, and was originally somewhat larger) and multi-column layout (eight when it is open) are both unique. It is also striking that, at a very early stage in the production of the parchment codex (for it was only in the fourth century that these began to be made), a quality of material was produced which has never been bettered. How many such copies were ever produced cannot be known. What can be recognised is the ambition of the team who brought together a veritable library of septuagintal and early Christian documents to make a single codex of over seven hundred leaves. The creation of such a codex is an indicator also of the result of the far greater social standing and financial resources available for book production.

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10 This debate has been charted in detail by E. J. Epp, 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text" in New Testament Textual Criticism', HTR 92 (1999), 245–81; reprinted in *Perspectives*, pp. 551–93 with added notes (pp. 592–3).

11 For digital images, transcriptions, translations and information, see www.codexsinaiticus.org and D. C. Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus. The Story of the World's Oldest Bible* (London: British Library / Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010).

It is relevant here to comment on the widespread belief that early Christian texts were produced in scriptoria. It must first be said that books would have been produced in response to demand, not in anticipation of it as has been the case with the printed book. The idea of a scriptorium producing books in advance, with a number of scribes copying to dictation, is probably an anachronism. There is certainly evidence of copyists using the same workshop, for example in Origen's circle, and again in the fourth century.[12] But the comparison with Origen is not precise, for the one represents an author's need to produce several fair copies of a new work, which could then be used as exemplars for further copies, while the other concerns the dissemination of a well-established text or collection used by all Christians. Beyond this, what do we know of the context of early Christian scribes? Were they themselves Christians, serving their community? Were they professionals, hired for the job? It has to be said immediately that, while the quality of production of papyrus manuscripts is varied in terms of materials and script, there is no reason to doubt that the copyists knew what they were doing, and so are more likely to have been professional scribes. The question of their relationship to the Christians who wanted their works (as did other people – Celsus, for example) cannot be answered with any certainty. These comments apply to the early centuries: in the Byzantine era we have a much clearer understanding of the scribes and their context, and sometimes have a detailed knowledge of them. An outstanding example is the tenth-century copyist Ephraim, who produced a number of top-quality manuscripts of the New Testament and of other important writings (Polybius, Aristotle, Plato), and was the recipient of four extant letters from his teacher.[13]

Tools for research

Greek manuscripts

The primary tool for every student of the Greek New Testament is the Greek manuscript copies. Although these are often only known from information excerpted from them and placed either as the running text in an edition or in a critical apparatus, it remains the case that they are the source of the vast majority of the information available. Access to the information they contain may be gained by various means:

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12 See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23. The passage is discussed in Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*. For further discussion, see Gamble, *Books and Readers*.
13 A. Anderson, *The Textual Tradition of the Gospels. Family 1 in Matthew*, NTTS 32 (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2004), pp. 22–46.

1. by examining them directly;
2. by studying images, whether they be digital, facsimile or microform;
3. by selected data provided by an editor. This may be either a 'diplomatic edition', that is a transcription (which may be either handwritten, printed or electronic), or in the form of a full or partial collation (which may be either independent or part of an apparatus). A collation consists of a list of variations between a base text and a witness.

Although there may be certain exceptions, it is reasonable to state that each extant copy was written to be used, and therefore functioned as a working copy for an individual or a group. These documents may be studied from two points of view: as artefacts of a certain size, written on papyrus, parchment or paper in ink of one or more different colours in a particular script or scripts; or as carriers of a text or texts. Each approach yields information potentially valuable to the other. Both provide evidence about the physical and textual character of earlier copies from which the manuscript is descended. Both are a source of information about the ways in which the text was regarded and interpreted by users of the copy.

The study of a manuscript takes into account the type of category to which it belongs. These may be divided into four. The most valuable is the continuous-text copy, containing an entire text (either a collection of one or more blocks such as Paul's letters, or a single text such as a Gospel). After this comes the commentary manuscript, a copy in which the biblical text is accompanied by either a catena or a complete commentary. The vast majority of commentary manuscripts have not been included by cataloguers of Greek New Testament manuscripts; manuscripts of commentaries by, for example, John Chrysostom are not counted. Commentators who are regularly included are Theophylact, Euthymius Zigabenus and Nicetas. The next category is of lectionary manuscripts, which contain the passages read in the liturgy, either as a *synaxarion* (which follows the church's year, beginning at Easter) or a *menologion* (which follows the civil calendar and starts on 1 September). The final category consists of copies produced for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways: with *hermeneiai* for divination; as amulets or for other magical purposes; on ostraca; and in inscriptions.

The versions

The next most important tool continues to be the versions, in particular the three oldest – the Syriac, Latin and Coptic in their subdivisions. The Syriac consists of a series of versions:

- Old Syriac, surviving in manuscripts only of the Gospels, having its origins in the second century;
- Peshitta, the most commonly attested form, emerging in the fourth/fifth centuries;
- Philoxenian, made in 508;
- Harklean, the slavish translation made by Thomas of Harkel (completed in 616). To what degree this is a revision of the Philoxenian has been a hot spot of debate;
- Palestinian or Christian Palestianian Aramaic (the language in which it is written), dating from a debated point (the third century is the earliest suggested).

The Latin tradition is traditionally divided between the Old Latin versions and the Vulgate. The Vulgate is the translation attributed to Jerome, although there is no evidence that he did more, so far as the New Testament is concerned, than make a revision of the Gospels (commissioned by Pope Damasus in 383). The origins of the other books of the New Testament are not so clear. Moreover, it has come to be recognised that the Vulgate text has its own internal development and history. These factors have an effect upon the way in which we understand the Old Latin, since it can no longer consist of everything which is not the Vulgate, and therefore by implication pre-Vulgate, given the fact that the Vulgate has its own degree of diversity. The fact that copies of parts of the New Testament in an Old Latin version continued to be made into the thirteenth century makes for an even more puzzling picture. The safe statement to be made is that the oldest translation, at any rate of the Gospels, was made in North Africa, and is already clear in the writings of Cyprian. A revision of this was popular in Italy, and the manuscripts represent either a pure or a blended form of these two main traditions and the Vulgate.

The number of forms of Coptic versions has grown from the three to be found in older writings (the Sahidic, Bohairic and Fayyumic) to seven. These are not divided by forms of text but by dialects of the language, although they do differ textually. The origins of the versions remain obscure, and the dates given are intended to be cautious. They are:

- Sahidic, probably dating from the third or early fourth century;
- Bohairic, the form still in use in the Coptic church, produced by the end of the fourth century and dominant from the tenth century;
- Fayyumic, also fourth century, for which we have some remarkable old texts on papyrus dating from the early stages of the version;

- Middle Egyptian, which is noteworthy for two important fourth century codices, one of Matthew and one of Acts;
- Protobohairic, of a similar age to the Bohairic;
- Akhmimic, consisting of a few fourth- and fifth century manuscripts;
- Subakhmimic, of a similar date in origin to the Akhmimic.

The text of a version can provide valuable data about the form of Greek text from which it was derived (which in date must be older than the version itself, and in some places remains older than any extant Greek manuscript). Such evidence was especially useful when our oldest Greek manuscripts dated to the fourth century. Even with the discovery of extensive papyri dating from the late second or third centuries, the textual role of the versions continues. Their relationship to the new papyrus texts has been very little studied.

In addition to these three, a number of other ancient versions shed light on the development of the New Testament text, and on its reception in different cultures. These include the Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Gothic and Slavonic. And later versions are important witnesses to the reception of the New Testament in their own culture.

Citations

The third class of tools is that of citations in Christian writers. These suffer from a number of well-known problems, of which the most conspicuous are misquotation by the writer, alteration of the biblical text to suit the purposes for which it is being used, and alteration of the text by copyists of the writer's works. However, where these problems can be overcome, we have first-rate textual evidence, where a particular form of text may be tied to a known time and location, to which there is the opportunity to relate other material, such as manuscripts with a similar form of text. Citations are also of value in the study of the versions. Indeed, in all of the Old Latin tradition except for the Gospels, far more information is available from citations than it is from manuscripts.

It is from these three classes of material that the history of the different parts of the New Testament is reconstructed.

Scholarly tools

The study of Greek manuscripts begins with the *Liste*, the catalogue produced by the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung, Münster-in-Westphalia, Germany. The aim of this list is to provide a convenient numbering to be universally used. To do so, it divides the manuscripts into four categories – papyri,

continuous-text manuscripts written on parchment in majuscule script, continuous-text manuscripts written on parchment and paper in minuscule script, and lectionaries. Essential identifying data are provided for each manuscript – library and shelf mark, physical dimensions, number of leaves, lines and columns, contents. It is best accessed in its digital version on the Institut's website.[14] A series of concordances cross-reference these numbers with the older systems of Tischendorf and von Soden, and list all witnesses by library. The second most useful tool is J. K. Elliott's *Bibliography*.[15] A third source for directing the researcher to more information on individual manuscripts is J.-M. Olivier's *Répertoire*.[16] This may be used to tap the rich vein of information contained in modern library catalogues and other specialist catalogues, for example of dated or illuminated manuscripts in each country. Information about available plates is to be found in *IMAGES*.[17] Increasingly, the first port of call for manuscripts is websites, in particular that of the library holding a particular manuscript.

For the study of manuscript groupings, the essential map for all the New Testament except Revelation (for which see below) is the *Text und Textwert* series.[18] From these, it is possible to gather information about the textual affiliations of any manuscript.

The Latin tradition, especially the Old Latin, and manuscripts prior to the Carolingian period, are both well served. For the latter an essential tool is *CLA*.[19] New Testament books may be accessed through the indexes. A list of Old Latin manuscripts is provided by Gryson's *Répertoire descriptif*.[20] A mass of information about 450 Latin Gospel manuscripts dated before the tenth century, including full collations in sixteen long test passages, is provided by B. Fischer in the four volumes of *Die lateinischen Evangelien bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*.[21] The precise grouping of so many Latin manuscripts, made

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14 See http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/.   15 Elliott, *Bibliography*.

16 J.-M. Olivier, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues des manuscrits grecs de Marcel Richard*, 3rd edn, Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995). Richard's first edition was published in Paris in 1948 and the second in 1958, with supplement 1 appearing in 1964.

17 S. J. Voicu and S. d'Alisera, *Index in manuscriptorum graecorum edita specimina* (Rome: Borla, 1981).

18 See n. 4 above. Explanations on their use are found at the beginning of each volume.

19 E. A. Lowe, *Codices latini antiquiores. A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century*, 11 vols. and supplement (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934–71).

20 Gryson, *Altlateinische Handscriften*, vol. 1.

21 B. Fischer, *Die lateinischen Evangelien bis zum 10. Jahrhundert. Vol. I: Varianten zu Matthäus*, AGLB 13 (Freiburg: Herder, 1988); *Vol. II: Varianten zu Markus*, AGLB 15 (Freiburg: Herder, 1989); *Vol. III: Varianten zu Lukas*, AGLB 17 (Freiburg: Herder, 1990); *Vol. IV: Varianten zu Johannes*, AGLB 18 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991).

possible above all by the foundational researches of Lowe and Bischoff,[22] has led to a massive advance in our understanding of the transmission and manuscript groupings of the Latin biblical tradition.

Coptic manuscripts are also well served, with two catalogues of material available, one produced in Münster, the other in Salzburg.[23] The latter, with plates and codicological reconstructions, is especially valuable: Coptic manuscripts are generally fragmentary and often scattered between several libraries and depositories.

The study of the Syriac manuscripts has advanced rather differently. Since the Old Syriac Gospels survive in two manuscripts, these have been studied carefully and are fully available. Some other individual witnesses have also been published, while study of the manuscripts of the other versions and the reconstruction of their relationships has become a stronger theme. But both the Coptic and the Syriac are behind the Latin in the extent of detailed knowledge of codicology and palaeography and often of the historical circumstances of textual types. In some respects this is due to the lack of palaeographical changes (Coptic hands are especially hard to date, changing little over time), as well as to the tendency of western scholarship to focus more on western manuscripts.

Editions

With regard to editions, large strides have been made in recent decades, and continue to be made. Of the older editions of the Greek New Testament, the most useful so far as the apparatus is concerned continue to be Tischendorf and von Soden.[24] The epoch-making editions of Lachmann, Tregelles and Westcott and Hort are of abiding textual interest, while the introductory volume of the last-named continues central to textual theory.[25] Today, the *Editio critica maior* is replacing all its predecessors. The creation above all of

22 B. Bischoff, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, trans. and ed. M. Gorman, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1994), with a complete Bischoff bibliography.

23 F.-J. Schmitz and G. Mink (eds.), *Liste der koptischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, part I, ANTF 8 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), part II. 1, ANTF 13 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989), part II.2, ANTF 15 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991); Schüssler, *Biblia Coptica*.

24 C. von Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum graece . . . editio octava critica maior* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1872–84); H. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbarren Textgestalt hergestellt auf grund ihrer Textgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1902–13).

25 K. Lachmann, *Novum Testamentum graece* (Berlin: Reimer, 1831); K. Lachmann, *Novum Testamentum graece et latine* (Berlin: Reimer, 1842–50); Tregelles' main edition was published in fascicles, some with little more information than 'Dr Tregelles Greek Testament', between 1857 and the posthumous prolegomena of 1879. B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the original Greek*, 2 vols. (London and New York: Macmillan, 1881).

Kurt Aland, and being produced by staff of the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung and its partners, it is both ambitious and revolutionary in its design and scope. The volume of the Catholic Epistles is complete, and others are in preparation.[26] The two Luke volumes of the International Greek New Testament project provide a large thesaurus of readings for that Gospel, while the same organisation is currently producing a series of editions of the Gospel of John, which has as its goal the *Editio critica maior Iohannes*, and a polyglot website bringing all these together.[27] The same team are editing Paul for the *Editio maior*, and a research team are responsible for Revelation. Other recent editions constructed upon various principles are mentioned in the next section.

For the Latin, the production of the *Vetus Latina* by the Vetus Latina Institut, Beuron, has now covered a significant portion of the New Testament, with more in preparation.[28] The fullest edition of the Vulgate is Wordsworth and White.[29]

A recent edition of the Syriac Gospels is Kiraz's comparative edition of the Gospels.[30] The epistles have been edited in the Münster Institut.[31] Further research is being carried out upon the manuscripts of the Peshitta and Harclean versions, which should lead to editions based upon a more informed selection of witnesses.

A start has been made on the Coptic with a collection of material for the Catholic letters.[32] An edition of the Gospel of John is in preparation at the University of Vienna, in conjunction with the International Greek New Testament Project. For some parts of the New Testament, scholarship is still dependent upon the editions of Horner and on the publications of individual manuscripts.

Indispensable though these major editions are, the minor editions serve the everyday purposes of many readers. First among these in Greek is the Nestle–Aland. The twenty-eighth edition of this, available in print and electronically, is unrecognisable from the edition available when this *History of the*

26 Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum graecum editio critica maior.*
27 W. J. Elliott and D. C. Parker, (eds.), *The New Testament in Greek. Vol. IV: The Gospel according to St. John Edited by the American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project. Part I: The Papyri*, NTTS 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995); U. B. Schmid, D. C. Parker and W. J. Elliott (eds.), *The New Testament in Greek. Vol. IV: The Gospel according to St. John Edited by the American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project. Part II: The majuscules*, NTTS 37, (Leiden: Brill, 2007). For further information, see www.iohannes.com.
28 Full information available at www.vetuslatina.org.
29 Wordsworth et al., *Novum Testamentum.*   30 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition.*
31 Aland and Juckel, *Das Neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung.*
32 Schmitz, *Das Verhältnis der koptischen.*

Bible first appeared. The text is no longer the mechanically produced form in which the Nestle edition first appeared (1898), but is the critical text also found in the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*. The apparatus is also a far larger and more comprehensive presentation of the evidence.

Editing the Greek New Testament

The electronic edition

In the first place, it needs to be recognised that editing is currently undergoing its biggest revolution since Lachmann, and arguably since Caxton. The reason for this is the advent of the computer, and with it of the electronic edition.[33] Its impact is being felt in two ways. First, in the process of making an edition. With the number of manuscripts and other kinds of evidence needing to be analysed, selected and presented, the New Testament has always stretched the capability of the hard copy edition. In particular, the difficulty of keeping track of changes and monitoring one's decisions has been an editorial nightmare. The use of databases provides an opportunity to check on editorial decisions and consistency, and also supplies all the material in a consistent format. It is this insight which, as much as any other, lies behind the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method, a database which also records the impact of an editor's decisions on the textual history which is implied by the reconstruction of the text.[34]

The second impact is in the kind of edition produced. The principal editions used hitherto are based upon collations. The example of Tischendorf's work illustrates the difference. His critical editions are presented as variants from his printed text. Behind them lie a range of other kinds of editions, namely transcriptions of individual witnesses – most famously of Codex Sinaiticus, but also of many other manuscripts in the volumes of his *Monumenta sacra inedita*. The electronic edition combines the two. The concept is best illustrated by the Münster Institut's 'Digital Nestle–Aland' and 'New Testament

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33 P. L. Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age* (Athens, GA, and London, 1986); D. C. Parker, 'Biblical Texts. Working Together in the Digital Age. The Case of the International Greek New Testament Project', *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 15 (2000), 27–41; D. C. Parker, 'Through a Screen Darkly. Digital Texts and the New Testament', *JSNT* 25 (2003), 395–411; J. McGann, *Radiant Textuality. Literature after the World Wide Web* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).
34 G. Mink, 'Was verändert sich in der Textkritik durch die Beachtung genealogischer Kohärenz?', in W. Weren and D.-A. Koch (eds.), *Recent Developments in Textual Criticism. New Testament, Other Early Christian and Jewish Literature* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), pp. 39–68; G. Mink, 'Problems of a Highly Contaminated Tradition. The New Testament. Stemmata of Variants as a Source of a Genealogy for Witnesses', in P. van Reenen, A. den Hollander and M. van Mulken (eds.), *Studies in Stemmatology II* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), pp. 13–85.

Transcripts' and by the editions of the Gospel of John produced in the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing, as well as by the Codex Sinaiticus Project.[35] The electronic apparatus, such as the 'Digital Nestle–Aland' and www.iohannes.com project, offers both an apparatus showing variant readings and, by a link on a manuscript siglum, a full transcription of the witness together with images of it. The electronic transcription provides a 'virtual manuscript', with a variety of aids to the understanding and interpretation of the text.

The electronic edition is not a passive instrument. The material it makes available provides the user with the opportunity to find new ways of studying and analysing the material, for example by searching for grammatical and morphological features in manuscripts rather than in a modern reconstructed text, and by studying the scribal habits of one or more manuscripts. The electronic edition is almost inevitably a collaborative exercise. Because the making of what is seen on the screen is very closely related to the scholarly preparation, the editorial team includes experts in XML and software, in the same way that sixteenth-century editions saw a close collaboration, indeed an interchange of roles in terms of later publishing, between scholars and printers. This, as much as the size of the task and the number of specialised fields of knowledge that are required, necessitates teamwork in any major New Testament edition.[36]

Editorial theory

As much as the way in which an edition is made, the critical theory justifying the goal of an edition has undergone profound change in recent times. The starting point here is Lachmannian stemmatics. To Lachmann, the editor's task was to reconstruct the form of text of the archetype of the tradition, the manuscript from which all surviving manuscripts are descended, which is the earliest recoverable form of text. No statement is made about the distance between the archetype and an authorial or what may loosely be called an original text. Lachmann's goal in editing the New Testament, his oldest recoverable text, was a fourth-century text. As will be seen below, there are parts of the New Testament where the amount of material permitting the claim to recover much older texts than this is still uncertain. The user of modern critical editions needs to understand the character of the text. The

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35 Details available at www.uni-muenster.de/INTF/ and www.itsee.bham.ac.uk.
36 This is the place to acknowledge the generous contributions of a number of my colleagues in editing the Gospel of John, who read this survey and provided many ideas for improving it.

dangers of treating critical texts as simply equivalent to 'what Paul wrote' or 'what the evangelist wrote' are self-evident. Some of the most important questions in this regard will be mentioned in the separate sections.

The editorial goal is clearly described by the editors of the *Editio critica maior*. It is to provide a 'textual history of the first millennium' while at the same time reconstructing the 'Ausgangstext', described in English as the 'initial text'. This is done by comparing all the existing forms of text at each point of variation, and applying philological criteria to decide which form gave rise to all the other forms. The goal of this process is to construct a stemma of variants at each point of variation. The reading from which all other readings are derived is the equivalent to the archetype of a Lachmannian stemma. At points where no final decision can be made, or where two readings are equally probable, they are accepted as equally authoritative – and in the case of the New Testament, and especially the Gospels, we certainly have second-century citations which do not fit very well into the overall analysis. Textual criticism cannot advance beyond this stemmatological investigation. The study of the possible difference between the oldest recoverable form of text and an authorial creation belongs outside it.[37]

This justifiable scepticism with regard to the authorial creation is not limited to New Testament textual study, as may be seen by comparison with other works. Whatever the expectation of the user, the attitude of editors is rightly cautious. The Nestle–Aland *Novum Testamentum graece* is 'a working text . . . not to be considered as definitive but as a stimulus towards defining and verifying the text of the New Testament'.[38] The 'initial text' of the *Editio critica maior* is the text which can be recovered by critical analysis of the extant materials.

The philological criteria by which the stemma of variants is constructed have not changed as much as other aspects of editing. It remains the case that that reading is oldest which is the one that explains the origin of the others. The old canon that 'the harder reading is to be preferred' still stands. It has to be remembered that it is the reading that was harder at the time at which it was changed to something else. Examples include grammatical features which might have been rejected by Atticists as vulgar, or solecisms which have been removed, words and phrases which became difficult as theological ideas developed, and differences between accounts (particularly in the Gospels, as well as in doublets such as the accounts of Paul's conversion

37 For this section, see D. C. Parker, *Textual Scholarship and the Making of the New Testament. The Lyell Lectures 2011* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
38 Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum graece*, p. 45*.

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in Acts). The principle that a variant presenting different wording is to be preferred to one that harmonises Gospel accounts is well established.[39]

Types of edition

Not all editions set out to provide a single reconstructed text. The *Vetus Latina* volumes, for example, represent several different text types on several lines, so that the African and European Old Latin versions, and the Vulgate, are three major text types each deserving a line of text and apparatus to itself. Another approach is followed in the editions of Reuben Swanson, in which the full text of a number of important witnesses is set out. Swanson groups manuscripts together where they agree, so that what is provided is a set of 'states of text', with a statement of the manuscripts supporting the line of text.[40] The Marc Multilingue Project sets out to present the evidence for second-century forms of text, using Greek, Latin, Gothic, Coptic, Georgian, Armenian, Arabic, Christian–Palestinian Aramaic, Syriac and Slavic manuscripts.[41]

The International Greek New Testament Project produced an edition of Luke which was in fact not an edition but a substantial collection of readings produced as a 'negative apparatus': a base text is provided for each verse, and the apparatus states each point at which the witnesses differ from this base.

As an alternative to the goal of editing the 'initial text', it is possible to make a critical edition of a later form of text. A number of attempts have been made to edit the Byzantine text. While some are based on the belief that the majority text or even the *textus receptus* (the form of text which developed in the early printed history of the Greek New Testament) is superior to editions using critical theory, others arise out of the place of the Byzantine text in the Orthodox church.[42] (It should be pointed out that it is an accident of history

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39 An introduction to the handling of variants by philological criteria by practising editors is found in Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, p. 280–316.

40 R. J. Swanson (ed.), *New Testament Greek Manuscripts. Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus*, 4 vols. (one for each Gospel) (Sheffield Academic Press / Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 1995), followed by Acts (Sheffield Academic Press / Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 1998), Galatians (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers / Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 1999), Romans (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers / Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2001), 1 Corinthians (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003) and 2 Corinthians (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers / Pasadena: William Carey International University Press, 2005).

41 J. K. Elliott, C.-B. Amphoux, and J.-C. Haelewyck, 'The *Marc Multilingue* Project', *Filología Neotestamentaria* 15 (2002), 3–17.

42 For the former, see W. G. Pierpont and M.A. Robinson, *The New Testament in the Original Greek according to the Byzantine/Majority Textform* (Atlanta, GA: Original Word Publishers, 1991); for the latter, B. Antoniades (ed.), *Η Καινη Διαθηκη* (Constantinople: Patriarchal Press, 1904, reprinted Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia, 1993, the so-called Patriarchal edition).

that the Byzantine text is also that of the majority of witnesses. It so happens that most extant manuscripts were copied in the period between the tenth and the sixteenth century. If by some strange set of events, more manuscripts had survived from the third to the sixth century, the majority text would no longer be the Byzantine text.) The Antoniades edition has provided a form of the Byzantine text for many years in the Greek Orthodox world. More recently, a trial edition of the Byzantine text of John has responded to Orthodox demands for an edition which both presented the textual variation within the Byzantine text and provided a form of the text used by the church.[43]

Selection and classification of witnesses

An important stage in making an edition is the selection of the Greek manuscript witnesses to be included. Even for the Catholic Epistles there are over five hundred manuscripts, and this is too large a number to include in an apparatus. The resources of time and personnel are not available to record all their readings in full. In fact, the majority of manuscripts belong to large groups of Byzantine witnesses. It is therefore necessary to have a method of selecting those witnesses which best represent the whole. There are two currently in use. The International Greek New Testament Project has used the Claremont Profile Method, which has the main object of grouping the mass of Byzantine manuscripts. The *Text und Textwert* approach developed in Münster also achieves this goal, but primarily distinguishes those manuscripts which do not contain the text of the majority of witnesses. Some other sets of manuscripts, for example clearly established families such as Family 1 or Family 13, can be dealt with more easily by means of reconstructing the archetypal text.

Part of the process of selection traditionally includes the classification of witnesses according to text type. This is an approach which has its roots in eighteenth-century scholarship, although the nomenclature has changed. The number of text types is quite small, consisting in the briefest possible space of the 'Alexandrian', the 'Byzantine' and the 'Western'. In recent years the Alexandrian has sometimes been subdivided by the addition of a 'Proto-Alexandrian' period, while other scholars have claimed the presence of a Caesarean text of the Gospels. These text types have sometimes been called recensions, and associated with either places or individuals where or by whom they may have been formed. The most distinguished witnesses of the

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43 R. L. Mullen (ed.), with S. Crisp and D. C. Parker and in association with W. J. Elliott, U. B. Schmid, R. Kevern and M. B. Morrill, *The Gospel according to John in the Byzantine Tradition* (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2006).

Alexandrian type are the codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. The western text is most closely associated with Codex Bezae, containing the Gospels and Acts, and Codex Claromontanus, which contains the Pauline Epistles. The Byzantine text, the predominant text of the Byzantine period, has as its earliest main representative in the Gospels the Codex Alexandrinus. The theory of text types was expressed in its fullest form in B. H. Streeter's concept of 'local texts', according to which each of the great sees of ancient Christianity developed its own text.[44] This view is best explained by the analogy of Darwin's observations of finches in different islands of the Galapagos archipelago, which by isolation and a process of natural selection had each developed distinctive features.

This theory of text types as used today was developed on the basis of a comparison of the manuscripts known to nineteenth-century scholarship. The discovery of many papyri in the course of the twentieth century raised some problems for the theory, since many of them fail to conform to the text types, containing instead a mixture of readings. This phenomenon led to a number of calls for a radical re-evaluation of the whole theory – calls which were largely ignored. Some methods of classification, including the Claremont Profile Method, still set out to divide the witnesses into these text types. The *Text und Textwert* method and the associated Coherence-Based Genealogical Method, have tacitly abandoned the whole schema. The reason is that the methods are based on a separate study of the textual development of each individual reading. This avoids the problems inherent within the text-type theory, which are many: (i) it is a scheme developed before the discovery of a number of significant papyri which fail to conform to it; (ii) it does not compare like with like, in that the 'western' text is largely acknowledged not to be exclusively western, and to consist of texts which do not fit into the other two, while the Alexandrian is tied to a concept of sophisticated textual activity in a major centre over a short period of time, and the Byzantine consists of a text which lasted a thousand years throughout an empire and consisted of many subtexts; (iii) the very small number of witnesses of the Alexandrian and western types reflects the fact already encountered, that few manuscripts have survived from the earliest centuries. As a result of this, the Alexandrian witnesses, while appearing fairly similar to each other compared to Byzantine text forms, also contain more differences from each other than those forms do. On the analogy of the later period, we might then assume each to be the sole survivor of a different group – but once that is recognised then the

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44 B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels. A Study of Origins Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship and Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1930), pp. 27–76.

concept of the text type becomes useless as a tool for comparison. We are left with the stemmatological analysis of variants.

Making the edition

Once the witnesses to be used have been selected, they need to be transcribed. From these transcriptions a draft apparatus of the Greek forms the basis of the edition, to which versional and patristic evidence is then added. For the versions, a prior critical edition is essential. The text types of the versions can then be cited very simply, the wealth of explanatory data being available in the versional edition. The patristic citations are gathered into a database, and the results are compared with the draft apparatus. For significant fathers, a number of individual studies have appeared, of which the most ambitious is the New Testament in the Greek Fathers series.[45] The next step is the selection of the reconstructed text, which is effected by a study of the variants, and a long series of decisions as to the oldest recoverable form of text in each place. Finally, the edition is prepared for publication.

The Gospels

The Gospels were by far the most frequently copied part of the New Testament. In 1989, K. and B. Aland provided the figure of 2,361 as the total number of manuscripts containing the Gospels. Of these, over 1,950 consist of the Gospels only. The lists in the *Text und Textwert* series so far published provide information on 1,997 manuscripts of the Synoptic Gospels and 1,987 of John.[46] Of these, a high proportion show a Byzantine form of text. Of the manuscripts examined in the Gospel of Mark in the *Text und Textwert* series, 1,566 agree with the Byzantine reading in 90–100 per cent of readings and 172 agree in below 90 per cent of readings. On the other hand, a similar analysis of John came up with 1,484 manuscripts showing over 90 per cent and 303 manuscripts below. Among the witnesses agreeing with less than 90 per cent of the Byzantine text, the older ones are particularly conspicuous. Two of the Gospels are comparatively well served with them – those of Luke and

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45 Published by the Society of Biblical Literature, the series was first edited by B. M. Metzger, and more recently by M. W. Holmes. Volumes have appeared on Didymus (Ehrman, 1986, Gospels only), Gregory of Nyssa (Brooke, 1991), Origen (Ehrman, Fee and Holmes, 1992, John only), Cyril of Jerusalem (Mullen, 1997), Epiphanius (Osburn, 2004, Apostolos only) and Basil (Racine, 2004, Matthew only).
46 K. Aland, B. Aland and K. Wachtel, *Text und Textwert. Vol. IV: Die Synoptischen Evangelien. Part I: Das Markusevangelium*, ANTF 26 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998), p. 1*, p. 17* (the printed number 1984 is in error); *Vol. V: Das Johannesevangelium*, vol. I, part I, ANTF 35 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), p. 1, p. 2.

John. In particular, three papyri stand out: P45 (the Gospels and Acts), P66 (John) and P75 (Luke and John). Where these overlap, we have a comparatively rich picture of the text as it was at the turn of the second century and into the third. The degree of overlap is, unfortunately, quite slight: in John, apart from fragments in chapters 4 and 5, it consists of John 10.7–11.57 with lacunae; in Luke, there is significant overlap between P45 and P75.

We find the following manuscripts which are from the early fourth century or earlier:

contents	papyrus	date[47]	extent and chapters
four Gospels	P4/64/67	c. 200	parts of Matt. 3, 5, 26; Luke 1–5
(and Acts)	P45	III	parts of Matt. 20–1, 25–6; Mark 4–9, 11–12; Luke 6, 9–14; John 4, 5, 10
Luke and John	P75	early III	parts of Luke 3–18, 22; John 1–15
Matthew	P1	III	27 verses (chapter 1)
	P37	III/IV	34 verses (chapter 26)
(and Acts)	P53	III	13 verses (chapter 26), plus 12 of Acts (chapters 9, 10)
	P70	III	14 verses (chapters 2, 24)
	P77	II/III	10 verses (chapter 23)
	P101	III	8 verses (chapters 3, 4)
	P102	III/IV	4 verses (chapter 4)
	P103	II/III	5 verses (chapters 13, 14)
	P104	II	8 verses (chapter 21)
Mark	none		
Luke	P4	III	parts of chapters 1–6
	P7	III/IV (?)	3 verses (chapter 4)
	P69	III	9 verses (chapter 22)
	P111	III	5 verses (chapter 17)
John	P5	III	48 verses (chapters 1, 16, 20)
	P22	III	17 verses (chapters 15, 16)
	P28	III	11 verses (chapter 6)
	P39	III	9 verses (chapter 8)
	P52	c. 150	5 verses (chapter 18)
	P66	c. 200	nearly all of 1–14, plus fragments
	P90	II	12 verses (chapters 18, 19)
	P95	III	7 verses (chapter 5)
	P106	III	13 verses (chapter 1)
	P107	III	3 verses (chapter 17)
	P108	III	7 verses (chapters 17, 18)
	P109	III	6 verses (chapter 21)

Even when the rest of the fourth century is included, the results are not very different:

47 A Roman numeral, e.g. III, indicates the century in which the manuscript was first produced.

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contents	papyrus	date	extent and chapters
Matthew	P25	end IV	11 verses (chapters 18, 19)
	P35	IV (?)	8 verses (chapter 25)
	P62	IV	6 verses (chapter 11)
	P71	IV	4 verses (chapter 19)
	P86	IV	8 verses (chapter 5)
	P110	IV	6 verses (chapter 10)
Mark	P88	IV	27 verses (chapter 2)
Luke	none		
John	P6	IV	24 verses (chapters 10, 11)

It will thus be seen that there is a very uneven situation with regard to the age of the available resources. On the one hand we have, for the central part of Luke and especially for the first half of John, access to witnesses copied at the end of the second century and the beginning of the third, which therefore provide information about forms of text available in the late second century. On the other hand, we are no better off for the vast majority of Matthew and Mark than scholars were once they had access to the texts of codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus a century and a half ago. It is also worth noting how many of these copies were found at Oxyrhynchus, the city 160 kilometres south-west of Cairo whose rubbish heaps were combed by Grenfell and Hunt. Publication began in 1898, and new volumes continue to contain New Testament texts. How much this fact skews our knowledge is uncertain.

The discovery of the papyri led to a questioning of traditional text-critical views with regard to the textual history and manuscript groupings of the Gospels. The study of the text of P75 by C. M. Martini remains a milestone in research.[48] On the foundation of a study of the 474 differences between P75 and B in Luke, Martini was able to demonstrate that P75 contains the same basic form of text as that found in the Vatican manuscript. It has therefore become impossible to claim that this text form is a recension of the third or early fourth century. Instead, the Lukan text of B is substantially in existence in P75 at the beginning of the third century, any differences between the two being due to sporadic and unsystematic alteration.[49] In addition, Martini argued that this text showed comparatively fewer signs of revision.

This form of text has been found to have been in existence in Luke in the late second century. The scholar is faced with a difficult task indeed in recovering text forms from earlier in the century. The uncertainty of the Gospel text in the second century has long been recognised. It was the subject

48 C. M. Martini, *Il problema della recensionalità del codice B alla luce del papiro Bodmer XIV*, AnBib 26 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966).
49 Martini, *Il problema*, p. 149.

of a symposium in Notre Dame in 1988, whose papers provide an important starting point.[50] In the absence of manuscripts, one is forced to make do with what little else is available. There are two options. The first is to study what citations there are in early Christian writers of the period. The Apostolic Fathers pose a particular problem. As W. L. Petersen cogently argues, they reveal that, on the occasions when we can ascertain their use of the Gospels, the forms they knew are not the ones we find in the extant manuscripts.[51] Similar problems arise when we look at citations in later writers, such as Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria. The second option is to 'triangulate' from later witnesses.

It has been observed of many texts that they changed most in the earliest stages of their transmission, and the significance of this for the New Testament writings has already been noted. In the case of the Gospels, there are several other reasons. In particular, the relationship between the oral and the written Gospel was not at all clear, so that we find not only the introduction of additional material, such as the passage in John 7.53–8.11, or the saying of Jesus at Luke 6.4 in one manuscript (05), but also frequent variations in pronouncements and sayings of Jesus. This variation is due to the ease with which for earliest Christianity the written word could be altered to reflect changes in the way believers understood and used the Jesus tradition.

In *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, B. D. Ehrman has argued that one may find not a few instances of places where the New Testament text was altered to take account of theological debate, so that wordings which appeared to support the 'wrong' point of view in a debate were altered to show the orthodox meaning that the evangelist must have represented. For example, he suggests that an original wording of Luke 3:22 υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε was altered to σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα because the older wording was used by adoptionists to justify their views.[52]

This approach is sometimes associated with that followed by me, in *The Living Text of the Gospels*. There is one important difference, however. Ehrman's

50 W.L. Petersen (ed.), *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century. Origins, Recessions, Text and Transmission* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

51 W. L. Petersen, 'Textual Traditions Examined. What the Text of the Apostolic Fathers Tells Us about the Text of the New Testament in the Second Century', in Gregory and Tuckett, *The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, pp. 29–46.

52 Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, p. 62–7. The interest in finding theological and social contexts for manuscript production and textual variation has been explored in further directions by several of Ehrman's students: Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*; W. C. Kannaday, *Apologetic Discourse and the Scribal Tradition. Evidence of the Influence of Apologetic Interests on the Text of the Canonical Gospels* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2004).

argument functions as an account of how an original form of text was altered by orthodox readers to remove what they regarded as the appearance of heresy. In my view the argument does not need to contain the binary opposites of competing views, one original and the other secondary (in fact there may be not two but three or more alternatives). Instead, the survival of both (or all) forms of text is due to their having a function within early Christianity. According to this theory, early Christians were interested in preserving not the letter but what they believed to be the true meaning of Jesus' words.

The nature of variation in the Gospels can hardly be described in a short space. It is noticeable that there is more variation in Jesus' discourse than there is in narrative material. An examination of the International Greek New Testament Project apparatus to Luke will show this. In some manuscripts and in some Gospels the most extensive variation will consist of harmonisation. This is least in Matthew and John, and greatest in Mark. Codex Bezae is the manuscript containing the most harmonisations.

Tatian's Diatessaron

The study of this text has been through many twists and turns. In spite of its huge popularity in early Christianity, especially in the Syrian world, no copy survives. A fragment of a gospel harmony in Greek found at Dura Europos and datable to the middle of the second century has generally been thought to be Tatian's.[53] Witnesses to the *Diatessaron* are generally divided into two, the eastern and the western. Of the eastern, the best of all sources is Ephrem's commentary, known in its Armenian version since 1876, and in an incomplete Syriac manuscript since its discovery in the 1950s.[54] Also used are the Persian and the Arabic harmonies. Of the western, the oldest is also the second most important source after Ephrem – the Latin Codex Fuldensis. Written in the 540s, this manuscript contains the Gospels as a continuous narrative, in a form largely altered to that of the Vulgate. Further western sources which have been regarded as independent witnesses to the *Diatessaron* include a number of vernacular harmonies, including some written in Dutch, Italian and English. Recent research, however, has produced compelling evidence that these vernacular forms are derived from a tradition of Latin harmonies which

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53 D. C. Parker, D. G. K. Taylor and M. S. Goodacre, 'The Dura-Europos Gospel Harmony', in D. G. K. Taylor (ed.), *Studies in the Early Text of the Gospels and Acts*, Texts and Studies, Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, Third Series 1 (Birmingham University Press, 1999), pp. 192–228, reject the Tatianic argument. The question needs re-examination in the light of Schmid's findings (see n. 55).
54 Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron*, pp. 114–17.

has been largely overlooked. This Latin tradition appears to be dependent on the Codex Fuldensis. There is thus only a single western witness to the *Diatessaron*.[55] With this one of the most romantic episodes in New Testament textual criticism seems to have been brought to a close.

Editing the Gospels

Some particular problems arise for the editor of the Gospels. So far as the Old Latin is concerned, where a large amount of the materials consists of patristic citations, the Synoptic Gospels need to be tackled together, since it is often impossible to decide which Gospel is being cited. With regard to the construction of an initial text, the question arises of whether such a text represents the collected Gospels. If so, it has to be asked whether all witnesses are descended from this text, or whether some of them on occasion preserve older forms of text. The significance of this is best illustrated by the example of various passages, for example Mark 16.9–20, which, while they are secondary to the Gospel, may have been intended to complete such an edition. Here there may be no right answer, but a necessity for the edition to follow consistent and transparent principles.

The Acts of the Apostles

The textual history of this book has hitherto been determined by the concept of two very fixed texts, poles in the tradition. The classic presentation of two texts is that of Ropes's edition.[56] He described them as the 'Old Uncial Text' and 'the "Western Text"', the latter being in his view a product of the mid-second century. His schema is completed by what he calls the 'Antiochian Text' (Westcott and Hort's 'Syrian Text'), a revision made in Antioch in the early fourth century, which became the foundation of the Byzantine text.[57] Ropes's old uncial and 'western' texts are also referred to as the Alexandrian and western, or by their main representatives as the B and D texts. Before discussing the principal theories concerning these texts, the main witnesses should be described.

The leading witnesses to Ropes's old uncial text are codices Vaticanus (formerly known by the letter B), Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus and Ephraemi

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55 U. B. Schmid, *Unum ex Quattuor. Eine Geschichte der lateinischen Tatianüberlieferung*, AGLB 37 (Freiburg: Herder, 2005). See also U. B. Schmid 'In Search of Tatian's Diatessaron in the West', *Vig. Chr.* 57 (2003), 176–99.
56 *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. Ropes et al.
57 *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. Ropes et al. p. cclxxviif.

Rescriptus, along with 81 as the closest minuscule manuscript. The 'western' text is above all associated with Codex Bezae (formerly known by the letter D). The next most significant witness is the Harklean Syriac. In third place comes the African Old Latin, which can only be partially reconstructed. The discovery of the Michigan papyrus, P38, was of some significance. Unfortunately, it was published a year after Ropes' edition.[58] It contains parts of 18.27–19:6, 12–16. Dating to about the year 300, the manuscript thus demonstrates that a form of the text best known from Codex Bezae was in existence a century earlier. Other important witnesses include the Laudian Acts, another Graeco–Latin bilingual. A manuscript of the first half of the book, written in Middle Egyptian, is a more recently published witness to the 'western' text. Most significant of all these discoveries is P127, published in 2009.[59] This text requires a fresh assessment of the entire situation. Like Codex Bezae, it contains a text that differs greatly from Codex Vaticanus. But its distinctive readings very frequently differ from Codex Bezae as well. Preliminary findings suggest that this new witness and Codex Bezae are independently descended from a similar form of text, itself different from that found in Codex Vaticanus.

The domination of the belief that Acts exists in two forms, to which all witnesses testify, has inevitably led to discussions about the claims of the one or the other to priority. There are two possibilities here, either that one was original to Luke's concept and the other secondary, or that both are Lukan, the author having produced a later revision (usually the longer western version).[60] With regard to the first possibility, the majority of scholars have argued that the western text is secondary. The main present supporters of its priority are Read-Heimerdinger and Ruis-Camps, commentators on the D text.[61] Their work, like Ropes's, presents two forms of text.

However, a problem faced by those who speak of two forms of text is that the witnesses also present forms of text which fall between them. If there was any doubt about this formerly, the publication of P127 makes it certain. The concept of two texts, one of which must be original, has led to the error of treating the 'western' text as a stable text like that of Ropes's 'old uncials'.

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58 But a note by Silva New is included in volume v.
59 D. Leith, D. C. Parker, S. R. Pickering et al., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. LXXIV 74 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2009), pp. 1–45, plates II–v.
60 W. A. Strange, *The Problem of the Text of Acts*, SNTSMS 71 (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 1–34.
61 J. Read-Heimerdinger, *The Bezan Text of Acts. A Contribution of Discourse Analysis to Textual Criticism*, JSNTS 236 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); J. Read-Heimerdinger and J. Ruis-Camps, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae. A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition*, JSNTS 257, 3 vols. (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2004–7).

If one starts with the theory that Codex Bezae contains a free and unstable text, then P127 is just the kind of document one would expect to find. Similar evidence includes the presence of agreements with the 'neutral' readings in the predominantly 'western' P38,[62] and signs within Codex Bezae that its text of Acts has reached its present state by a process of growth.[63] The evidence lies in the analysis of differences between the Greek and Latin columns of the manuscript, which indicate that the Latin is a revised form of a translation based on an earlier stage of the Greek text.

That the text of Acts was particularly susceptible to revision and recasting may be related to its literary character as a narrative of apostolic activity. The fact that there is greater variation in the narrative than in the dialogue and discourse – the very opposite of the situation in the Gospels – may support this theory.[64] If this is the case, then the attempt to identify a single time and place at which the longer text emerged may be a mistaken endeavour. In a thorough survey, B. Aland has concluded that it is a third-century product.[65] It may be that this is true of the bulk of the readings in question, even if they also arose out of a series of events rather than a single revision.

The task of editing Acts therefore does not require the reconstruction of two parallel texts. On the other hand, the placing of all the material in a critical apparatus, in such a way that the degree of difference between the various forms of text is lost, may not be the best way ahead either. This is a situation where the flexibility provided by an electronic edition, in which different manuscripts may be selected for comparison, is especially desirable. From the technical point of view, the role of the secondary forms of texts is in providing evidence for the older forms of text from which they are derived. Here places where the B text seems to be rougher have been the focus of attention. A case in point is 12:25, where the B form of the narrative seems to place the protagonists in the wrong place.

The Catholic Epistles

The study of the letters is now dominated by the *Editio critica maior*, in which the epistles are the first part of the New Testament to appear. The

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62 S. New, 'Note XXIII. The Michigan Papyrus Fragment 1571', in K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part 1: The Acts of the Apostles. Vol. v: Additional Notes to the Commentary* (London: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 262–8.
63 Parker, *Codex Bezae*, pp. 228–49.
64 According to Read-Heimerdinger, *The Bezan Text of Acts*, pp. 17–19. P127 bears this out.
65 B. Aland, 'Entstehung, Charakter und Herkunft des sog. westlichen Textes untersucht an der Apostelgeschichte', *ETL* 62 (1986), 5–65, at 12–36.

edition provides a lot more than a critically reconstructed text and an apparatus. It has led to a long series of studies, including Wachtel's study of the Byzantine text,[66] Schmitz's collection of Coptic materials,[67] a supplementary fascicle accompanying every fascicle of the edition, and a volume of studies.

Only in the fourth century did the seven letters become recognised as a group. Previously, they must have circulated either as separate letters or in smaller groups. The compilation may have occurred in stages, with the association of 2 with 1 Peter, the gathering of the Johannine letters, and so on. Some of the earliest manuscripts provide evidence for this. An important papyrus (P. Bodmer VII–IX) contains three of the letters among other early Christian texts – the entire collection consists of the Nativity of Mary, *Apocryphal Correspondence*, the *Eleventh Ode of Solomon*, Jude, Melito's *Paschal Homily*, a hymn fragment, the *Apology of Phileas*, Psalms 33–4, and 1 and 2 Peter.[68] Jude and the Petrine letters were copied by different hands, of which there are six in all.[69] The precise circumstances of the growth of this manuscript are uncertain, but the date by which it was complete was early in the fourth century. Codex Bezae originally contained the Gospels, some other books ending with 3 John (the available space matches Revelation and the Johannine letters), and then Acts. This would suggest an association by supposed authorship and not a grouping of letters. The editors of 2 and 3 John and Jude in the *Editio maior* provide evidence that the groupings of manuscripts are not consistent, which may suggest different early groupings.

The Pauline corpus

As with the Gospels, Paul's letters are available to us as a collected edition. This is evident from the titles, with each letter given a standardised name (Προς -), and with two to the same group or person numbered. Some of the most extensive textual problems may be due to the process of formation of

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66 K. Wachtel, *Der Byzantinische Text der Katholischen Briefe. Eine Untersuchung zur Entstehung der Koine des Neuen Testaments*, ANTF 24 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1995).
67 Schmitz, *Das Verhältnis der koptischen*.
68 Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, pp. 96–104. The New Testament letters are placed together under the number P72, though whether they should be grouped together is rendered doubtful by the composite character of the manuscript. See also E. de Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques*, Subsidia Hagiographica 33 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1961).
69 Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex*, pp. 79–80; T. Wassermann, 'Papyrus 72 and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex', *NTS* 51 (2005), 137–54.

this collection. At a number of points and in several different ways, there seems to be evidence of editorial activity in order to provide an organised and consistent reading text. In order to understand this, it is necessary first to appreciate that the letters are only available to us as a collection, not as separate items. A basic question to be asked concerns the resources available to the editor of the collection. It seems reasonable to state that an editor would have wished, on grounds of both convenience and authority, to have accessed Paul's own archive, rather than the papers of individual churches. And this collection is the starting point for the transmission of the text: that is to say, one may at least start with the belief that the editor's task is to restore the text of this collected edition. The textual criticism of Paul's letters sets out to ask on the reader's behalf exactly what is available in the collected edition and how it may differ from the copies first dispatched to individual first-century churches: how far it is Pauline, how intrusive the editor has been, and how far the process of making and transmitting the edition has shaped the individual letters. These questions require comment on the formation of the collection. But first the principle witnesses should be mentioned.

Of the 792 Greek manuscripts of Paul's letters,[70] the oldest extensive manuscript is P46, dated to the early third century. Its textual value has been demonstrated from a careful study, most especially in 1 Corinthians and Hebrews, by G. Zuntz.[71] No other papyrus rivals it in extent. The only complete ancient copy is Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus being lost from Hebrews 9.14 onwards. The next oldest extensive Greek copy is the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus (it lacks 2 Cor. 4.13–12.6). In this collection the value of Codex Vaticanus decreases, while that of Alexandrinus grows. One other highly important manuscript is the Graeco–Latin Codex Claromontanus, produced in the sixth century. It is virtually complete. The Latin is of especial value, since it is the oldest representative of a group consisting also of some representatives from the period of the Carolingian Renaissance of the ninth century. They are two direct copies of the Claromontanus, and two more distantly related codices, Augiensis and Boernerianus. A study of their relationship enables us to reconstruct the text of a lost archetype Z, which was produced in about 350. There is patristic evidence for an Old Syriac version of Paul, dating from the fourth century.

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70 Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, p. 83.
71 Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*.

To return to the evidence concerning the formation of the collection. P46 is extant in the following sequence of letters:

Romans
Hebrews
1 and 2 Corinthians
Ephesians
Galatians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians

Since P46 is a single-quire codex (that is to say, formed by taking a single pile of sheets and folding them all in half once), it is possible to calculate the original number of leaves and thus the available space. The presence of page numbers at the tops of pages with extant upper margins provides a further check. The manuscript originally contained 208 pages, and can only have had room after 1 Thessalonians for 2 Thessalonians and (perhaps) Philemon. It is of course possible that an extra quire might have been added, and it has been suggested that the number of letters per page increases towards the end of the extant portion (which might indicate that the scribe had realised that there was not enough space for the whole corpus of fourteen letters which he wished to copy). But if the single quire was all that there ever was, then the manuscript contained ten or eleven letters, in order of descending length. If Philemon was absent, then the collection consisted solely of letters to congregations. Such a distinction between letters to a congregation and those to individuals is supported by the Muratorian Canon,[72] and invites comparison with the seven Catholic Epistles and the Letters to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse. If Philemon was originally present, then an explanation for the absence of the Pastoral letters is lacking. The latter hypothesis is therefore less convincing.

Marcion's collection certainly had ten letters. He had them in the following order:

Galatians
1 and 2 Corinthians
Romans

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72 'As for the Epistles of Paul, . . . the blessed apostle Paul himself, following the example of his predecessor John, writes by name to only seven churches. [Paul also wrote] out of affection and love one to Philemon, one to Titus, and two to Timothy; and these are held sacred in the esteem of the Church catholic for the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline' (translation from Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 306f.

1 and 2 Thessalonians
Laodiceans (= Ephesians)
Colossians and Philemon[73]
Philippians

If the letters to a single destination and Colossians and Philemon are combined, there are again seven units. Schmid's study reaches the conclusion that Marcion made use of an existing ten-letter edition that was already at least some decades old.[74]

Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest extant complete copy of this part of the New Testament, contains the letters and order of Athanasius' Festal Letter of 367:

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
Hebrews
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon[75]

This is the standard number of letters (fourteen) in Greek manuscripts from this period on, though not the standard order, since in subsequent tradition Hebrews was to be located after Philemon. There is further evidence for a different order, since the paragraph numbers of Codex Vaticanus place Hebrews between Galatians and Ephesians.[76]

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73 According to Epiphanius he included Philemon with Colossians. Tertullian puts it after Philippians. See the evidence as given by Gamble, *Books and Readers*, p. 61 and note, and Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos*, p. 286.
74 Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos*, pp. 284ff.
75 See also Frede, *Epistulae ad Philippenses et ad Colossenses*, p. 295.
76 Because this manuscript is lost from Heb. 9.14, its full contents and order cannot be known – but it shares the order of 01 (Codex Sinaiticus) as far as Hebrews.

The sequence in the Latin tradition is complicated by the regular appearance of Laodiceans,[77] giving eventually a fifteen letter collection.[78] The mid-fourth-century bilingual tradition[79] appears to have consisted of thirteen letters:

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Colossians
Philippians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

The Old Syriac canon differed again, omitting Philemon but including 3 Corinthians. The best evidence for the order is the Armenian version of Ephrem's commentary on Paul:

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
3 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
Hebrews
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus

77 Not to be confused with Marcion's Laodiceans, which is his name for Ephesians.
78 For details, see Frede, *Epistulae ad Philippenses et ad Colossenses*, pp. 301–3.
79 Frede, *Epistulae ad Philippenses et ad Colossenses*, pp. 299f. See the same author's *Altlateinische Paulus–Handschriften*, AGLB (Freiburg: Herder, 1964).

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The (Sahidic) Coptic canon also differs in the sequence of the epistles. Here we find Hebrews regularly after 2 Corinthians, so that the order is normally:

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Hebrews
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

The same sequence is found in Fayyumic manuscripts (for example Vienna, ÖNB, K 9001–9002. But there are also exceptions (such as sa 509, Schüssler, *Biblia Coptica* 3.1 (2001)), where we find Hebrews at the end of the codex, after Philemon).

We thus have several different collections, with regard both to the letters included and to the sequences attested by the earliest sources. There are traces of various systems of ordering: by length, by association (Colossians and Philemon), or by letters to groups and to individuals placed separately. None of the collections includes only letters generally considered authentic today, and only in the case of Hebrews does there seem to be an uncertainty in inclusion and location that may be due to concerns about authenticity. It is reasonable to conclude that there has never been a single generally authoritative collection.

This evidence is from contents and order of codices. The study of the formation of the collection may be taken a step further by examining textual variation in two epistles.

The beginning of Romans shows two variations: at 1.7 Codex Boernerianus reads τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ἀγάπῃ Θεοῦ / *qui sunt in caritate Dei* and omits τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ at verse 15. The omission of ἐν Ῥώμῃ at verse 7 is also attested by a few other manuscripts, including the text known to Origen – stated explicitly according to a marginal comment in the important minuscule manuscript 1739 and by inference from his commentary on the letter. The Greek of Codex

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Claromontanus is missing, but the Latin conflates the two, while another Latin manuscript omits the second half of the phrase. Latin patristic evidence includes Ambrosiaster and Pelagius.

There is also evidence that fourteen- and fifteen- chapter forms of the epistle existed in Antiquity. Although all surviving manuscripts contain all sixteen chapters, the evidence is indisputable.[80]

The critical question is as to the age of these forms of text. Gamble concluded that the sixteen-chapter form was the oldest, and that the other two were post-Pauline attempts to 'catholicise' the letter, by the removal of the specific address to Rome and the over-specific final chapter or chapters. Others have argued in favour of revision by Paul. J. B. Lightfoot believed that the two forms of which he knew, of fourteen and sixteen chapters, were both produced by Paul. The first form consisted of 1.1–16.23, omitting both the benediction and the doxology. 'At some period of his life, not improbably during one of his sojourns in Rome, it occurred to the Apostle to give to this letter a wider circulation.'[81] He changed the two references to Rome in chapter 1, and 'cut off the last two chapters containing personal matters, adding at the same time a doxology as a termination to the whole'.[82] An alternative version was proposed by Kirsopp Lake. He started with the problem that since 15.1–13 seems to belong with chapter 14, there is no obvious reason why it should have been excised with chapter 16. He suggests that Paul first wrote a general letter of fourteen chapters, at about the same time as Galatians. He later altered this to address the Romans, making changes to the address in chapter 1 and adding chapter 15. Lake thought that chapter 16 was probably a separate letter, addressed to the Ephesians.[83] T. W. Manson, on the grounds that many of the names of chapter 16 have connections with Ephesus rather than Rome, proposed that Paul wrote two versions of Romans: the first consisted of chapters 1–15 (the form to which P46 indirectly testifies), and was sent to Rome; he then sent this to the Ephesians with a covering letter (chapter 16).[84]

80 Full details are available in H. Y. Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans*, SD 42 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977).
81 J. B. Lightfoot, 'M. Renan's Theory of the Epistle to the Romans', *Journal of Philology* 2 (1869), 264ff., reprinted in *Biblical Essays* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1893), pp. 287–320, at p. 319.
82 Lightfoot, 'M. Renan's Theory', p. 319.
83 K. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Rivington, 1911).
84 T. W. Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans – and Others', *BJRL* 31 (1948), 224–40, reprinted in M. Black (ed.), *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Manchester University Press, 1962), pp. 225–41.

There are also some difficulties with regard to the naming of the Ephesians in Eph. 1.1. It has already been noted that Marcion called this letter Laodiceans. A number of important manuscripts, including P46, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, omit 'in Ephesus' from 1.1. (There cannot be any doubt that the scribes of at least most of these manuscripts assumed an Ephesian destination, since they wrote subscriptions 'To the Ephesians' or the like (01, 03; P46 has no subscription): the variants testify to an earlier state of affairs.) This, allied to the very general character of the epistle, has led some to argue that ἐν Ἐφἐσῳ is secondary.[85]

Is it coincidence that some uncertainty surrounds Ephesians, the letter to a place with which it has been argued Romans 16 may more likely be associated? And that Marcion, who either knew or created a text with the fourteen letter chapter form, knew Ephesians as something else, especially since one might suppose this confusion to be more likely to concern Colossians (see 4.16)?

The evidence so far gathered illustrates the state of affairs with regard to the formation of the collection and the textual critic's role in studying it. On the one hand, the individual letters survive only as part of a collection. This is unlike the situation with regard to the Gospels, where most papyri probably only contained one (though it may be that any of these is the sole survivor of a set of four). On the other hand, we have evidence that more than one collected edition existed, with a different order, different books and one different name for a book that we know about. Even the collected edition which became the dominant one in the Greek world contains traces of the older forms.

What light do the textual questions described in Romans and Ephesians shed on the growth of the tradition? With regard to Romans, the answer depends on the decisions taken about the cause of the variation. If Paul was responsible for both forms, then we may conclude that different collections derived their text from different Pauline versions. If one form was a revision by an editor, then it is possible that it is associated with the making of an early collection. In terms of the relationship between letters and collections, in the case of Pauline revision, then the letter once circulated independently in two different forms. In the case of secondary revision, then the letter did not circulate independently in two forms. The example of Ephesians is rather simpler: the problem is best explained by the need for collections to give each letter a different name: Marcion called it Laodiceans, while the majority of manuscripts are descended from a collection in which it was called

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85 E.g. E. Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 98–101.

Ephesians – and this address in time found its way from the 'title' of the letter into the text.

The collected edition may also have had another effect on the text of individual letters: the impulse to make the apostle more consistent. A variant which appears to do exactly that is found in 1 Cor. 14.34–5. Long before this variant became the subject of intense debate, Zuntz argued that the passage was an interpolation:

> [T]his passage is one more illustration of the fact that the editor of the *Corpus Paulinum* did not exclude from his text some passages which cannot originally have been where he put, or left, them. They must at one time have been written in the margin of the text and must have been penetrated into it, either when the archetype was edited or even earlier.[86]

The theory here is that the verses are ones seeking to harmonise the thought of the Pauline collection, on the grounds that the verses, although inconsistent within 1 Corinthians (cf. 11.2ff.), provide a broader agreement within the entire collection, by introducing the command of 1 Tim. 2.12. Such an argument requires that the interpolation was made into a collection which, unlike that found in P46, included the Pastorals.

The evidence that emerges is that of a number of collections available at an early stage. To Zuntz, who writes of a single corpus, the corpus that matters was that from which the extant manuscripts are descended. However, the evidence given above suggests that other collections have left their mark on the text of our witnesses, so that one has to draw back from Zuntz's terminology. There is evidence that there were a number of attempts to make a collected edition.

One comes finally to the questions of when the collection represented by our manuscripts was formed, and by whom. The recent suggestion by Trobisch that the date was early and the compiler Paul deserves to be taken seriously.[87] According to Trobisch, the first four letters of the normal sequence (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians) were edited by Paul for Christians in Ephesus (Rom. 16 is a cover note for this purpose), with the aim of justifying Paul's actions in his conflict with the Jerusalem church.

Editing Paul's letters

Yet again the editor is faced with the nature of a collection: the edition should reconstruct a text of the collected letters. Here there is the added task of

86 Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, p. 17.
87 D. Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection* (Bolivar, MO: Quiet Water Publications, 2000).

deciding whether the extant manuscripts are all descended from a single starting point, or whether traces of several separate collections, or even of individual copies (for example, at 1 Cor. 14.34f.), survive in the tradition. At the same time, the choice of the collected edition as a basis for the edition solves one problem. Whether Romans was used twice by Paul or not, if one of the two forms was that used by a collected edition from which the extant witnesses are descended, then that should be the form presented in the edition.

Revelation

History of research

Two contributions stand out as essential to the study of the text of Revelation. The first is H. C. Hoskier's monumental collection of variant readings from the manuscripts.[88] The second, by Josef Schmid, was the refinement of many years' study of the materials, and provides the most complete and satisfactory assessment of the textual condition of any part of the New Testament.[89]

The materials

Because Revelation has never been a part of the Orthodox lectionary, the number of available Greek manuscripts is immediately reduced by the absence of any lectionaries. Moreover, it was copied less than any other part of the New Testament. According to K. and B. Aland, there are only 287 copies, comprising 59 complete New Testaments, 8 copies with 10 folia or less, and 220 complete copies.[90] Since 1989, these numbers have risen, but only slightly. In fact the total number of entries in the *Liste*, with the online supplement, of manuscripts containing Revelation is 304, but a number of these are bracketed as wrongly included (for example, several are in Modern Greek). As throughout the New Testament, the majority were written in the tenth century or later:

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88 H. C. Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse. A Complete Consensus of All Authorities*, 2 vols. (London: Quaritch, 1929).

89 J. Schmid, *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse–Textes. Vol. 1: Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia* (Munich: Zink, 1956); *Vol. 11: Die Alten Stamme* (Munich: Zink, 1955). For a summary and assessment, see G. D. Kilpatrick, 'Professor J. Schmid on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse', *VC* 13 (1959), 1–13.

90 Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 83. With 59, contrast the number 61 given p. 413 above, and for the correction see J. K. Elliott, 'The Distinctiveness of the Greek Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation', *JTS* 48 (1997), 116–24.

century	number of extant copies
II	1
III	1
IV	6
V	4
VI	0
VII	1
VIII	1
IX	2
X	15
XI	34
XII	29
XIII	27
XIV	64
XV	57
XVI	39
XVII	14
XVIII	5

The most significant point about this distribution (and the justification for including it here) is the high proportion of manuscripts dating from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries – 160, or half of the total. By contrast, the number of manuscripts containing other parts of the New Testament from the same centuries is 766 out of 2,744, just under a third.[91] The difference for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is even more marked – 96 for Revelation, 291 for the rest: one third against rather more than a tenth. The reason may well lie in the role of the text in the Greek world after the fall of Byzantium, under Ottoman rule, when the text had an important function as an expression of Orthodox identity. Although such a profile might seem rather disappointing, the comparatively restricted transmission of the text means that its history is simpler than we would find with a much more active copying tradition (as for example is the case with the Gospels). The value of a set of witnesses depends not upon their absolute age, but upon the number of copyings between them and the beginning of the tradition. Where a text is copied more frequently, the likelihood of corruption is greater. This fact gives the lie to the claim that the New Testament text is more secure because the manuscripts are so much older than are those of many Greek and Latin literary texts. The greater frequency of copying means that the number of lost

91 This is extrapolated from the chart given by Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 82.

intermediaries between the beginning of the transmission and the extant witnesses is greater.

In the specific case of Revelation, the significance of chronologically late copies may be demonstrated by the following. Among these manuscripts, a significant and well-defined group is that of manuscripts containing the commentary by Andreas of Caesarea, written while the author was archbishop of Cappadocian Caesarea (563–614). Schmid described 111 manuscripts, 83 in the commentary's original form, 13 of an abbreviated version, and 15 containing scholia. He was able to group most of them and to provide stemmata of the groups. As a result, he was able to define the type of text available to Andreas when he was writing the commentary, so that these witnesses, many of them dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, together contribute to the reconstruction of a sixth-century text form.

As with other parts of the New Testament, there are important papyrus finds. The most extensive is the third of the three Chester Beatty New Testament papyri, P47. It contains portions or all of chapters 9, 11, 16 and 17. It is dated to the end of the third century. The next most significant discovery, P115, was published very recently (1999). It is very similar in date (late third or early fourth century), and contains portions of chapters 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8–15.

Of other ancient witnesses, there are a comparatively small number of majuscules: codices Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus and Ephraemi, 025 (a ninth-century copy of all the New Testament except the Gospels) and 046 of the tenth century. Of fragmentary copies we have 0169, 0207 and 0308 (fourth century), 0163 (fifth century), 0229 (eighth century), 051 and 052 (tenth century). It should be noted that Codex Vaticanus is not extant here. Important minuscules include 18, 35 and 61 (all complete New Testaments), and 42.

The discovery of ancient witnesses is an even more recent event for this text. After the addition of Codex Alexandrinus in the seventeenth century and Ephraemi soon after, the next ancient manuscript to become available to western scholarship was Codex Sinaiticus. It is particularly significant then that Schmid's researches have elucidated the history of the text. Uniquely among the New Testament writings, the witnesses group consistently into two main ancient text forms, each of them subdividing into two more.

The first of these, Schmid's 'neutral' text, consists of P115, 02, 04 and a number of minuscules, principally 1611, 1854 and 2329, with the text used by the sixth-century commentator Oecumenius. The text of 02 is generally of higher quality than 04, and is often supported by P115 in its superior readings. The text of 025 also contains a stratum of these readings.

The second group described by Schmid is the text to which P47, 01 and Origen all attest, one with many distinctive readings.[92]

There is evidence that both the old text forms are of great antiquity, and this is as clearly seen as anywhere in the well-known variant at 13.18. The reading 616, discussed by Irenaeus, is attested from the first group by P115 and 04, while 666 is found in the other group (P47, 01 and most witnesses, including the other members of the first 02–04 Oecumenius group). Certainly 616 is the harder reading, and one can produce a cogent argument that 666 is secondary. In other places one can find the two groups ranged against each other. There are ten such places where P115 is extant.[93] In all of them the P115–02–04 reading is superior.

The editing of the text of this book is thus placed on a quite different footing. With the assistance of the lengthy examination by Schmid of various types of grammatical variant, in which generally one can see a trend towards softening of difficult or impossible constructions, and by observing the habits of individual manuscripts and their relationships, one is able not only to reconstruct with a high degree of certainty the point at which the two old text types converge, but also by tracing the history of individual readings to observe how the reading text developed.

The versional evidence has yet to be fully explored. The Old Latin has now been edited, in a way that illuminates not only the Old Latin, but also the history of the Vulgate forms of text into the Middle Ages.[94] Evidence from the Coptic is limited, so far as the *Biblia Coptica* is concerned, to one manuscript (sa 519), variously dated to the fourth to the sixth century.[95] But there are Sahidic lectionary manuscripts (such as Vienna, ÖNB, K 2658+9723+9724). The book of Revelation was probably first translated into Syriac in the Philoxenian version. It is best known from the Crawford manuscript.[96] The relationship between this form of text and the Greek tradition needs to be explored afresh in the light of Schmid's researches. Thomas of Harkel's version has received a critical study.[97]

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92 Schmid, *Studien*, vol. I, p. 121.
93 D. C. Parker, 'A New Oxyrhynchus Papyrus of Revelation. P115 (P. Oxy. 4499)', *New Testament Studies* (2000), 159–74, at 165.
94 R. Gryson (ed.), *Apocalypsis Johannis*, Vetus Latina. Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron unter der Leitung von Roger Gryson 262 (Freiburg: Herder, 2003).
95 Schüssler, *Biblia Coptica*, vol. III, part I.
96 J. Gwynn (ed.), *The Apocalypse of St. John, in a Syriac Version Hitherto Unknown* (Dublin University Press, 1897).
97 I. R. Beacham, 'The Harklean Syriac Version of Revelation. Manuscripts, Text and Methodology of Translation from Greek', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham (1990).

Conclusion

In reviewing developments in the discipline since the publication of the first edition of this volume in 1970, one cannot but be struck by the dramatic changes. In a generation, we find that the basic tools of the trade have been transformed by the adoption of the computer and with it the internet, the database and the electronic edition. The continuing growth in the amount of evidence and the fact that scholarship is beginning to catch up with the implications of the major twentieth-century finds, especially the Chester Beatty and Bodmer papyri, have combined with the development of new theory in editorial technique and manuscript transmission. The steady publication of major critical editions, the greater availability of microfilm and now the creation of web-based digital images of manuscripts have combined to place far more primary material at the scholar's disposal than has ever been the case before. We are seeing a democratisation of the primary materials, so that users throughout the world will have access to images of manuscripts which are often easier to read than the manuscripts themselves.

Finally, the concept of the goal of textual criticism with regard to the concept of the original text has become a subject of much sharper debate than was the case in 1970.

At the same time, certain things remain the same. In 1970, J. N. Birdsall quoted with approval the words of Kirsopp Lake: 'It is impossible to separate the history of the text from the general history of a church.'[98] This insight has become so influential that the study of the theological and social factors which contributed to the development of early Christian texts has made textual criticism far more than a tool for reconstructing a critical text. Instead, it is now as much as anything a bridge between New Testament scholarship and the study of early and Byzantine Christianity.

As the current revolution in textual editing develops, what are the main requirements for New Testament scholarship? First and foremost comes the digitisation of the manuscripts, so that colour images of all the primary materials are available. Where necessary, we need to apply multispectral imaging (and other specialist techniques as they become available) to palimpsests and other difficult manuscripts. Second comes the completion of the main editions in hand – the *Editio critica maior* and the other projects which have been described. This includes the development of the electronic edition. Third come

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98 K. Lake, *The Text of the New Testament*, 6th edn (London: Rivington, 1928), p. 10, cited on p. 312 of the first volume of the first edition of this work.

studies of the material – of groups of manuscripts, of the causes of textual variation, and research combining textual, manuscript and cultural studies. These should include careful treatment of the most important manuscripts, of the kind developed for the Codex Sinaiticus Project. Finally, the current revolution is so rapid, and is likely to have so many effects that cannot now be envisaged, that this survey cannot be taken as anything more than a view of the state of the discipline in the early years of the twenty-first century.

The 'apocryphal' New Testament

J. K. ELLIOTT

Since the beginning of the twentieth century the early non-canonical Christian writings, known as the apocryphal New Testament, have been subjected to serious academic study;[1] and from the end of that century onwards critical editions of many of these texts in their original languages have been published.[2] These scholarly enterprises stand in contrast to the attitude adopted towards this literature in earlier centuries, when the texts were sidelined as heretical or (at best) irrelevant and were relegated to the outer fringes of Christian writing. Recently it has become increasingly apparent that such writings, castigated though many were by church authorities, can reveal much about the early development of Christian belief, practice and (in many instances) popular, folk religion. They may also be of relevance when assessing the development of the canon.

The twenty-seven books that were eventually accepted as the foundation documents of Christianity were not the only Christian texts to have been composed prior to the fourth century. Not all of these other, early texts are extant, but that is not surprising. Even within the New Testament there are clues to writings that have not survived. Luke's preface indicates that 'many' had attempted to compose gospel-type books; Col. 4:16 refers to a letter, now lost, which Paul claims to have written to the Laodiceans; 1 Cor. 5:9 and 2 Cor. 7:8 probably refer to correspondence Paul had had with the church in Corinth in addition to 1 and 2 Corinthians.

What is remarkable is that so much has survived, given the fact that early Christian writings, including those which were eventually to form the New

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1 Most influentially beginning with E. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1904), and M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924). See also Elliott, *Apocryphal*; *Écrits apocryphes*, vol. 1; Moraldi, *Apocrifi*; and Erbetta, *Apocrifi*. A popular introduction is F. Lapham, *An Introduction to the New Testament Apocrypha* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2003).
2 Notably in *Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983–). See also Geerard, *Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* for a listing of apocryphal texts.

Testament, were not composed as scripture and that many of them were addressed to a particular locality with a limited readership. The ecclesiastical authorities, East and West, who eventually agreed upon a list of authoritative writings, acceptable to the worldwide church, did so for a variety of reasons. But it seems certain that one of the motives was the need to discriminate among the multiplicity of writings confronting Christians, particularly in the second to third centuries. Gnosticism alone spawned a large number of writings in this period. Some of those texts are familiar nowadays, thanks to the discovery in 1945–6 of the Gnostic library at Nag Hammadi. The existence of many contemporary Christian writings acted as a catalyst for those wishing to establish an authorised canon of Christian books that had to be not only apostolic and old, but also universally used and accepted by the church.

Writings by Gnostics and other groups had a great influence on the beliefs of many early Christians. Orthodox authorities such as Irenaeus were concerned to remove the threat posed by such teachings by restricting the circulation of their literature. The decision to create a canon of Christian writings was therefore due less to a desire to define an exclusive collection of early, apostolic and universally approved books and more to a requirement to avoid dangerous texts which were new and heretical in the eyes of those who were later to be recognised as the orthodox defenders of the faith.

Not all the texts that were excluded from the New Testament were in fact 'heretical' or unorthodox. The writings that have conventionally been labelled as the 'Apostolic Fathers' do not fall into this category. Nor should the bulk of the writings commonly collected together under the title of 'the apocryphal New Testament' be dismissed *en bloc* as heretical, to use that description anachronistically.

The title 'apocryphal New Testament', a comparatively modern term, is given to a range of amorphous texts that seem to have originated from the second (some would even argue the first) century onwards. The earliest examples of this literature spawned many imitations, rewritings and expansions. For instance, the five earliest apocryphal Acts (those of Peter, Andrew, Paul, Thomas and John) were followed by countless later imitations, such as the Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, the Passion of Matthew or the Acts of Philip.

The term 'the apocryphal New Testament' is not ideal: the definite article wrongly implies that one is dealing with a fixed and agreed collection, comparable to the Old Testament Apocrypha, the contents of which are known and accepted by modern scholarship and are to be found as a recognisably fixed entity in Bibles. Not only is the use of the definite article misleading but the adjective 'apocryphal' is wrong if taken in its primary

meaning of 'hidden'. Very few of the so-called apocryphal texts actually claim to have been hidden, one exception being the Apocalypse of Paul. In addition the Gospel of Thomas and the Acts of Andrew purport to contain secret words or hidden truths. (However, if the meaning of 'apocryphal' is 'spurious' or 'secondary', then it may well be allowable.)

Even the use of 'New Testament' in the title is not precise. It is true that many of the 'apocrypha' are concerned with the characters or events that appear in the canonical texts but not all are. Despite this, there is, nevertheless, a tendency in modern scholarship to collect the apocryphal texts into the conventional New Testament subheadings (Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse), even though not all of the 'apocryphal' texts match those categories.

Convention, however, requires our using terms like 'apocryphal' and 'canonical' anachronistically when speaking of writings earlier than the fourth century. Also the umbrella title, the apocryphal New Testament, is well established and is therefore used here.

Adverse critical comments by the church fathers, and early lists such as the Gelasian Decree, the List of the Sixty Books or the Stichometry of Nicephorus provide evidence of the general and widespread use and knowledge of these apocryphal writings. The censoring of books and the placing of certain texts on a black list always perversely have the opposite effect to the one intended. In the case of the Christian writings castigated as non-approved, many survived, some, admittedly, in clandestine or catholicised versions. The apocryphal acts in particular were heavily rewritten, frequently revised or epitomised. For example, Gregory of Tours rewrote the ancient Acts of Andrew, setting out, as he put it, to avoid verbosity and to omit 'all that bred weariness'. That is why the modern editor of the apocryphal acts and other texts frequently has to work back from fragments, and from the expurgated rewritings, to try to establish an earlier form.

Agrapha

There is a considerable body of sayings of Jesus that may be collected from patristic writings, from biblical manuscripts and from apocryphal sources which are not paralleled in the New Testament. Such sayings are commonly called 'agrapha', that is, sayings 'not written' in the New Testament itself.[3] As

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3 Major collections of agrapha are to be found in Resch, *Agrapha*; and Resch, *Ausserkanonische Schriftfragmente*. See also Stroker, *Extracanonical Sayings*.

well as the familiar saying about the man working on the Sabbath found after Luke 6:4 in Codex Bezae, some other famous agrapha are: 'Be competent money-changers' (in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.28.177) and 'Ask for the great things, and God will add to you what is small' (*Strom.* 1.24.158). Some sayings such as those could represent early tradition, which may contain *ipsissima verba* of Jesus; some result from false attribution (e.g. 1 Cor. 2:9 appears as a saying of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas 17); some, embedded in apocryphal works, may have been composed ad hoc for the work concerned (and would therefore have no claim to authenticity).

Lost gospels

Some gospels are known now only by their titles, found in patristic and other sources, while extracts from some others are known from citations in patristic works.[4] Among the latter are extracts from Jewish–Christian gospels, for instance the Gospel according to the Hebrews, known from quotations in Origen and Jerome, the Gospel of the Egyptians, parts of which are quoted in the work of Clement of Alexandria, and the Preaching of Peter, parts of which are known from Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

Extant gospels

Some of the apocryphal gospels known today have survived complete or relatively so, while others are fragmentary.[5] The main apocryphal gospel texts are the Protevangelium of James, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the Arabic Infancy Gospel, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter and the Gospel of Nicodemus. Some of these are passion gospels, others birth or infancy gospels; there is nothing among these later writings comparable to the canonical gospels. What have also survived are texts that contain stories which could belong to the period of Jesus' ministry. Some are small fragments containing sometimes only one episode, sometimes three or four stories. Again, we have no means of knowing the original scale of the texts from which these fragments have chanced to survive. The most famous of these fragments of apocryphal gospels is the second-century Egerton Papyrus 2 in the British Library. This contains four stories on the

4 See Klijn, *Jewish–Christian Gospel Tradition*.
5 For descriptions and discussions see Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*; Lührmann and Schlarb, *Fragmente*; Dieter Lührmann, *Die apokryph gewordenen Evangelien* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); and Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*.

front and reverse of two fragments. The manuscript has been supplemented by an additional fragment, P. Köln 255 (inv. 608), which enables the London fragments to be extended slightly. These stories have biblical parallels, in particular the healing of a leper (cf. Matt. 8:2–4 and par.), paying tribute to Caesar (Matt. 22:15–22 and par.), the prophecy of Isaiah 29:13 (cf. Matt. 15:7–8 and par.) and an episode with echoes of John 5:39, 45–6, 9:29. Among other fragments are the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840 of the fourth century, which relates a scene in which Jesus defines true purity, and the so-called Fayyum Fragment of the third century containing sayings at the Last Supper.[6]

It will have been noticed that many of these writings claim to have come from the pen of an early Christian apostle. Such a convention was intended to convey ancient authority, pseudonymity being a relatively common practice at the time. But once a document's authorship was queried and pseudonymity presumed, then such a writing would lose its claim to represent genuine apostolic authorship and be set aside as 'apocryphal'.[7]

The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Thomas[8] is another example of a writing claiming to be the work of an early disciple, Didymus Judas Thomas; in its entirety it was discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945. The copy, written in Coptic, has been dated to *c.* AD 350, although the original composition of its text is usually dated some two centuries earlier. It contains 114 sayings, nearly all of them attributed to Jesus. As such, it may be comparable with the hypothetical canonical gospel source known as Q, usually said to have been a gospel containing sayings of Jesus, without narrative. Many scholars as a consequence have discussed the nature of its sayings, in some cases claiming that the Gospel of Thomas may contain a more original form of a dominical saying than its canonical counterpart. This apocryphon is therefore one of the few non-canonical texts in which the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus are said to exist. Controversy rages about the dating of this gospel, some scholars even claiming that it is a first-century composition.

The conclusion of the Gospel of Thomas states that it is 'a gospel', but its opening words speak merely of 'sayings'. Its original language was Greek:

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6 These and other texts may be seen in Elliott, *Apocryphal*.
7 See Lapham, *Introduction*, pp. 3–5.
8 Among the extensive literature on this apocryphon see Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (London: Penguin, 1979); Risto Uro (ed.), *Thomas at the Crossroads* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); Valentasis, *Thomas*.

three fragments of Thomas in Greek have survived, and were discovered in Oxyrhynchus at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (P. Oxy. 1, P. Oxy. 654, P. Oxy. 655). One fragment has been given a date of around AD 200; the other two are third century. Until the Coptic text was unearthed, the relationship of the Greek fragments to one another and to a longer work gave rise to half a century of learned debate and speculation. The discovery of the Gospel of Thomas at Nag Hammadi answered many of the earlier questions and laid to rest much speculation, although the exact relationship between the Coptic and the surviving Greek fragments is still not entirely clear – the Coptic, for instance, is not an exact translation of the Greek and it seems as if Thomas passed through several recensions.

The date of its composition seems to have been prior to AD 200, but whether it goes back to the first century or is even contemporaneous with the canonical gospels is still being discussed. Most scholars, however, accept that the Gospel of Thomas was written later than the New Testament Gospels, but the degree of dependence, or relationship, between the apocryphal text and the biblical is debated. An analysis shows that many of its *logia* are linked to New Testament sources, especially the Gospels. Some links are mere allusions; others are deviant versions of the same saying; a few are almost exactly parallel. All of this opens intriguing questions about the history, origins and significance of the sayings in Thomas.

Among sayings that closely parallel the New Testament are *logion* 20 (mustard seed), *logion* 64 (parable of the wedding guests) and *logion* 65 (parable of the wicked husbandmen). On the other hand, there are sayings such as *logia* 23, 67 or 114 which have no obvious New Testament parallel. Because of sayings like these, the term 'Gnostic', usually intended as a pejorative term synonymous with 'heretical', has been applied to Thomas as a whole. In other words, a common judgement is that the community responsible for preserving and circulating Thomas in the form in which it was eventually written was a Christian group sympathetic to or influenced by Gnosticism. Gnosticism in varying forms flourished in the early Christian centuries and in many ways some of the teaching of Thomas was merely characteristic of second-century syncretism. This could mean that it did not necessarily originate in a fully fledged Gnostic movement, nor is it to be dismissed as unorthodox in its entirety. Often the mere fact that Thomas was found in the Nag Hammadi Library is sufficient for some commentators to brand it, because of guilt by association, as a Gnostic work when all that may be deduced is that the Nag Hammadi Library found it a congenial work to possess.

Marian gospels

One of the dominant motives behind the composing of apocryphal gospels seems to have been the filling in of perceived gaps in the canonical, biblical narrative; another is the completing of the biographies of its *dramatis personae*, while yet another motive may well have been the attempt to correct and respond to criticisms made about details within the earlier gospel narratives.

It was the natural curiosity of those reading the texts that became the canonical Gospels which led to the need to amplify the story of Mary.[9] Anyone attempting to tell her life story, based only on the New Testament, comes across many tantalising gaps.

Biographical queries then arise about Mary. Where was she born? Who were her parents? How was she reared? What about her death? Other questions are theological. Why was that woman chosen to be the mother of Jesus? What was special and unique about her? What example can she set? It was in order to answer questions such as these that, by the second century, Christian imagination and piety produced many (apocryphal) tales about Mary. Some of these survived, despite official disapprobation.

The third–fourth century manuscript Bodmer v contains a gospel entitled 'The Birth of Mary; the Revelation of James', a text usually referred to as the Protevangelium, because it tells of events prior to Jesus' birth and concerns Mary's parents, Anna and Joachim, her birth and upbringing. The purported author (according to its final paragraph) is James of Jerusalem, pseudonymous authorship being an ongoing tradition within Christian writing. Its stories reflect a developing tradition that was ultimately expressed in Christian teaching about the perpetual virginity of Mary. In addition, it gave support and impetus to feasts such as the Immaculate Conception of Mary and the Presentation in the Temple.

The work is sometimes seen as apologetic in tone. One motive for its having been written seems to have been the defence of aspects of Christianity ridiculed by Celsus. To combat charges of Christianity's humble origins, the Protevangelium is at pains to show us that Jesus' parents were not poor: Joseph is a building contractor; Mary spins, but not for payment. Another motive may be to defend Jesus' conception against charges of sexual irregularity: the pregnant Mary's virginity is vindicated before Joseph and later before the priests. Similarly, the Davidic decent of Mary is stressed (10:3),

9 In addition to the collections of apocryphal texts listed above where many Marian gospels are included, see also Rita Beyers, *Libellus de nativitate Sanctae Mariae*, CCSA 10 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997).

The narrative continues with a famous monologue by Joseph, who describes the wonders that accompanied Jesus' birth – in particular, the cessation of natural phenomena. The apocryphal writer obviously believed that the arrival on earth of the universal saviour demanded cosmic recognition. The moving star in the biblical account was not sufficient: for this developed tradition the catalepsy of nature was introduced as an appropriate accompaniment to the birth. In this, parallels can be drawn with the cosmic events that accompanied Jesus' departure from earth, notably the eclipse and the earthquake at the time of his crucifixion (Matt. 23:51–2; Mark 15:33). The paralysis of natural phenomena may be compared with the silence in heaven at the opening of the seventh seal in Rev. 8:1.

A variation of the stories in the Protevangelium is to be seen in the later Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. Here Jesus' birth is acknowledged not only by the shepherds and the wise men, but also by animals. This well-known scene is due to the influence of the Old Testament, in particular Isa. 1:3 and Hab. 3:2. This represents an ongoing tradition in which various biblical passages were read as messianic prophecies that were then said to have been fulfilled in the life of Jesus. Pseudo-Matthew's use of Old Testament citations continues a tradition that arose at the beginning of Christianity.

Gospels of Jesus' childhood

Several apocryphal gospels, such as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Arabic Infancy Gospel, relate incidents about Jesus as an infant and a young boy.[12] Their main theme is to show Jesus' precocious awareness of his supernatural origin and his power over life, death and nature. The biblical precedent for such stories is likely to be the account in Luke's Gospel of Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve. That story is to be found in a modified form in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas – a second-century composition, which, together with the Protevangelium of James, seems to have had an enormous influence on Christian tradition, thanks partly to the fact that both were re-edited in other, later writings.

The belief in Jesus' divinity is clearly orthodox in Christian doctrine, but the often sensational manifestations of his supernatural abilities displayed in the numerous childhood stories in the apocryphal gospels tend to distort that belief. Modern readers are struck less by the piety underlying the stories than by the destructiveness of many of Jesus' actions. Such a negative theme may

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12 See Elliott, *Synopsis*.

be paralleled in the New Testament story of Jesus' blasting the fig tree (Mark 11:12–14, 20–4), but the recurrence of this motif makes it the dominant feature of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas in particular.

Passion gospels

The main accounts of Jesus' death in apocryphal texts occur in the Gospel of Peter and in the Gospel of Nicodemus.[13] The Gospel of Peter is likely to have been composed in the second century. Although it was known in Antiquity (Eusebius reports that Bishop Serapion of Antioch, *c.* 190, knew of a church in Rhossus that used this 'unorthodox' book and initially permitted its reading), the Gospel of Peter seemed to have disappeared without trace. Unlike many of the other apocryphal texts which have been preserved, often in multiple copies, no manuscripts of Peter were known until recently, when, at the end of the nineteenth century, a copy of a part of it was discovered during an archaeological excavation in Egypt. Since then, one or possibly two tiny fragments have also come to light. A reading of the main text shows that its passion narrative parallels very closely the story in the four canonical Gospels, and it seems clear that the writer of the Gospel of Peter has drawn on these New Testament accounts for his version of Jesus' passion. Much in this gospel repeats material in the canonical stories; modern printed gospel synopses often include parallels from Peter alongside the canonical passages.

As the complete text of the Gospel of Peter has not survived, we have no means of knowing if the original composition was a fully-fledged gospel like the canonical four, containing stories from Jesus' ministry prior to the arrest.

A motive for the composition of the Gospel of Peter may have been the desire to rewrite the four canonical accounts as one. The *Diatessaron*, itself of second-century origin, is one such attempt to retell the separated stories about Jesus as one continuous composition, probably with the intention of replacing the four individual and differing versions. There are, however, some significant differences between the Gospel of Peter and the New Testament. One is the cry of Jesus from the cross ('My power, O power, you have forsaken me!'), which some commentators would interpret as an indication that the Gospel of Peter has been contaminated by unorthodox influences. A stronger heretical indication may be seen in the sentence, 'He held his peace as he

13 On the Gospel of Peter, see the general introduction in the major collections and, for a more distinctive viewpoint, J. D. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988).

felt no pain', which might imply that Jesus was incapable of suffering pain. If that is the correct translation, then it would indeed suggest possible docetic influence. Nevertheless, our overall assessment of the Gospel of Peter is that its author was not self-consciously following unorthodox teaching, but that he was a typically unsophisticated and uncritical product of the syncretism which characterised much of the Christian world.

One significant post-biblical characteristic found in the Gospel of Peter is a dominant anti-Jewish sentiment. Here Jewish malevolence is the motive for the intention not to break Jesus' legs; and the blame for the death of Jesus is laid firmly at the door of the Jews. Another development is the account of Jesus' leaving the tomb.

The first half of the Gospel of Nicodemus, which probably dates from the fifth or sixth century, is known as the Acts of Pilate and tells of Jesus' trial, death and resurrection. The book is concerned with Pilate's role in the sentencing of Jesus. In it we note that Jesus' power is shown to exceed that of the Roman state. The superiority of Christianity over earthly rule is one of the most dominant themes throughout the whole range of apocryphal literature. It is perhaps the single most significant unifying element of teaching in a body of literature that is otherwise amorphous, heterogeneous, and widespread geographically and chronologically.

The descent to the underworld

It is interesting to note that the apocryphal tradition did not seek to elaborate stories of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. What seem to replace stories of the risen Jesus in the New Testament apocryphal tradition are accounts in which the ascended Jesus communicates orally with believers: several apocryphal books containing discussions with the ascended Christ are recognised as a new genre, and are now sometimes classified as 'Dialogues of the Redeemer'. The Apocryphon of James is one such example.

But the apocryphal tradition did elaborate upon Jesus' descent to Hades. This credal affirmation seems to be based on a particular interpretation of 1 Pet. 3:19. That statement encouraged later generations of Christians to expound on what was meant by Jesus' appearance before imprisoned spirits. The apocryphal stories of Jesus' descent to the underworld reflect those considerations, and in addition helped to address the church's doctrinal concerns about the destiny of those who died before the incarnation. The main text describing these events is the fifth- to sixth-century *Descensus ad inferos*, found in several manuscripts as the second half of the Gospel of Nicodemus. Here

Jesus breaks down the gates of Hades, releases the faithful dead imprisoned there and leads them to paradise.

Another text, which partly parallels the *Descensus*, is the Questions of Bartholomew, dated perhaps as early as the second century. In that book Bartholomew confronts Jesus in the period before his ascension. Among many questions and answers is one concerning Jesus' whereabouts after his crucifixion (when he is said to have vanished from the cross). Jesus' reply is remarkably consistent with the story in the *Descensus*.

Pilate

Several apocryphal texts relate stories about the end of Pilate, the *Acta Pilati* being the most extensive. For many early Christians the role and fate of Pilate were enigmatic. Was he a just but weak ruler swayed by the Jewish mob, or a wicked, doomed man, guilty of deicide? In the canonical tradition what begins as an ambivalent attitude towards Pilate becomes fixed: Pilate is a puppet in the hands of the mob. This way of resolving the theological and historical problem of the role of Pilate by the New Testament authors did not, however, finally settle the issue. The later, apocryphal, tradition reflects a continuing dilemma in judging his character. Possibly the change in attitude, especially in western European sources, may be explained by the fact that the earlier goodwill of the Roman authorities had sometimes turned to officially inspired persecution. The ambiguous ways of treating Pilate are at their most apparent only when the apocryphal legends reach the death of Pilate. Where a judgement on his career is expected, he is treated variously as a saint or as an outcast. In the eastern church, particularly in the Coptic and Ethiopic tradition, he was portrayed favourably. Those churches eventually canonised him. An apocryphal tale, usually known as the *Paradosis Pilati*, shows how one eastern legend treated Pilate: although Caesar has Pilate beheaded, Pilate's destiny is a triumph. The western church judged Pilate harshly, as may be seen in the text known as the *Mors Pilati*.

Apocryphal acts

Just as the apocryphal gospels amplify events relating to Jesus' birth, childhood and death, so the apocryphal acts tell us about the founding fathers of the church.[14] There are many apocryphal acts that have survived, but the most

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14 Klauck, *Apocryphal Acts*.

important and influential are the oldest: the Acts of Andrew, the Acts of John, the Acts of Paul, the Acts of Peter and the Acts of Thomas. The stories themselves, although bearing some relation to the genre of literature parallel to the Acts of the Apostles, with its breathless sequence of stories, journeys, conversions, plots and speeches, are in effect Christianised counterparts to the popular reading matter of predominantly literate Roman believers.[15] Parallels to these Christian novels are to be found in erotic pagan literature. Eventually this type of literature gave rise to lives of the saints and hagiographies. But as far as the second-century acts and their immediate successors are concerned, the emphasis is on an individual apostle's miracles, prayers, preaching and death.

Only the Acts of Thomas has survived intact. The other early acts are very fragmentary, especially in their early chapters. The ecclesiastical authorities who denounced these second-century acts, labelling them as apocryphal, nonetheless seemed to allow their concluding chapters to survive. It is in those chapters that in most cases an account of the eponymous hero's martyrdom is to be found. Such accounts were presumably exemplary and of hortatory value to the faithful, even though the stories preceding the martyrdom were rejected by the authorities as uninstructive, secondary or even unorthodox. Later, expurgated or catholicised rewritings of the originals were encouraged. But some of the earlier, original acts can be reconstructed from surviving manuscripts and other sources.

Within the Acts of John are to be found some details relevant to an understanding of how the figure of the risen Christ was said to have been experienced in the second century. In particular, the belief that he was able to appear in differing guises, sometimes simultaneously to different people, had taken hold. This picture of the polymorphic risen Jesus has him experienced as an old man in the Acts of Peter, as a child in the Acts of Andrew and as a youth in the Acts of Paul. These often strange descriptions nonetheless reveal an orthodox belief in the omnipresence of Jesus. A related phenomenon are those stories within the apocryphal acts which describe the eponymous apostle and Jesus as interchangeable. Thomas is Judas Thomas or Didymus, the twin of Christ, and is identified as Jesus in the Acts of Thomas; Jesus and Andrew are interchangeable in the Acts of Andrew. This belief in the apostle as the alter ego of his master (again, quite orthodox in itself) is here expressed in dramatic and literal form.

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15 See Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*; Pervo, *Profit with delight*; and Bovon, Brock and Matthews, *Apocryphal Acts*.

However, the majority of the stories in the apocryphal acts are concerned with the deeds of the eponymous hero – these are the 'acts' themselves. Some of the passages are well known and have had their influence on Christian tradition. The description of Paul as small, bald and bandy (from the Acts of Paul and Thecla) is well known. The description of Peter's inverse crucifixion occurs in the Acts of Peter. The tradition that India was evangelised by Thomas is found in the Acts of Thomas. The 'quo vadis?' scene in which Jesus sees the impending death of the apostle as a repetition of his own crucifixion comes from the Acts of Peter; and a comparable scene also occurs in the Acts of Paul. The story of Thecla, the woman apostle, in the Acts of Paul is popular. From the Acts of John we read of a parricide who later castrates himself: he is rebuked by John for so doing but is then converted. In the same book we have an odd tale where John rebukes bedbugs who disturb his sleep. From the Acts of Paul come the baptism of a lion, and Paul's subsequent preservation when thrown to the self-same lion. In the Acts of Peter is the story of an adulteress who becomes paralysed when she tries to receive the Eucharist. Also there we find a story in which Peter revives a dead fish.

The apocryphal acts have a historic value, but obviously not concerning the events of the first-century world they purport to relate. Their most obvious importance is that they give an unparalleled insight into the popular folk religion of their times. But even more importantly, they reveal aspects of early Christian preaching, teaching and worship. Most of these acts are orthodox and catholic, and stem from those second- to third-century Christians who in writing these stories of the apostles projected their own faith. Behind their undoubted exaggeration and distortion lies a faith that shares much with the New Testament in general and the Acts of the Apostles in particular.

The apostles' deaths, usually martyrdoms, may be compared to that of Jesus, especially in the cases of Peter and of Andrew who are crucified. In addition, the various trials serve as convenient contexts for the authors to have their hero preach a sermon before large, and generally sympathetic, crowds. A courtroom scene is a useful device for allowing the apostle to deliver a major *apologia pro vita sua*. These defences are likely to represent the rationale of those Christians who identify with the apostle in order to withstand their own tribulations. Among the speeches the farewell address of the apostle, from Stephen onwards, is another valuable vehicle in which the author can give a defence of Christianity. Jesus' three-chapter farewell discourse in the fourth Gospel doubtless provided a precedent for the long farewell in, among other places, the Acts of Andrew, where Andrew gives a final sermon that lasts over three days.

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The apostles in the apocryphal acts are imitators of Jesus even after death. Just as Jesus fails to be bound by death, so too the apostles' deaths are in fact triumphs. Thomas reappears after death. Nero sees a vision (presumably of Peter) after Peter's death and he subsequently ceases persecuting Christians. In the Acts of Paul, Nero hears of Paul's reappearance; Longus, a proconsul, and Cestus, a centurion, see Titus and Luke praying with Paul after the latter's death.

Two particular passages within the apocryphal acts are worthy of attention because of the beauty and poignancy of their poetry. These are the Hymn of Christ in the Acts of John 94–5, a poem since set to music by Gustav Holst, and the Hymn of the Soul or Hymn of the Pearl in the Acts of Thomas. Both poems are likely to have been insertions into their respective narratives; they may have had an independent existence previously. The former concerns Christ and the disciples who exchange versicles and responses within the context of a dance. The latter is a charming oriental allegory concerning a youth who sets out to recover a pearl of great price, and when he ultimately succeeds in his mission he is rewarded with a heavenly garment.

The entertainment value of these books was obviously paramount, but these acts are witnesses to the religious ideas of a great part of Christendom – even if such teaching did not match the intellectual debates and theological ideals of the patristic writers. These acts were the popular reading matter of Christians in many parts of the Mediterranean, Syria, North Africa and Asia over several centuries at precisely the same time as the great thinkers were formulating creeds, doctrines and canons of belief and practice. The apocryphal acts may be crudely sensational, may promote an unthinking superstition at worst, a simple faith at best, but their creation, enduring existence and undoubted popularity show that Christianity was vibrant, popular and, above all, successful throughout the dark ages of the second century and beyond.

Apocryphal letters

Given Paul's reputation as a letter writer, it is not surprising that several apocryphal letters claim to be from his pen. A letter from the Corinthian church to Paul and his reply, known as 3 Corinthians, are found in the Acts of Paul. The most famous of the other invented letters allegedly written by Paul is the Epistle to the Laodiceans. As is usual in the traditions of this apocryphal literature, the original impetus to concoct a writing was due to a perceived gap in the New Testament. Col. 4:16 refers to a letter Paul wrote to the church in Laodicea. That epistle did not survive. The apocryphal letter was

created, perhaps as early as the second century, out of phrases found in the authentic Pauline corpus, particularly Philippians and Galatians, in order to compose an epistle intended to be accepted as that referred to in Colossians. That it succeeded in its purpose is shown by its appearance in several Latin manuscripts of the New Testament, including the famous codices Fuldensis, Cavensis and Ardmachanus. It appears as an appendix at the conclusion of modern printed editions of the Latin Vulgate.

Other apocryphal epistles include a set of fourteen letters, purporting to be correspondence between Paul and Seneca. Most of them are likely to have been composed in the fourth century. There is even a letter allegedly from Christ to Abgar. This occurs in a version of a legend related by Eusebius. Abgar, who was king of Edessa from 4 BC to AD 7 and again from AD 13 to 50, sent a letter to Jesus asking him to come to Edessa to heal his malady. Jesus did not accede to the request, but sent a letter instead, which is reproduced by Eusebius.

Other texts that have conventionally been classified as letters include the *Epistula apostolorum*, although this is not really epistolary in form or content: it starts as a letter but soon turns into an apocalypse. (Perhaps the book of Revelation provides a loose parallel.) Similarly, the Epistle of Pseudo-Titus was never an example of real, personal correspondence. It is a homily on the theme of celibacy. That letter has been used by modern scholars to assist in the recovery of some missing portions of the apocryphal Acts of John, of Peter and of Andrew.

Apocryphal apocalypses

Christian writers, biblical and post-biblical, concerned themselves, just as their Jewish predecessors had done, with apocalyptic themes and teaching. In general, apocalypses speak of the signs and portents presaging the end of this world, and hinting at the nature of the other world. In the apocryphal literature we may separate these two features.

There are those texts which describe what heaven and hell hold in store for the faithful and the unbeliever. Post-biblical writers used this genre of literature with its tours of the other world with great imagination. Two of the most influential texts were the Apocalypse of Peter, dating probably from the mid-second century, and the Apocalypse of Paul, probably written in the fourth century. Once again, one finds the names Peter and Paul in use as the supposed authors of apocryphal works. That an apocalypse was written in Paul's name is not surprising, given the statement by Paul in 2 Cor. 12 that

he had been 'caught up as far as the third heaven'. In the authentic Pauline literature this baffling statement is not explained. It was an obvious gap that was left to the imagination of a later writer to fill and the Apocalypse of Paul tells what happened to Paul on his otherworldly visits. This apocalypse proved to be the most popular of the western church's apocryphal apocalypses, and it led to the commonly held beliefs about heaven and hell that fuelled the medieval imagination. Much of the art and sculpture in the Middle Ages depicting the afterlife was inspired by this work. Dante's *Inferno* was also influenced by the Apocalypse of Paul and even quotes it.

Whereas the apocalypses of Peter and of Paul are concerned with the current state of affairs in heaven and hell, the Apocalypse of Thomas contains predictions about the ending of the present world. It is thus 'apocalyptic' in its sense of foretelling the future.

Assumption of Mary

Many apocryphal narratives tell of Mary's death.[16] Just as believers and writers in the post-New Testament period began to reflect on why it was that Mary was chosen to be the one to bring Jesus into the world, so too they reflected on her death. Like her birth, this needed to emphasise her unique status. The assumption (or dormition, falling asleep, *transitus* or obsequies) appeared in written forms, somewhat later than stories of her early years; Epiphanius of Salamis towards the end of the fourth century claims he can find no record of how the Virgin's life ended. Only from the fifth century do the stories of Mary's departure from the earth emerge.

There is a large number of accounts of Mary's death and assumption into heaven composed in various languages. The history of those traditions is largely uncharted, although some scholars[17] have argued for an organic growth within the differing extant traditions.

Although it seems impossible to edit a single narrative of the assumption that takes into account all variant forms in the different languages, one can detect certain roughly defined differences between two main areas. In the Coptic tradition Mary's corporeal ascent is a feature: there is a long interval between her death and assumption. That tradition knows nothing of the summoning of all the apostles – only Peter and John are present. Mary is

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16 On this genre see Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions*.
17 E.g. S. C. Mimouni, *Dormition et assomption de Marie. Histoire des traditions anciennes* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995).

warned of her death by Jesus. In the tradition represented by the Latin, Greek and Syriac, Mary's death is announced by an angel (who in the Latin brings a palm branch), the apostles are summoned from all parts of the world and Mary's assumption occurs soon after her death. In the Latin narrative attributed to Joseph of Arimathaea Mary dies and Jesus takes her soul to heaven. Her corpse is placed in her tomb but is then immediately transported to heaven by angels to be reunited with her soul. The Greek narratives may have been used liturgically on the commemoration of Mary's death, and, as a consequence, are somewhat shorter. The Latin narratives are smoother, suggestive of a later date. The Syriac tradition is perhaps the earliest. This diverse collection of narratives possibly originated in Syro-Palestine and Egypt but spread throughout Christendom by the tenth century.

Principal themes in the Apocrypha

As well as containing features about the faith found throughout early Christian orthodox writings, there are several distinctive themes characteristic of the Christian Apocrypha. Some of these reflected and also fuelled various developing teachings. Among the more prominent are the following.

Celibacy and virginity

Celibacy is a virtue found in the New Testament, but in the apocryphal literature this theme is dominant. The extreme asceticism in early Christianity encouraged, and was itself encouraged by, literature such as the apocryphal acts, the theme in many of which is the conversion of a pagan woman to Christianity. That is a common and repeated storyline in many of them. As a consequence of the apostle's ascetic teaching, the newly converted woman forsakes her husband's bed. The spurned husband, usually a prominent citizen, then arranges for the arrest and death of the apostle, whose teachings have stolen his wife.

Another example of such teaching is when Jesus, disguised as Thomas in the Acts of Thomas, in a sermon to a couple of newlyweds, urges them to devote themselves to chastity. Similar teaching is found elsewhere. Also in the Acts of Thomas 12 comes a denunciation of begetting children. John gives thanks that he was prevented from marrying (Acts of John 113). Peter in the Acts of Peter is praised for allowing his daughter to remain a paralytic, rather than be a temptation to men. It is no wonder that encratite and apotactite teaching found some of these Apocrypha congenial, although it is to be noted that later a writer like Jovinian vehemently disagreed with such teachings.

The same theme is dominant in the Marian gospels. As soon as Anna conceives, her child is destined to be the mother of the Son of the Most High. Mary is to be reared in the temple and later, without the stain of sexual contact, shall, as a virgin, bear a son. Protevangelium 9:7 uses the title 'Virgin of the Lord' for the first time, but that is how she is constantly referred to thereafter in this literature. Throughout the Marian gospels she is only ever called 'the virgin', not ever 'daughter', 'wife' or 'mother' (with only one exception at Protevangelium 21:11).

Mary's reaction to the proposal by the high priest, Abiathar, that she marry his son is to defend her status as a true religious, saying that her own virginity is in itself worship: 'God is first of all worshipped in chastity . . . I from my infancy in the Temple of God have learned that virginity can be sufficiently dear to God. And so, because I can offer what is dear to God, I have resolved in my heart that I should not know a man at all' (Pseudo-Matthew 7).

Mary's perpetual virginity is emphasised after the pregnancy: the strange story of the administration of the 'water of truth' in the Protevangelium serves to emphasise her ongoing virginity, while physically her womb is great. Similarly in *De nativitate Mariae* 8:5 Joseph's and Mary's was a real marriage, even though, according to a statement by Augustine, it was not consummated.

The principal midwife in Pseudo-Matthew 13:3 makes a significant declaration about Mary's perpetual virginity by stating, having observed that the birth of Jesus occurred without the spilling of blood: 'Virgo peperit et postquam peperit virgo esse perdurat.'[18] The physical examination by a disbelieving midwife confirms she is *virgo intacta*.

Asceticism and poverty

A comparable theme is that the apostles are consistently described as ascetics: they practise a rigorous self-denial, their abstinence and otherworldliness are exemplary. The reputation of Thomas (Acts of Thomas 20) is typical: continually he fasts and prays, and eats only bread with salt. His drink is water, and he wears only one garment whatever the weather. He takes nothing from anyone, and what he has he gives to others. One can understand why encratite groups found these acts congenial, but the teaching in itself is compatible with and closely paralleled in New Testament teaching, even though unworldliness and chastity as Christian virtues are pushed to the extremes. Such teaching

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18 Cf. Augustine's 'virgo concepit, virgo peperit, virgo permansit' (*Sermon* 51.11).

is paralleled by sermons denouncing wealth, beauty and possessions (for instance, the Acts of Peter 17, 30; *Virtutes Iohannis* 6).

Intercession

The Christian tradition that Mary and the saints can be intercessors and interlocutors seems to derive from the New Testament Apocrypha. As far as Mary is concerned, soon after the birth of Jesus in the Arabic Infancy Gospel (chapter 3) Mary encourages a sick woman to touch the baby and be healed. Mary as intercessor is a prominent motif through the Holy Family's sojourn in Egypt. The Arabic Gospel as well as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas in Latin have numerous stories in which the 'Lady Mary' is an intercessor.[19] In Pseudo-Matthew 6 we learn that Mary herself is also a healer and not merely a mediatrix ('If anyone who was unwell touched her the same hour he went away healed'). After the end of her life she heals on her own account too: in the dormition account of Pseudo-Melito Mary heals the Jew whose hands were evulsed when he attacked her bier. The popularity of intercession by saints also owes much to the apocryphal acts, where frequently the apostle is prayed to, and where he then effects a miracle or healing in his role as the alter ego of Christ.

Patron saints

Several apostles seem to be associated with particular places. One common theme in the apocryphal acts is the dividing of the universe into sections to be evangelised by an individual apostle. Thus Thomas is selected by lot to preach in India. Similarly, John is chosen to serve in Ephesus. Another commissioning occurs in the later Acts of Philip. Here we see the origin of the tradition of patron saints, that is, apostles associated with a particular geographical area, and venerated locally as the founding father of the church there.

Anti-Jewish teaching

Anti-Jewish sentiment may be nascent in the New Testament proper, where it can be seen that the blame for Jesus' arrest and crucifixion is increasingly pinned on the Jews *en bloc*, thereby exonerating the Romans. But in the apocryphal literature that theme is stronger. The Jews are specifically responsible for the crucifixion in the Gospel of Peter 3 and in the *Descensus*. In the Letter of Pilate to Claudius, found, among other places, in the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Jews are reported to be plotting the crucifixion 'out of envy'. In the story

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19 See Elliott, *Synopsis*.

of Mary's dormition her coffin is desecrated, significantly by a Jew, during her funeral procession. Again, we detect that a minor theme in the New Testament becomes exaggerated in the later, non-canonical writings. Doubtless, it was literature like this that fuelled medieval anti-Semitism and justified it.

The veneration of relics

The Christian interest in the veneration of relics may also be traced to the Apocrypha. The efficacy of a saint's remains as a panacea may have originated in the Acts of Thomas, where dust from his tomb is taken away to effect a healing. The virgin's girdle is venerated at Prato in the Cappella del sacro cingelo. The story behind this is the Narrative of the Assumption by Joseph of Arimathea, where the ascending Mary throws Doubting Thomas her belt. The story of Veronica's kerchief, which captured Christ's facial image, occurs in the *Vindicta Salvatoris* and in the *Mors Pilati*; the cloth was venerated in Rome.

Women

In addition to numerous stories about Mary and her mother, Anna, in the Christian Apocrypha, the prominence of other women is noticeable. Thecla, who becomes an apostle in her own right, is a major character in the Acts of Paul and numerous stories about her trials and apostleship survive. In other acts many of the main converts to Christianity and other leading characters in the stories are women, usually of a pagan background and of some social standing. Such prominence given to women enhances and reveals the high status they had in the early church, a feature less emphasised in the canonical texts. Mary Magdalene also achieves a greater role in the apocryphal tradition and Veronica, identified in the *Acta Pilati* as the haemorrhaging woman of Matt. 9, also appears in later narratives. Such emphases reflect developments in Christian society and show the readership's interest in such characters.

Monasticism

Monasticism is another theme prominent in the Marian gospels. At the time Anna conceives Mary, she and Joachim vow that, if they are granted to be parents, their offspring would be dedicated, like a religious, to the service of the Lord. From her earliest days even while she is in her parental home, Mary is nurtured constantly in the 'sanctuary of her bedroom', as her feet must not be contaminated through contact with the earth. The Protevangelium stresses the undefiled nature of that domestic sanctuary where Mary is attended by 'the pure daughters of the Hebrews'. In the temple, later, Mary is attended

by fellow virgins and she undertakes monastic rituals. Pseudo-Matthew 6–7 gives the daily routine of the Virgin during her nine years cloistered in the temple. Day and night her life is characterised by righteousness and prayer. Pseudo-Matthew 6:1 refers to perpetual adoration (*laus perennis*) by Mary. Even when Mary leaves the temple to be the ward of Joseph, other virgins (religious) accompany her.

The wider influence of the Apocrypha

Painting and the arts

It is in the field of painting and the plastic arts that the influence of the apocryphal traditions is most obviously and strongly felt. Visitors to galleries or to many churches come across mosaics, sculptures, frescoes, stained glass or canvases where the artist has found inspiration not only from the Bible itself, but also from the post- or extra-biblical themes that we know independently from the apocryphal New Testament. The following are popular iconic themes: the inverse crucifixion of Peter; the many scenes involving the female apostle Thecla; the scene of the date palm bowing at the infant Jesus' command during the rest on the flight into Egypt; John and the poisoned chalice; the water trial of Joseph and Mary; the annunciation to Mary at the well; the numerous scenes of Mary's death and assumption.

Where there is a sequence of scenes illustrating the life and death of an apostle, we may legitimately look to the priority of the rhetorical form which a later artist has illustrated. The story of St John in the splendid Apocalyse of Trinity College, Cambridge, illustrates very vividly scenes known to us from the Acts of John and the *Virtutes Iohannis* attributed to Abdias. The Thomas cycle in Chartres; the John cycles at Bourges, Chartres and St Mark's, Venice; scenes of the deaths of the apostles at St Mark's, Venice – all these, and many more, have parallels in the apocryphal New Testament.

Likewise, artists responsible for illustrative series such as cycles of Mary's life (for example in Chartres Cathedral) had to look beyond scripture to complete their narrative.[20] Giotto's famous sequence of scenes from Mary's life in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua (the Arena Chapel) needed to use apocryphal stories to tell of her early life and background.

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20 Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art*, especially Chapter 2, 'Mary'; Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie*. See also A Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton University Press, 1968); G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society and Lund Humphries, 1971–2); Mathews, *Clash*; Weitzmann, *Book illumination*; Snyder, *Ante pacem*; L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1955–9).

In some cases the medieval writer and artist may have become familiar with the apocryphal stories from their retelling in the popular *Golden Legend* by Jacob of Voragine, but behind the *Golden Legend* or Pseudo-Bonaventura's *Meditations* lie the Apocrypha of many centuries earlier. The filtering process the original Apocrypha went through is part of the fascination of this field of study, and clearly shows that these writings had an ongoing relevance for centuries after their original composition.

Drama

The apocryphal story of the descent of Jesus to the underworld to release the faithful dead in the period between Good Friday and Easter emerges in the medieval mystery plays. For example, the Harrowing of Hell, as that story is often labelled, was performed by the saddlers' company in the York cycle. That scene (often painted too) has Jesus breaking down the gates of Hades and extending his hand to awaken Adam, the patriarchs and prophets. Another medieval mystery play, known as the N-Town Play, shows an even greater debt to the apocryphal New Testament. Its nativity scene, for example, includes the physical examination of Mary by the midwives after Jesus' birth, and the withering of Salome's hand. There is a reference to a bowing cherry tree (a parallel to the bowing date palm in the apocryphal tale of the Flight to Egypt). The N-Town Play also includes the presentation of Mary in the temple, the trial of Mary and Joseph before the priests, the trial of Jesus before Pilate that owes much to the Gospel of Nicodemus, and a scene about Joachim and Anna, as well as the episodes of the harrowing of hell and the assumption of Mary. These and other details show how influential the New Testament Apocrypha were in the Middle Ages.

Conclusion: the relevance of the Christian Apocrypha

Those early apocryphal texts that were relegated to the fringes of Christian literature nevertheless continued to survive or were included in later writings; their stories were also perpetuated in iconic, that is in non-rhetorical, forms. Study of these texts and images reveals their importance and influence. Among the most important are the insights they give into the popular folk-religion traditions from the second century onwards, showing how the New Testament stories and characters were elaborated and expounded. The later expansions may well be fictitious, creations of pious imagination, crudely sensational and superstitious, but behind them and indeed beyond them may

be seen the growth of much standard Christian teaching about the person of Christ, the role of Mary and the influence of the apostles. The apocryphal gospels and acts and other literary forms reflect the theology and practices of the times they developed in (and that in itself is instructive), but they also helped the perpetuation and growth of such teachings. Modern scholarship's reluctance to maintain watertight compartments into which canonical and non-canonical texts were traditionally divided has meant that from the last quarter of the twentieth century onwards historians of early Christianity and biblical scholars have looked to a wider range of literature than hitherto to shed light on their studies. Such material inevitably includes the so-called apocryphal New Testament writings. The gradual publication of an increasingly significant number of critical editions, translations and monographs has encouraged further academic investigation into their social, religious and literary backgrounds and theological teaching. More texts await and demand attention.

The Old Testament in the
New Testament

DALE C. ALLISON, JR.

The authors of ancient Jewish texts regularly quote and allude to what Christians call the Old Testament. Examples are, for practical purposes, endless. The Hebrew Bible itself is a compilation of interacting texts, and the Dead Sea scrolls, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha and the rabbinic sources in turn regularly cite, echo and imitate those texts. The Tanakh was trailed by Jewish writers who, as members of text-based religions, incessantly occupied themselves with it.

For all of their novel readings, the authors of the New Testament – almost all were Jews who took for granted Jewish exegetical conventions – offer us more of the same. No part of the Christian collection is a linguistic island or an isolated revelation. Its books, despite the variety, instead reveal in line after line that they have parental texts, which they consistently honour and otherwise engage through explicit and implicit reference as well as emulation. The vocabulary, style and fundamental theological ideas of the New Testament are inescapably scriptural.

That there is a large amount of intertextuality in the New Testament is obvious to all readers, who cannot miss the many explicit quotations. The twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle–Aland *Novum Testamentum graece*, through the use of italics, highlights fifty nine instances of what it calls 'literal quotations' from the Old Testament for Matthew, thirty six for Acts, sixty three for Romans and forty five for Hebrews; and such 'literal quotations' are sprinkled throughout the rest of the New Testament. Although what exactly constitutes a quotation as opposed to an allusion is not always clear, there are, even on a conservative estimate, over 225 formal quotations in the New Testament, that is, over 225 places where an author explicitly – often using the phrase 'It is written' – cites scripture.

A second feature of the New Testament that palpably displays its heavy dependence upon the Jewish scriptures is its recurrent mention of persons

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whose stories are told in, or whose purported writings are preserved in, the Old Testament. Early Christian writers regularly name ancient worthies such as Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David; and they do not refrain from also naming lesser lights, such as Abiathar, Barak, Jephthah and Zechariah. (They do refrain from mentioning individuals from any other ancient literary corpus.) Rarely, moreover, is any biographical clarification offered (Acts 7 and Heb. 11 being prominent exceptions). This circumstance not only reveals the writers' familiarity with the corporate written memories of Judaism, but further implies that they anticipated an audience who would be able to turn simple names into texts and stories. Indeed, some verses lose import altogether if hearers do not have such ability. What would 'God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham' (Matt. 3:9 = Luke 3:8) mean to someone wholly unfamiliar with the book of Genesis? Or what would be the point of being told that 'Rahab the prostitute . . . welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road' (Jas. 2:25) unless one knew something of the book of Joshua? In cases of this sort, the New Testament generates meaning only if one can place it within a network of pre-existing texts.

The church's scriptures

Although some passages in Matthew, John, Paul and Revelation may show knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament authors, writing in Greek, naturally used Greek translations of the scriptures. To what extent they thought in terms of a closed, well-defined, authoritative collection close to what we now know as the Septuagint is difficult to determine.[1] The author of Jude presumably regarded 1 Enoch, which is not in the Septuagint, as a sacred writing. Jude 14–15 quotes 1 Enoch 1:9 as though it were scripture. But other early Christian writers may have been unfamiliar with 1 Enoch, or perhaps they were acquainted with it but neither knew it as a liturgical text nor deemed it authoritative. Apart from Jude and some likely echoes in Matthew, there is little evidence that 1 Enoch influenced the New Testament documents.

Whatever conception of 'canon' its authors did or did not have, and whatever Greek textual traditions they may have known,[2] the New Testament

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1 See the recent collection of essays in McDonald and Sanders, *The Canon Debate*.
2 R. Timothy McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), supplies a useful introduction to the problems surrounding the Old Greek, the Septuagint, later Greek recensions and their relationship to the New Testament texts.

borrows from and refers to all three major divisions of the Tanakh – the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Writings. Particular portions of scripture are, nonetheless, favoured. The Pentateuch (above all Genesis), the Psalms and Isaiah are recalled most often. The table entitled 'Loci citati vel allegati' in the twenty-seven edition of the Nestle–Aland Greek New Testament contains approximately eighteen columns of entries for the Pentateuch, eight columns each for Isaiah and the Psalms, and no more than three for any other Old Testament book. Perhaps it would be anachronistic to speak of a canon within the canon, but it appears that early Christians either knew certain portions of the Tanakh better than others or found certain portions more useful for their purposes. Probably both were true at the same time.

This circumstance accords with what we find outside the New Testament. Isaiah, the Psalms and the five books of Moses are also the favourites of the apostolic fathers and indeed of Christian writers in general up to Eusebius.[3] This appears to be part of Christianity's Jewish heritage, for the scriptural book represented by the most copies in the Dead Sea scrolls is the Psalms, followed (in order) by Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Exodus, Genesis and Leviticus. Similarly, if one consults the scriptural indexes for the modern collections of the so-called Pseudepigrapha, the books with the most citations are Genesis, the Psalms and Isaiah. The story is not much different with Philo or the rabbinic texts, although the latter exhibit a greater interest in the whole of the Pentateuch (altogether natural given the centrality of command rather than prophecy for the rabbis). The tendency in both Jewish and Christian literature from Antiquity as a whole can be seen in Bradley H. McLean's index of citations of and allusions to scripture in ancient Jewish and Christian writings.[4] In this nothing comes close to being listed as often as the Psalms and Isaiah, except for Genesis and Exodus; and the Pentateuch, if taken as a unit, surpasses both.

In addition to the Pentateuch, Isaiah and the Psalms, the early church also paid considerable attention to the book of the Twelve Prophets and Daniel. But, as C. H. Dodd urged many years ago, certain portions within all these writings garnered more attention than others.[5] His conspectus of primary passages that the early church favoured for witnesses to its theological convictions arranges the material into four categories.

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3 See Stuhlhofer, *Gebrauch der Bibel*.
4 Bradley H. McLean, *Citations and Allusions to Jewish Scripture in Early Christian and Jewish Writings through 180 C.E.* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1992). Within the Pentateuch, the ranking is this: Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Numbers.
5 Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*.

1. Apocalyptic–eschatological scriptures
   Dan. 7
   Joel 2–3
   Zech. 9–14

2. Scriptures of the New Israel
   Isa. 6:1–9:7, 11:1–10, 28:16, 40:1–11
   Jer. 31:10–34
   Hos.

3. Scriptures of the Servant of the Lord and the Righteous Sufferer
   Pss. 22, 31, 34, 38, 41, 42–43, 49, 80, 88, 118
   Isa. 42:1–44:5, 49:1–13, 50:4–11, 52:13–53:12, 61

4. Unclassified scriptures
   Gen. 12:3, 22:18
   Deut. 18:15, 19
   Pss. 2, 8, 110

Three observations may be made concerning this list. First, early Christians hardly confined themselves to these portions of scripture. Matthew, to illustrate, contains ten formula quotations, that is, quotations introduced by the formula, 'In order to fulfil [or, Then was fulfilled] the word (of the Lord) through the prophet(s) saying' (1:22–3, 2:15, 17–18, 23; 4:14–16, 8:17, 12:17–21, 13:35, 21:5, 27:9–10). Three of these quotations are from sections not on Dodd's list (Ps. 78:2; Isa. 4:3, 62:11). Furthermore, fully eight of the formula quotations quote verses not cited elsewhere in the New Testament (the exceptions are Isa. 53:4, cited in 1 Pet. 2:24, and Zech. 9:9, cited in John 12:15). Matthew accordingly shows some independence in its use of testimonies, and it seems a good guess that the evangelist or his tradition set out to gather from the prophets proof texts which had not previously been deployed in the Christian cause. This would help explain the introductory formula: one alludes to well-known texts – Matthew does so often – but may need to call attention to what is new.[6] The situation is similar in Hebrews, where chapters 1 and 2 assume the well-known application of Pss. 22 and 110 to Jesus, whereas chapters 3 and 4 offer a clearly novel, christological exposition of Ps. 95.

Second, Dodd's contribution pays insufficient heed to extra-biblical tradition. The first Christians were not adherents of *sola scriptura*; they rather

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6 On Matthew's use of the Old Testament see especially the careful work of M. J. J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible* (Louvain: Peeters / Leuven University Press, 2004).

had been educated into the exegetical methods and traditions of Judaism.[7] So when, for instance, they read a passage about Moses, they were not uninfluenced by legends about the law-giver or by traditions attached to that passage. Paul found a travelling rock in Num. 20:7–13 because his Jewish education had taught him to do so (cf. *LAB* 10:7, 11:5; t. Sukk. 3:11); and when John of Patmos identified the serpent of Gen. 3 with Satan (Rev. 12:9, 20:2), he was following a Jewish convention (cf. Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* 16:4, 17:4; 2 En. 31:4–6; 3 Bar. 4:8). It is further the case that Christians must have pondered how to associate Jesus with texts that Jewish convention had already come to regard as eschatological or messianic. They could not simply start with their proclamation and look for whatever supporting scriptures they could find. If pre-Christian Judaism had firmly linked certain texts with the latter days or the Messiah, it was incumbent upon Jewish Christians to show how those texts could be linked specifically to Jesus and his story.

Third, the repeated use of a particular portion of the scriptures by more than one Christian writer can reveal a theological belief. As illustration, consider the following table, which shows the conspicuous tendency of the canonical passion narratives to borrow from Zech. 9–14.

Quotation of Zech. 9:9	Matt. 21:5; John 12:15
Allusion to Zech. 9:9 (?)	Mark 11:2; Luke 19:29–31
Allusion to Zech. 9:11 (?)	Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20
Quotation of Zech. 11:13	Matt. 27:9
Allusion to Zech. 11:12	Matt. 26:15
Allusion to Zech. 12:10	John 19:37
Allusion to Zech. 12:10–14 (?)	Luke 23:27
Quotation of Zech. 13:7	Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27
Allusion to Zech. 14:4–5	Matt. 27:51–3
Allusion to Zech. 14:20–1 (?)	Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–19

In addition to the Psalms and Isa. 40–55, early Christians turned to Zech. 9–14 when contemplating the passion of Jesus. The impetus for drawing upon the Psalms and Isa. 40–55 is obvious. Those texts depict the sufferings of saints or an individual. Zech. 9–14, however, is an apocalypse, an anthology of prophecies about the latter days. It concerns the eschatological judgement and its attendant events. Its utilisation in the passion narratives, then, reflects the primitive faith that the end of Jesus inaugurated or fulfilled

7 Particularly helpful for understanding how ancient Jews read scripture is Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*.

expectations associated with the latter days. Here is a case where the repeated use of a precursor text – Zech. 9–14 – makes manifest a novel Christian conviction.[8]

Quotations

Formal citations typically call attention to themselves for the purpose of adding authority. This explains the pattern of scriptural quotations in the Pauline Epistles. There are no formal citations at all in Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians or Philemon. And, whereas the Corinthian correspondence averages less than one formal citation per chapter (fourteen citations for the sixteen chapters of 1 Corinthians and seven citations for the thirteen chapters of 2 Corinthians), the six chapters of Galatians contain ten such citations, and Romans, with its sixteen chapters, has forty-eight. The explanation for these disparate distributions is that the apostle wanted to quote scripture explicitly in making controversial points or in polemical situations where opponents were also citing scripture. When writing to the Romans and Galatians, Paul needed the traditional court of appeal, the authoritative scriptures.

Such appeal characterises not only some of Paul's letters but also the book of Hebrews and, more generally, much of early Christian apologetics. There were two driving factors here, one intramural, the other extramural. As for the former, Christians, in their debates with each other, naturally ended up arguing over the interpretation of the scriptures. One sees this above all in Galatians, where Paul cites and discusses certain texts presumably because his adversaries had cited them to promote their different understanding of the Gospel. It is, for example, highly likely that those teachers interpreted the promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:3, 15:5, 17:4, 18:18) in terms of Gen. 17:10, which makes circumcision the sign of Abraham's covenant.[9] Paul is then compelled to offer a different interpretation.

In addition to citing scripture in debates among themselves (cf. Acts 15.12–21), Christians also had to deal with the problem that Jesus in many ways did not match Jewish expectations. Above all, the failure of Israel as a body to join his movement (cf. Mark 4.3–9) and his crucifixion as a royal pretender were for

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8 See further Joel Marcus, 'The Role of the Scripture in the Gospel Passion Narratives', in John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green (eds.), *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), pp. 218–20.
9 See J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), pp. 302–6.

many stumbling blocks to belief. So there was a pressing need for apologetics (aimed at doubts within the church as much as incredulity outside it); and one of its chief means of persuasion was finding proof texts in the common scriptures. It was also necessary to reconcile Jesus' history with scriptures that seemed to discredit it. Thus Paul, in Gal. 3.13, comes to terms with the potentially embarrassing Deut. 21:23 ('anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse') by turning a curse into a blessing. 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us . . . in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles.'

Biblical memories were the measure of all things, so in order to establish that Jesus was indeed the *telos* of Israel's history, one had to show that the prophets foretold him and the events attending him. The rhetoric was of great vitality and force in the early church, whatever today's prejudices may make of it. One sees this above all in the formula quotations in Matthew as well as in the early speeches in Acts. The discovery of correlations between scripture and events in the life of Jesus and the life of the church amounted to a claim that prophecy had come to fulfilment.

Some scholars have suggested that the need for apologetical scriptures was such that some Christians, very early on, cobbled together testimonia, that is, compiled systematic collections of scriptural passages showing Jesus to be the realisation of prophetic expectation.[10] Such collections did in fact circulate later on among Christians. Cyprian's *Libri* III *ad Quirinum. Testimonia* is one example, as is apparently P. Ryl. Gk. 460. Furthermore, 4QTestimonia (4Q175), which cites Deut. 5:28–29, 18:18–19; Num. 24:15–17; Deut. 33:8–11; Josh. 6:26; and a Joshua apocryphon, shows us that stringing together eschatological texts was a known procedure in pre-Christian Judaism. Romans and 2 Corinthians abundantly attest the same phenomenon (see e.g. Rom. 9:25–9, 10:15–21, 15:9–12; 2 Cor. 6:16–18).

Acceptance of the testimony hypothesis would neatly explain why more than one New Testament writer can cite the same Old Testament passage with similar variation from the LXX (e.g. Ps. 28:16 in 1 Pet. 2:6–8 and Rom. 9:33; cf. Epistle of Barnabas 6:2, 4) – they used the same primitive book of testimonies – and why authors sometimes wrongly name a quotation's source. Mark 1:2–3, for instance, attributes to Isaiah words that are in truth from Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3, which would be explicable if the evangelist had to hand not

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10 The pioneering work was J. R. Harris, *Testimonies*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1916, 1920). For an overview of anthologies in the ancient Christian and Graeco-Roman worlds see Henry Chadwick, 'Florilegium', *RAC* 7 (1969), 1131–60.

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the prophetic books themselves but rather a scriptural anthology that ran the two quotations together. Similarly, Matt. 27:9–10 assigns to Jeremiah words that are primarily from Zech. 11:13 while Paul, in Rom. 9:27, credits Isaiah with words that are from Hos. 2:1 as well as Isa. 10:22.

Whether these and additional considerations suffice to make the testimony hypothesis more likely than not is hard to say. Misattribution can have several explanations, including simple misremembering, and a testimony book is not needed to explain why certain Old Testament texts gained the attention of more than one follower of Jesus. So the hypothesis of a primitive document that sought to confirm Jesus' identity as the Messiah through scriptural proof texts remains just that, a hypothesis.[11]

Although that issue remains unresolved, there is no doubting that the use of scriptural quotations to prove Jesus' messianic identity reflects the far-flung conviction that eschatological expectation was moving from promise to fulfilment. Like many of the Dead Sea scrolls and the Jewish apocalypses, the pre-understanding of much of the New Testament is that scripture – including the Pentateuch – is in large part a collection of eschatological prophecies, and that if the Messiah has come, his activities should correlate with what those oracles foretell, sometimes in great detail.

In line with this, the New Testament, just like the Dead Sea scrolls, pre-supposes that the Old Testament, despite being written down long ago, must be of contemporary application. It is characteristic that scripture can be cited with the present tense, 'He (God) says' or 'It says'. The assumption is that people in the present are being directly addressed. Similarly, 'the Lord has commanded us' introduces a citation of Isa. 49:6 in Acts 13:47, and Heb. 12:5 prefaces its citation of Prov. 3:11–12 with the words, 'You have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children.' Paul's conviction that 'whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction' (Rom. 15:4) was a commonplace.

Allusions

There was a traditional rhetoric of allusion as well as one of quotation (although the line between quotation and allusion is often indistinct), and the New Testament alludes to scripture far more often than it quotes it. But why allude rather than cite? The purpose of allusions is usually not to add authority and so to help clinch arguments. Their regular effect is rather

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11 See further Skarsaune, 'Scriptural Interpretation', pp. 418–21.

to move hearers to become more active. In any context the explicit soon becomes tedious, and allusions are, among other things, a way of fighting tedium. Meaning is often enfolded not to obscure but to improve communication. Allusions give the imagination more to do – it has to fill in the blanks – and so they heighten attention.

But the New Testament's allusions to the Old are not just a matter of formal rhetoric. They are also important carriers of theological meaning. In Gal. 1:15–16, Paul says that, 'when God, who had set me apart from my mother's womb [ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου] and called [καλέσας] me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles [ἔθνεσιν], immediately I did not confer with any human being'. These words are, as has long been observed, conceptually very close to Jer. 1:4–5: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' There are, in addition, parallels to the calling of God's servant in Isa. 49:1–6 – 'The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me [ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου ἐκαλέσαν τὸ ὄνομα μου]' (verse 1); 'who formed me from the womb [ἐκ κοιλίας] to be his servant' (verse 5); 'I will give you as a light to the Gentiles [ἐθνῶν] that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth' (verse 6). It seems likely enough that Paul thought of his calling as analogous to those of Jeremiah and the servant of Deutero-Isaiah, and readers who recognise the scriptural intertextuality are enabled to see that his apostolic self-understanding was partly modelled upon his conception of a prophet. Such readers will also grasp that the allusions constitute an implicit claim to authority, which is of course something Paul is anxious to establish in Galatians.

The miracles that the New Testament attributes to Jesus are consistently good illustrations of how much meaning can be enfolded in allusions. The feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14:13–21; Mark 6:32–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–15) in all four versions strongly recalls 2 Kings 4:42–4, where Elisha feeds one hundred people with small provisions. John in fact tells us that Jesus distributed barley loaves, which is what Elisha likewise has to hand in the Old Testament parallel (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. John* 42). Here it seems that Jesus is like the wonder-working Elisha but is his superior because he can feed even more. The synoptic accounts of the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36) are all designed to recall Moses' transfiguration on Sinai (Exod. 24, 34). Jesus shines, a bright cloud appears, and the divine voice speaks from that cloud, just as in Exodus. That divine voice, with its echo of Deut. 18.15, 18 ('him you will listen to'), makes clear the meaning of the parallel. Jesus is

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the eschatological prophet like Moses.[12] The accounts of Jesus calming the sea (Matt. 8:23–7; Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–5) draw upon the tale of Jonah.[13] In addition to some verbal echoes, there is a common sequence.

- departure by boat;
- a violent storm at sea;
- a sleeping main character;
- badly frightened sailors;
- a miraculous stilling related to the main character;
- a marvelling response by the sailors.

These parallels are in the service of a striking contrast. Whereas Jonah, when in desperate trouble, can only pray to God for help, Jesus is able to subdue the storm with a word.

Many modern scholars have viewed the intertextual nature of so many of the miracle stories as strong evidence of their fictional origin: early Christians made claims for Jesus by rewriting scriptural tales. Long ago, however, Christian apologists, such as Tertullian and Eusebius, observed the very same parallels between the Testaments, and they found them useful for defending their faith: the correlations established for them that the two Testaments must have the same God. Whatever one's judgement on that or on the historicity of the various stories, the fathers, in espying the intertextuality of the miracle stories and turning them into theological meaning, were reading them as they were intended to be read.

Intertextual signals can often be subtle. In Mark's version of the feeding of the five thousand, we are told that Jesus ordered the crowd to 'sit down in groups on the green grass' (6:39). This remark on the setting is unexpected. The author of Mark is not much interested in colour. Jesus' cloak is purple in Mark 15:17 because the scene is a mock coronation and purple is the colour of royalty. Other than this and the green grass, Mark is colour-blind. Now some have taken Mark's green grass to be the sure trace of an eyewitness, or an indication of Palestinian spring. But an intertextual explanation seems preferable. The people are like sheep without a shepherd before Jesus takes care of them (6:24). The feeding occurs beside the seashore in the evening (6:32, 35). Everyone reclines, eats and is satisfied (6:40–4). And all this happens

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12 For Moses' and Matthew's version of the transfiguration see A. D. A. Moses, *Matthew's Transfiguration Story and Jewish–Christian Controversy* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).
13 Cf. O. Lamar Cope, *Matthew. A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976), pp. 96–8.

upon the green grass. It is plausible that a christological assertion is implicit in all this. Jesus is or is like the shepherd of Ps. 23.[14]

How does one identify allusions, understood as deliberate prompts to readers? The question has been much discussed of late, largely in response to Richard Hays's work on scripture in Paul.[15] Parallels can be the upshot of unconscious borrowing or coincidence or the common use of stock phrases, and a writer can use biblical language for its own sake, without any desire to recall a particular subtext. Moreover, diligent searching can always unearth parallels between two texts. Justin Martyr discovered resemblances between the Pentateuch and Plato and took them to establish the dependence of the latter upon the former; and almost every verse in the New Testament has been thought by someone to depend upon this or that Old Testament text. Theological libraries are full of unsubstantiated intertextual theories, and proposals are often hard to evaluate. John 1:51 ('you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man') obviously has something to do with Jacob's ladder and Gen. 28:12; but does Mark 10:45 ('to give his life as a ransom for many') draw upon MT Isa. 53? Is Rom. 8:32 (God 'did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all') a reminiscence of Gen. 22 and the offering up by Abraham of his son Isaac? Or, given that Jews spoke of the fringes of their garments as 'wings' (MT Num. 15:38; Deut. 22:12), does the notice that people were healed when they touched the fringe of Jesus' garments (Matt. 9:20, 14:36; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44) derive from a christological reading of Mal. 4:2, which says that the sun of righteousness will arise with healing 'in his wings' (cf. Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Test.* 7.30)? And does the affirmation that God raised Jesus on the third day 'according to the scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:4) refer to Hos. 6:2 ('on the third day he will raise us up'), to the promises to David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12 'I will raise up your seed after you'), to Ps. 16:10 (which is quoted in Acts 2:27 'You do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit'), to Deut. 18:15, 18 (God will 'raise up a prophet' like Moses) or instead to some broader scriptural principle (such as God's vindication of suffering saints and prophets)?

These questions remain unresolved because subjectivity cannot be avoided. Detecting allusions can never become a science. There are nonetheless a few helpful methodological rules of thumb.

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14 See further Dale C. Allison, Jr., 'Psalm 23 in Early Christianity. A Suggestion', *Irish Biblical Studies* 5 (1983), 132–7.

15 Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*. Hays differentiates between allusions, explicit verbal connections between texts and intertexts, and echoes, which are more subtle verbal and thematic correlations. In what follows I shall use the word 'allusion' to cover both phenomena.

First, in the absence of explicit citation or undeniable tacit borrowing, an allusion will not be credible unless text and intertext share some combination of the following: common vocabulary, common word order, common theme(s), similar imagery, similar structure, similar circumstance(s). One of these alone will not suffice, and the greater the number of parallels, the more probable the allusion and the easier it will be to discern. To illustrate: Rev. 9:2 recounts that an angel opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, 'and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace'. The line is reminiscent of Gen. 19:28, where Abraham looks down on Sodom and Gomorrah and sees 'the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace'.

Rev. 9:2   ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐκ τοῦ φρέατος ὡς καπνός καμίνου
LXX Gen. 19:28   ἀνέβαινεν φλὸξ[16] (verse 1: ἐκ) τῆς γῆς ὡσει ἀτμὶς καμίνου

Not only are there three or (if ἐκ is included) four Greek words in common, but these words occur in the same order: ἀναβαίνω (+ ἐκ) + ὡσεί/ὡς + καμίνου. Beyond that, the image in both texts is the same, as is the theme. Rev. 9:2 and Gen. 19:8 depict the smoke that rises after God's judgement upon the ungodly. It is not any one parallel between Rev. 9:2 and Gen. 19:8 that clinches the allusion, but rather the evidence in the aggregate – similar vocabulary, similar word order, similar imagery, similar theme.

Second, common vocabulary, word order, theme(s), imagery, structure and circumstance(s) are only corroborative when not commonplace. 'Thus says the Lord' and collections of woes are recognisably biblical, but they appear too often to call to mind any particular passage.

Third, the probability that one text intentionally recalls another is increased if the latter is prominent in the tradition of the former. Suggested allusions to the foundational stories in Genesis and Exodus accordingly have more initial appeal than proposed allusions to obscure verses in lesser-known books. Certainly it has always been easier to call to mind Gen. 1:1 ('In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth') – as John 1:1 ('In the beginning was the Word') does – than, say, a line in the middle of Nehemiah. In accord with this, ecclesiastical exegetes, when commenting on the story of the feeding of the five thousand in the canonical Gospels, have more often been put in mind of Moses and the manna than of the tale about Elisha in 2 Kings 4:42–4, despite the fact that the parallels with the latter are closer. The reason must

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16 While this word means 'flame', the MT has קיטר 'smoke', which it repeats two words later (cf. Revelation's καπνός . . . καπνός).

be that stories in Exodus have been more prominent in Christian memories than items from the cycle concerning Elisha.

Fourth, the probability of an allusion is enhanced if a suggested intertext belongs to a source that the author otherwise shows interest in. When, in Luke 9:61–2, a would-be follower says to Jesus, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home', Jesus responds with this. 'No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back [βλέπων εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω] is fit for the kingdom of God' (Luke 9:61–2). There are several reasons for surmising that βλέπων εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω is an echo of Gen. 19:26, where Lot's wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt (cf. LXX Gen. 19:17: μὴ περιβλέψῃς εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω; 19:26: ἐπέβλεψεν . . . εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω). Among those reasons is the Gospel's attention to Gen. 19. Not only does the missionary discourse refer to the story of Sodom (10.12), but Luke returns to that tale again in 17:28–9 and 31–2. Indeed, in Luke 17:31–2 there is an explicit mention of Lot's wife and her sin of turning back to look at what is behind: 'In that day anyone on the housetop who has belongings in the house must not come down to take them away; and likewise anyone in the field must not turn back [εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω]. Remember Lot's wife.' So the proposed intertextual reading of Luke 9:61–2 gains plausibility from the broader Lukan context.[17]

Fifth, the history of interpretation either enhances or diminishes the plausibility of a proposed allusion. If text A has reminded commentators of text B, the odds that it was designed to do so are increased. Conversely, if commentators have uniformly missed an allusion, doubt is likely appropriate. Using Luke 9:61–2 again as an illustration, many readers have indeed caught an allusion to Genesis here, beginning with Tertullian, who commented that when Christ 'forbids the man "to look back" who would first "bid his family farewell", he only follows out the rule of the Creator. For he had not wanted those he rescued from Sodom to look back' (*Adv. Marcionem* 4.23). Bede had the same thought when remarking upon Luke 9:62: 'If anyone having begun . . . delights with Lot's wife to look back to the things he has left, he is deprived of the gift of the future kingdom' (*Luc. exp. ad loc.*). Origen, Cyprian, Athanasius, Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, Luther, Grotius, Maldonatus and others have made similar remarks.

Sometimes the history of interpretation can even call to our attention a suggestive intertextual reading ignored by recent commentators. In Matt. 5:21–4, Jesus quotes the Decalogue's prohibition of murder, delivers a prohibition against anger, and then illustrates his imperative by painting a scene in which

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17 Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, pp. 78–81.

a man who is offering a gift at an altar has something against his brother. Cyprian took this passage to allude to the famous story of Cain and Abel, as did Tertullian, Chrysostom, Chromatius, Geoffrey of Babion, Paschasius Radbertus, Rupert of Deutz, Hugh of Saint-Cher, Albert the Great, Hugo Grotius and Matthew Henry. One understands why: Matt. 5:21–4 concerns the affiliation of murder and anger, and it depicts a circumstance in which someone, while offering a gift on an altar, is upset with his brother – all of which is strongly reminiscent of the story in Gen. 4, where Cain offers his gift, becomes angry, and attempts no reconciliation with his brother, whereupon murder ensues.[18]

Sixth, one more readily recognises an allusion if such recognition enhances meaning in a manner congruent with a book's arguments or themes. In John 1:51, Jesus says to his new-found disciple, Nathaniel, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon [or: towards] the Son of Man.' All the commentators agree that this alludes to Genesis, where angels ascend and descend upon the sleeping Jacob. But how the allusion functions is far from obvious. One good guess, however, is that the text assumes the later Jewish myth that Jacob's features were fixed on high, on or near God's throne. According to the reading of Gen. 28 in Gen. Rab. 68:13, the angels first see the face of the sleeping patriarch. Surprised, they then ascend in order to compare what they have seen below with the image fixed in the heavens. And then they descend and return to Jacob, to look once more at the slumbering Jacob. They move back and forth because they are setting side by side in their minds' eyes the face above and the face below. A slightly different account appears in some of the Targums, in which Jacob's heavenly face is hidden from the angels, so, when they ascend, they do so in order to announce to their fellow angels that they should come and see the image they otherwise are unable to behold. In either case, the face in heaven is the face near or on God's throne, and if one presupposes this idea when reading John 1:51, the result is congruent with John's theology. The fourth Gospel is claiming that the face affixed to the throne of God is not the face of Jacob/Israel but the face of the Son of God; and the concealed image upon which the angels long to look belongs not to Jacob but to Jesus of Nazareth. John 1:51 is then a poetic or parabolic way of expressing the propositions in John 1:18 ('No one has seen God at any time; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known') and 14:9 ('Whoever has seen me has

18 See further Dale C. Allison, Jr., *Studies in Matthew. Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), pp. 65–78.

seen the Father'). The heavenly secrets have been revealed not in Jacob (that is, Israel) but in Jesus, the Word and Son of God.[19]

Finally, postulating intertextual dependence is also the more plausible when it resolves an exegetical difficulty. In Mark 14:53–65, when the high priest, faced with a silent Jesus, cries out in exasperation, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' (14:61), readers may wonder what prompts the question. The proceedings have so far concerned a purported threat against the temple, not Jesus' claim to be the Messiah or Son of God. The narrative has seemingly jumped from one subject – the temple – to another – Jesus' identity. The difficulty dissolves, however, if one reads the narrative in the light of the oracle to David in 2 Sam. 7.12–16:

> When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me . . . Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

Although this prophecy is obviously about Solomon, the promise that the kingdom of the son will endure for ever was belied by the eventual failure of David's line, so 2 Sam. 7.12–16 became a messianic oracle yet to be fulfilled, as we know from 4QFlorilegium and the Targums. Early Christians naturally enough applied it to Jesus, the Son of David and Son of God (Luke 1.32–3; Acts 2.30; Heb. 1.5; cf. Rom. 1.3). This then clarifies Mark 14. Jesus is accused of prophesying that he will destroy and rebuild the temple and then he is asked if he claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God. The assumption is that, if Jesus has said that he will himself build the temple, then he has made himself out to be the eschatological fulfilment of Nathan's oracle, which foresees a descendant of David who will build the temple, will be God's Son and will rule in Israel. In other words, the question about Jesus' identity is not independent of the accusation about the temple but follows directly from it. Once one recognises the subtext, Mark's sequence makes sense.[20]

Larger patterns

Sometimes a series of citations and allusions creates a meaningful pattern. The following displays some of the obvious references to Psalms in Mark's passion narrative.

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19 Cf. Christopher Rowland, 'John 1.51, Jewish Apocalyptic and Targum Tradition', *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984), 498–507.
20 Cf. Otto Betz, *What Do We Know about Jesus?* (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 87–92.

Mark 14:18: Jesus is betrayed by one eating with him.	Ps. 41:9
Mark 14:57: False witnesses rise up against Jesus.	Ps. 27:12, 35:11
Mark 14:61: Jesus is silent before his accusers.	Ps. 28:13–14
Mark 15:24: Jesus' garments are divided.	Ps. 22:18
Mark 15:24: Soldiers cast lots.	Ps. 22:18
Mark 15:29, 32: Jesus is mocked and reviled.	Ps. 22:6, 7
Mark 15:34: 'My God, my God, why . . . ?'	Ps. 22:1
Mark 15:36: Jesus is given vinegar to drink.	Ps. 69:21
Mark 15:40: Bystanders look on from a distance.	Ps. 38:11

Taken as a group, these references, for readers with the requisite intertextual knowledge, turn Jesus' death into an event that was recurrently foretold long ago in passages that must now be regarded as prophetic. The crucifixion was not an accident but part of a divine plan repeatedly revealed before it happened. The links also enable one to go back to the psalms and to read at least those depicting a suffering just one as connected directly to Jesus; that is, they help Christianise the psalms. Mark's passion narrative and the psalms of suffering end up interpreting each other.

Another example of recurrent reference occurs at the beginning of Matthew. The Gospel begins by replaying the plot of the exodus:

- Israel's deliverer is born;
- a wicked king sits upon the throne;
- that king slaughters Jewish infants;
- the hero's years after infancy go untold;
- he passes through the waters;
- he goes into the desert;
- he stays there for a period of time marked by forty units;
- temptation comes in the form of hunger and idolatry;
- the deliverer goes up on a mountain;
- we learn the commandments.

That these parallels are not coincidence but rather constitute a typology appears from numerous facts, among them: (i) 2:15 cites as fulfilled in Jesus' life Hos. 2:15, which in its Old Testament context can be about nothing but the exodus, so its reapplication to Jesus presupposes a typological correlation: the story of Jesus is like the story of the exodus. (ii) 2:19–21 makes use of the language of LXX Exod. 4:19–20. (iii) Paul at least had no difficulty associating, by means of typological exegesis, the crossing of the Red Sea with baptism (1 Cor. 10:1–5). (iv) Jesus' words to the devil in 4:1–11 all come from passages having originally to do with Israel's time in the desert (Deut. 6:13, 16, 8.3).

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(v) The notice that Jesus 'went up on the mount' (5:1–2) imitates the pentateuchal notices of Moses ascending Sinai (Exod. 19:3, 12, 13, etc.). (vi) Much of the Sermon on the Mount is a direct engagement with what was said on Sinai (5:21–48).

Matthew's Moses typology, which is not confined to the first seven chapters, serves several functions. It is apologetics, showing that the new religion, Christianity, is rooted in the old religion, Judaism. It is a christological statement, establishing Jesus as among other things the prophet like Moses of Deut. 18:15, 18. And it is a contribution to ecclesiological identity, for by linking the Christian saviour to the scriptures in such an extensive fashion, Matthew claims those scriptures for the church and bestows upon the church a long sacred history. Israel's scriptural story becomes the church's story.[21]

It is possible that the arrangement of Luke–Acts in its entirety is partly due to an intertextual prototype and so offers yet another typology.[22] The Gospel establishes a number of conspicuous parallels between Jesus on the one hand and Elijah and Elisha on the other (note Luke 4:25–6 and cf. Luke 7:11–17 with 1 Kings 17 and Luke 9:59–62 with 1 Kings 19:19–21), and both 1 and 2 Kings and Luke–Acts exhibit a broad pattern. Both contain a long series of stories about a miracle worker (Elijah; Jesus); both bring this series to a conclusion with an account of that miracle worker's ascension to heaven (2 Kings 2; Luke 24; Acts 1); and both follow that ascension with the story of the miracle worker's successors (Elisha, the twelve) who, having witnessed their master's departure and received from him a supernatural spirit, proceed to work their own miracles, often in imitation of their teacher. This common sequence might be coincidence, but the stories of the ascension in Kings and Luke–Acts share enough similarities that one wonders about such a verdict. In addition to common vocabulary (cf. Acts 1.11 – ὁ ἀναληφθεῖ ἀφ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν – with 2 Kgs 2.10 – ἀναλαμβανόμενον ἀπὸ σοῦ – and 2 Kgs 2.11 – ἀνελήμφθη . . . εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν), there are strong circumstantial similarities.

- 1 Kings 2:10: 'If you see me as I am being taken from you . . . '
  Acts 1: 'As they were watching he was lifted up . . . '
- 2 Kings 2:11: Ascension follows walking and talking.
  Luke 24:44–51 / Acts 1:6–9: Ascension follows walking and talking.

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21 For detailed discussion see Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses. A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994).
22 Cf. Thomas L. Brodie, *The Crucial Bridge. The Elijah–Elisha Narrative as an Interpretive Synthesis of Genesis–Kings and a Literary Model for the Gospels* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000).

- 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6: Elijah tells Elisha to 'stay' (κάθου).
  Acts 1: Jesus tells the disciples to 'stay' (καθίσατε).
- 2 Kings 2:13: Elijah passes on spirit and clothing (mantle) to Elisha.
  Luke 24:49: Jesus' disciples are clothed (ἐνδύσησθε) with the Spirit.

The history of interpretation reveals that the parallel between Elijah's ascension and that of Jesus has regularly been espied (cf. Acts of Pilate Latin 15.1 and the commentaries of Albertus Magnus and Matthew Poole on Luke 24.51).[23]

Whatever one makes of the proposal that the ending of Luke and the beginning of Acts are inspired by the stories surrounding Elijah and Elisha, there is no doubt that the opening of Luke–Acts is a tapestry of allusions (very different from the intertextual tapestry in Matt. 1–2). Together they function to demonstrate that the divine hand orchestrating the entrance of Jesus into the world is the same providence that long before intervened for Abraham and Sarah to give them Isaac, for Manoah and his unnamed wife to give them Samson, and for Hannah and Elkanah to give them Samuel. The Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), for instance, repeatedly echoes the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1–10). In this way Luke ties together the old and new dispensations.[24]

Readers

Covert references are only potentially transparent. Hearers or readers must, in order to perceive them, live and move and have their being in the right precursor texts. For those who live elsewhere, outside the tradition, much can be missed. When Heb. 13:2 enjoins, 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels unawares', nothing is said about Abraham, so only those who know the story in Gen. 18 can catch the allusion. Everything depends upon what readers bring to the text. But what sort of first-century readers should we posit for the New Testament documents?

Many of the early Christians who attended religious services where the Old Testament was regularly heard probably had less difficulty catching some allusions than do many modern readers, who are acquainted with far more books and not intimately acquainted with the biblical texts in their original

23 Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in secundum parten Evang. Lucae* (x–xxiv), Opera Omnia (Peris: Vivès, 1895), p. 776; Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, vol. III (London: H. G. Bohn, 1846), p. 276.
24 Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke–Acts. Telling the History of God's People Intertextually* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 70–81.

languages. The scriptures were presumably the centrepiece of whatever elementary education Jewish Christians may have had (cf. 4 Macc. 18:10), and surely many of them must have been like the Timothy of 2 Tim. 3:15, who is said to have been acquainted with the sacred writings from childhood. One guesses, further, that enthusiastic Gentile converts, eager to learn their new religion, would quickly have done what they could to catch up. The situation in parts of the early church was no doubt not far from what Josephus boasted was the case for first-century Jews – that they had a 'thorough and accurate knowledge' of the scriptures, and that 'should anyone of our nation be questioned about the laws, he would repeat them all more readily than his own name. The result, then, of our thorough grounding in the laws from the first dawn of intelligence is that we have them, as it were, engraven on our souls' (*Contra Apionem* 2.175, 178; cf. *Antiquities* 2.111). While these words are no doubt a bit rhetorical, they surely have some grounding. And, in any case, several early Christian sources leave the impression that the new movement was a religion of the book, that the First Testament was a large part of its symbolic universe. Acts 17:11 purports that the Jewish converts of Beroea 'examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so'. 1 Clement 53:1 address the Corinthian Christians as people with 'a good understanding of the sacred scripture', who 'have studied the oracles of God'. Polycarp, (*Phil.* 12.1) expresses the writer's confidence that the Philippian Christians are 'well versed in the scriptures'.

Literacy may have been restricted in the first century – although less so among Jews than others – but those who grew up going on the Sabbath to synagogues – Philo could call them 'schools' (διδασκαλεία, V. *Mos.* 1.216; *Spec. leg.* 2.62) – or who frequented Christian gatherings probably knew scripture well enough, whether they read or not. They had learned it through their ears. There can be an oral literacy as well as a visual literacy, and within the context of formative Christianity, an inability to read scripture cannot be equated with an ignorance of scripture. It did not require a scribal elite but only ordinary memories to catch many scriptural allusions, and so it is altogether reasonable to surmise that the scriptural allusions in the New Testament were intended to be recognised. One need not posit a radical disjunction between those who could read texts and auditors who could not.

Paul seemingly assumed a good deal on the part of his Christian hearers, not many of whom were wise by worldly standards (1 Cor. 1:26). Not only did the apostle sometimes expect his readers to recognise a citation from the Hebrew scriptures even when it had no introductory formula (as in Rom. 10:13, 11:34–5 and 12:20), but does not 1 Cor 10:1–5, for instance, presuppose that

the Corinthians could recall for themselves the pentateuchal narrative of the exodus? 'The frequency, variety, and subtlety of Paul's recourse to Scripture presumes not only that the communities he addressed acknowledged the authority of Jewish Scripture, but also that they were sufficiently familiar with it to understand and appreciate his appeals to it, subtle and diverse as they were.'[25]

There is no reason to suppose that those who first heard the non-Pauline parts of the New Testament were any less sophisticated than the recipients of Paul's letters. This is not to say that all early Christians were equally informed listeners. Early Christian gatherings, like all other human conglomerates, will have contained some who were more learned and some who were less learned as well as some who had superior memories and some who had inferior memories. One may thus surmise that some of the more subtle allusions in the New Testament would not have been picked up by everyone. Maybe some of the less obvious echoes in the letters of Paul would have been heard more readily by the apostle and his scripturally literate conversation partners in mission – Barnabas, Luke, Silas, Timothy, Titus – than by the new Gentile converts in Corinth or Galatia. Acts 18:24 tells us that Apollos was 'well-versed in the scriptures', which must be a virtue in which he exceeds others. Nonetheless, Paul probably taught his charges as much of the Septuagint as he could in the time he was with them (cf. Origen, *Hom. Exod.* 5.1). There is no reason to think that the New Testament's subtle allusions to scripture were intended only for a scant few who could appreciate them.

Context

How exactly quotations and allusions work is a bit mysterious. A fragment from a precursor can beckon that fragment's first immediate context, the entire work to which it belongs, that work's author, its genre and/or its literary period. Indeed, the intertextual possibilities are endless.[26] Yet in practice the fragment's new home and its own textual coherence will suggest to the competent reader which one or more of various possibilities, of various deeper meanings, should be pursued.

In this connection one can raise the issue, much discussed since the 1960s, of the extent to which the New Testament writers paid attention to the

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25 Gamble, *Books and Readers*, pp. 212–13.
26 Helpful here is Ziva Ben-Porat, 'The Poetics of Literary Allusion', *PTL. A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976), 105–28.

original contexts of their subtexts.[27] Some exegetes, perhaps moved by a desire to defend the hermeneutical practices of the New Testament authors, have sought to vindicate them against the charge of being arbitrary. The relevant question, however, is not whether authors respected the original Old Testament context of an allusion or quotation – clearly they often did not – but rather what associations were, because of exegetical tradition, tied to that Old Testament text. The New Testament writings arose in a social setting where scripture was well enough known that phrases pulled from it could carry specific associations – associations often related to the site of extraction. This is not a question of legitimate interpretation or illegitimate interpretation but of the cultural connotations of particular words and phrases.

Jan Fekkes's careful work on scripture in Revelation has shown that 'when John wants to emphasize his own prophetic status and authority or illustrate his throne-room vision, he draws on the well-known experiences and examples of earlier prophets. And when he comes to describe the New Jerusalem, he builds on a biblical substructure of OT prophecies relating to the future glorified Jerusalem.' In like manner, 'political oracles correspond to political oracles; prophecies of judgment to prophecies of judgment; and promises of salvation serve as the basis for promises of salvation. Furthermore, John employs corporate models for corporate subjects and individual models for individual subjects.' So 'we do not find Daniel being used in the portrayal of Harlot-Babylon, nor is Isaiah ever used to describe the eschatological enemy. All this challenges the common assumption that John is not consciously interpreting the OT, but simply using it as a language and image base.'[28] Revelation's scriptural borrowings are not neat cuttings but transplants with roots and some of the old soil.

Despite what one finds in Revelation, the New Testament contains numerous instances where the reapplication of scriptural words pays no heed to their original context. Recognising this, however, should not lead one to surmise that the writer or his audience never paid heed to extended portions of scripture. Although Paul, like other Jewish exegetes of his time and later, can, for example, be guilty of quoting without regard for original sense, his thought reflects an engagement not with isolated verses but with the plot of

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27 Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, was the original impetus for this discussion. More recently it has been provoked by debate concerning the work of Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*. For a recent, sceptical treatment of the issue see Christopher Tuckett, 'Paul, Scripture and Ethics', in John M. Court (ed.), *New Testament Writers and the Old Testament. An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2002), pp. 71–97.
28 Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*, p. 102.

the Pentateuch as a whole. Francis Watson has shown that Paul's theology corresponds to tensions within the Torah itself. Although the law promises life (Lev. 18:5), its story reveals how the people's failure to keep the law, as in the incident with the golden calf (Exod. 32), brought death: the generation in the wilderness died there. Numbers and Deuteronomy especially relate the punishment that came from disobedience. So the failure of the law's promise appears in the Pentateuch itself. Also in the Pentateuch, however, is God's promise of salvation to Abraham's descendants (Gen. 15:6; cf. Hab. 2:4), and Watson has made a compelling case that Paul's concept of justification by faith, developed in opposition to justification by works of the law, arose in part from the apostle grappling with the whole Pentateuch. The apostle was doing far more than just meditating on individual lines of scripture.[29]

Authority

The early Christians revered the scriptures for the same reason that many pagans revered oracles: they were thought to be unmediated communication from the divine sphere. So, when supplying proof texts for the New Testament, the scriptures function as a sacred authority (cf. Matt. 5:17–20; Luke 16:17), and their impact upon New Testament theology would be hard to exaggerate. The fact that they have a commanding status is the reason why one can settle many matters with the unqualified γέγραπται, 'It is written', and why the New Testament's moral teaching shows (more often than believed) so many points of contact with the Old Testament.[30] In accord with Jewish tradition, to cite the scriptures is usually, in effect, to quote God (cf. Matt. 15:4; Acts 3:21, 7:6, 7; Rom. 9:25; 2 Cor. 6:16).[31] The New Testament even attributes to God words that in the Old are not on God's lips (e.g. Acts 13:35; Heb. 1:5–8).

At the same time, the New Testament does not shrink from creating striking contrasts with scripture. Matt. 2:6 inserts οὐδαμῶς, 'not at all', into its quotation of Mic. 5:2, so that, although Micah remarks upon Bethlehem's insignificance, Matthew outright denies it. Luke 10:4, in alluding to 2 Kings 4:29, which commands the taking of a staff, prohibits taking a staff; and Luke 10.5 prohibits itinerants from taking silver, bread bag, sandals and staff, all of

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29 Watson, *Paul*. Hays has similarly argued that one can detect behind Paul's letters a wrestling with Isaiah in its entirety; cf. his article, 'Paul's Reading of Isaiah', in Court (ed.), *New Testament Writers*, pp. 46–70.

30 For Paul see Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics. A Study of 1 Corinthians 5–7* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

31 In Heb. 2:12–14 and 10:5–7, however, the Son speaks in scripture while in 3:7–11 and 10:15–17 the Spirit does this.

which Moses famously commanded the Israelites to take with them in their departure from Egypt (Exod. 12; cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem* 4.24). Luke 14.26 commands one to hate father and mother, which (as the ecclesiastical commentators prove) cannot but make one wonder about the Decalogue, where honour of father and mother is commanded. In Rom. 10:6–8, Paul transmutes the exhortation to follow the law in Deut. 30:11–14 ('It is not in heaven. . . . Neither is it beyond the sea . . . No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe it') into a statement about the law's antithesis, his law-free gospel. A less obvious but still striking example of inverting scripture occurs in Revelation, if one looks at the book in its entirety. Although the Apocalypse regularly extracts phrases from Ezek. 40–8, which depict the eschatological temple, Rev. 21:22 denies that there will be a new, eschatological temple.[32]

In cases such as these, we do not have antinomianism or anything approaching it but instead forceful rhetoric. Incongruity with an authoritative precursor renders a text louder and more memorable. This is, moreover, a traditional rhetorical move in Judaism. A scriptural subtext can mean one thing and the new text parasitic upon it another. The denial of apparent human insignificance in Ps. 2 is itself ironically denied in Job 17:17–18 and Ps. 144:3. Similarly, Ps. 144, in rewriting Ps. 18, turns it from a thanksgiving into a complaint. Joel 3:9–10 prophesies war in the language of a famous prophecy of peace in Isa. 2:4 and Mic. 4:3. Although in all these cases, as in the New Testament texts cited above, there is a distance or disparity between the sacred subtext and the new composition, scripture is not being set aside.

There are, however, New Testament texts that are less restrained. Luke's sermon on the plain sets up a series of contrasts with Lev. 19, an important text in the Holiness Code.[33] If the former demands one to be holy because God is holy, commands one to judge one's neighbour, to love one's neighbour, and to repair fraternal relations, Luke's Jesus demands that his hearers be merciful because God is merciful, that they not judge others, that they love not neighbour alone but also enemy and, finally, that they not do good just to 'brothers'. All this amounts to something similar to the supertheses of Matt. 5:21–48, where Jesus modifies and adds to the Mosaic demands, and in 5:33–7 even prohibits taking oaths, although the Old Testament allows them. In like manner, Mark 10:2–12 plays the creation story against Deut. 24:1–4 and sets

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32 Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p. 43.
33 Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, pp. 29–38.

aside the law of divorce promulgated by Moses. In Luke 9:51–6, James and John, in a clear reference to Elijah's action in 2 Kings 1, ask Jesus if they should not call down fire from heaven. Jesus rebukes them, seemingly leaving the reader to infer his disapproval of how the prophet of old used his miracle-working powers.[34] In Galatians 3–5, Paul argues that the era of the law is over, and that Christians are no longer 'under law', which means in effect that the Torah is no longer their chief rule of life. Despite Matt. 5.17–20 and the New Testament's recurrent appeal to and dependence upon the Old Testament, some of its writings leave the impression that, in certain respects, the law and the prophets have come and gone (cf. Luke 16:16). Prophecies have given way to fulfilment, and fulfilment now clarifies, reinterprets and qualifies the prophecies, indeed the entirety of the Tanakh.

This was a radical development given the centrality of Torah and its nomistic authority within Judaism. Novel Christian readings of scripture, such as the application of messianic texts to Jesus of Nazareth, were one thing; the eschatological conviction of some of his followers that the Torah's reign was past, that its temple was obsolete, and that much of Jewish law was no longer binding on them, was quite another. This undermining of the Torah's foundational authority, and its subjugation to Christian teachings, was a large part of the reason why the church did not survive as a Jewish sect, but instead became a new religion.

34 For further details and the related Jewish discussion see Dale C. Allison, Jr., 'Rejecting Violent Judgment. Luke 9.52–56 and Its Relatives', *JBL* 121:3 (2002), 459–78.

PART IV

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BIBLICAL VERSIONS OTHER
THAN THE HEBREW AND
THE GREEK

The Latin Bible

PIERRE-MAURICE BOGAERT

Despite a certain overlap, it is helpful to distinguish three stages in the history of the Latin Bible until 600. The first is that of the *Vetus Latina*, translated from the Greek. This is followed by Jerome and the first diffusion of his translations from the Hexaplaric Greek and from Hebrew. The third stage marks the confluence of the early translations with the new. Gregory the Great and Isidore are best placed at the start of the following period (600–900), studied in volume 2.[1]

Translations from the Greek: the *Vetus Latina*

Origins

During the first centuries of the spread of Christianity, Greek was the common language spoken in the Mediterranean world, even in the West. Therefore here the church read the Old Testament according to the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament. When the need was felt, which was as early as the end of the second century in Roman Africa, the Bible was translated from Greek into Latin. The exact circumstances are unknown. It was not unusual for Tertullian, who also translated his sources directly from the Greek, to use a translation whose particular felicities have been perpetuated through the entire history of the Latin Bible. As early as 180, the Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs speak of 'the books and epistles of Paul, a just man', which in Africa were probably in Latin and consisted of codices and not of rolls.

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1 Since 1970, considerable progress has been made in this area, particularly regarding the ancient Latin versions, thanks to research and publications by the Vetus Latina Institute in Beuron (B. Fischer, H. J. Frede, W. Thiele, R. Gryson). It is now possible more precisely to trace the way Jerome's translations gradually replaced the more ancient translations. In the first edition of *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (volumes 1 and 2), mentions of the Old Latin are scattered and, with the exception of the New Testament, rare. Division of material did not allow for a continuous history of Latin Bible translation.

It seems somewhat surprising that the first translations were not produced in Italy or Rome. But this can be explained adequately by the blossoming of Christian literature in Latin in North Africa in the third century, with figures such as Tertullian and Cyprian, with whom no one has been found to compare in Italy. The church of Rome favoured Greek up to the middle of the fourth century.

Should one consider the possibility of a Jewish origin for the Old Testament books? In Tertullian's period and later, some Jewish communities in Africa spoke Latin: why would Christians not have used Jewish translations, for example, of the Pentateuch, if they existed? The question has been considered, but poses problems. For instance, Tertullian and Augustine testify that Jews in their circles referred to the eve of the Sabbath as *cenapura*, a typically Latin name. The same usage is attested by excellent witnesses in Jdth. 8:6, and there is nothing to prove that the book of Judith, even if not part of the Judaic canon, was not translated into Latin for the Jewish public. But African witnesses (and certain European ones) in the Gospels have employed and retained this usage: Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42. A Christian translator might have followed Jewish usage in translating προσάββατον and παρασκευή. Indeed, it is not certain that, in the second and third centuries, the Jews would have been happy with a translation of the Septuagint.[2] As sometimes occurred later, one may imagine that Jewish scholars were occasionally consulted, particularly for the translation of the books of the Hebrew Bible.

With the work of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, in the middle of the third century, we are on firmer ground. When he quotes the Bible at length and at sight in *Ad Fortunatum* and above all in the *Libri III ad Quirinum*, commonly known as *Testimonia*, he does so according to a Latin version which is (certainly in places) a revision and which thus already has a complex history.

Jerome complained about the inconsistency (*vitiosissima varietas*) of manuscripts. Around the year 400, there were innumerable variants of vocabulary, and greater discrepancies were frequent. Nevertheless, similarities were too widespread and too many to enable differences to be explained through the number of translations. Continuity is noticeable in certain felicitous

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2 See also L. Blaud, 'The Relation of the Bible Translations of the News in Romance Language to the Ancient Versions and the Jewish Inscriptions in the Catacombs', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, NS 19 (1928–9), 157–82; U. Cassuto, 'The Jewish Translations of the Bible into Latin and Its Importance for the Study of the Greek and the Aramaic Versions', in U. Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. I (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973), pp. 285–98; M. Kraus, 'Hebraisms in the Old Latin Version of the Bible', *VT* 53 (2003), 487–513.

translations of forms proper to Greek, which Latin cannot render word for word, as it frequently did. Thus in Cant. (Wisd.) 5:2, ἐπὶ τῷ παραδόξῳ τῆς σωτηρίας was rendered, certainly from the time of Cyprian, as *in subitatione insperatae salutis*. In view of the basic uniformity, we should not insist overly on the exceptional cases where a Greek text was so completely different from that of the first translator as to necessitate a new translation (the case, for example, in Exod. 36–40, if one compares Codex Monacensis, VL 104 and Codex Lugdunensis, VL 100).

The history of the Latin translation of the Greek Bible is thus that of its revisions, on the one hand revisions made in accordance with Greek models which differed from those used by the first translator, and, on the other, revisions of Latin for its own sake, primarily of the vocabulary, to stay in line with the language's evolution and the diversity of its use.

Witnesses

First, we will briefly list and characterise the sources of our knowledge with respect to the *Vetus Latina*:

1. Citations in the patristic literature and sometimes even in medieval literature. Because of their length and number, citations encountered in the works of Cyprian, Lucifer of Cagliari, Tyconius, Jerome (who does not always acknowledge his own translations), Augustine and certain anthologies, of which *Liber de divinis scripturis* (or Pseudo-Augustine's *Speculum*), are the most important. Citations from the fathers have the additional advantage of being situated and dated; the longest, made at sight, merit particular confidence. Nonetheless, one must be careful of the three following risks. (i) The normalisation in accordance with the text which became the Vulgate affected its transmission very early and considerably later too. (ii) The text reproduced at the head of a commentary or a section of commentary (lemma), might have been added if it was not given in the archetype; it might have been normalised in further use, due to its easy location. The faithfulness of lemmata may be judged through reference to a biblical text correctly cited or explained within the commentary itself, therefore less easily detected and corrected. (iii) The identification of quotes given by editors is sometimes incorrect, since they thought they could be found in Vulgate concordances, whereas the vast majority of the fathers did not know or only rarely used Jerome's translations from the Hebrew. To identify difficult cases successfully, one must attempt a Greek retroversion, and search the Septuagint concordances.

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2. Biblical manuscripts copied at the time when the *Vetus Latina* was still in use (up until about 800). Unfortunately most of these are fragments or palimpsests. They may be found in Elias Avery Lowe's general repertory, the *Codices latini antiquiores* (*CLA*) and its supplements. The witnesses are localised and dated through palaeographical methods, which are necessarily approximate. They enable the physical representation of the most ancient biblical codices, which is very important for the history of transmission. Three manuscripts are recognised as having been copied in Africa: the Gospels' Codex Bobbiensis (*k*, VL 1), in the fourth century, the fragments from the Reigns of Naples (VL 115) in the fifth century and the Freising Pauline Epistles (VL 64) in the second half of the fifth century.

3. Carolingian and medieval Bibles. Occasionally a particular book has been copied from an Old Latin model within a Bible collection of 'Vulgate' translations: Esther, Tobit, Judith, 1–2 Maccabees and the Acts of the Apostles are the most obvious cases. The practice survived well into the thirteenth century.

4. Glosses and additions to Jerome's translations. In places where the accepted Hebrew and Jerome were notably shorter than the Greek, revisers quickly sought to fill out what appeared to be omissions (the case with Samuel and Proverbs), and sometimes also to provide different translations (the case with a series of Spanish Bibles, VL 91–6).

5. Biblical readings, canticles deriving from the Bible, antiphonies and so forth, in liturgical books from various Latin rites (Roman, Milanese, Frankish or Gallican, Visigoth or Mozarabic) and sometimes in the Bibles themselves. Liturgy is conservative. Readings and canticles drawn from the Bible allow us to go back a considerable way in time. Antiphonies are more problematic, but they were protected by the accompanying melody.

6. Ancient sequences of *capitula* and *tituli*. See below.

Unity and diversity
Changes in vocabulary

The vocabulary of the *Vetus Latina* gradually changed. Certain technical terms, common words and grammatical terms faded from use; thus *parasceue* replaced *cenapura*, *verbum* replaced *sermo*, *mysterium* replaced *sacramentum*, *ergo* and *igitur* replaced *itaque*, and so on. At the outset, vocabulary use might be termed African; at the end it was European – which explains the division of Gospel manuscripts in Jülicher, Matzkow and Aland's *Itala* between *afra* and *itala* sources. Two elements acted simultaneously: geography and chronology.

And to make matters more complicated, the European text must have returned to Africa with Augustine.

Revisions from Greek

The first Latin translation was made from Greek manuscripts from before 200, possibly still in roll form, whose text might have been quite different from the accepted text two centuries later. With the New Testament, the text is the single rather inappropriately named 'western' text; with the Old Testament, the situation varies from book to book. It is not unusual for the Latin to show evidence – either alone or with another version – of a form of text lost in the Greek, and one which, since necessarily older, might indicate an older Hebrew text than the accepted Hebrew (masoretic) text.[3] With the diffusion of texts by the great scriptoria of Alexandria, Caesarea and Antioch, the need emerged to check the first Latin translation against the Greek. The more complicated the situation was with the Greek, the more complicated it was with the Latin, since revisions could act in a number of ways. It appears from a study of the texts that, during the patristic period, Latin versions of the Bible did not have an independent authority; they adhere to their model and this is particularly so with the LXX, which is considered to be an inspired translation. A further consequence is that the *Vetus Latina* is an important witness for the history of the Greek text, again, particularly the Septuagint. In the same way, a good knowledge of the history of the Greek text is required to understand that of the *Vetus Latina*.

Types of texts

Biblical texts proper, when very old, are often difficult to date and localise, and when from a later date, they do not indicate their origins. By contrast, patristic citations are usually correctly dated and localised, but, with the exception of those made at sight and of commentaries, they are often short and sometimes free. Bringing together the information from these two sources, and considering the vocabulary with respect to the Greek, one may distinguish

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3 From this viewpoint, the following are of particular interest: Exodus (VL 104; P.-M. Bogaert, 'L'importance de la Septante et du *Monacensis* de la *Vetus Latina* pour l'exégèse du livre de l'Exode [chap.35–40]', in M. Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus*, BETL 126 (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), pp. 399–428); Kings (VL 115; A. Schenker, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher. Die hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher*, Oriens Biblicus et Orientalis 199 (Fribourg: Academic Press/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2004)); Jeremiah (Bogaert, 'La *Vetus Latina* de Jérémie'); Ezekiel (VL 177; P.-M. Bogaert, 'Le témoignage de la *Vetus Latina* dans l'étude de la tradition des Septante. Ézéchiel et Daniel dans le Papyrus 967', *Bib* 59 (1978), 384–95); Esther (Haelewyck, 'Relevance'); and Ecclesiasticus (P.-M. Bogaert, 'Bulletin de la Bible Latine', RB 98 (1988), [240]–[2]).

several different types of text: ancient African (K in VL), further evolved African (C), Ancient European (D), evolved Italian (I, J), Spanish (S), Milanese (M) and so on. O designates Jerome's translations from the Greek Origenian edition, H, his translations from the Hebrew, V, the form which became the Vulgate of those works untouched by Jerome.[4]

From codices to the pandect

In the manuscript tradition of the Latin Bible, no traces remain of the copies on rolls (in fact the case with all Latin literature). Patristic witnesses and a few ancient manuscripts attest to the common use of Bibles in ten or more codices. The subtotal of Mommsen's stichometric list (see below), the reasoned reading of the *Liber de divinis scripturis*, Cassiodorus' evidence (*Inst.* 1.13.2) and certain actions described by Augustine in his preaching demonstrate the ways in which books were copied and grouped. In fact there is nothing to guarantee the homogeneity of these collections of codices, and some must have been more frequently used and copied than others. Pierre Petitmengin has made a detailed study of the codicological and palaeographical characteristics of documents conserved before 600.[5] In the Greek Christian world, as soon as it became 'codicologically' possible, that is to say as soon as the method of producing codices had been sufficiently perfected, the Old and New Testaments were copied into one large codex; this happened in the first half of the fourth century (codices Sinaiticus, Vaticanus). The first certain witness on the Latin side is Cassiodorus (see below), who called this type of codex Bible 'pandect', after the name given to the great legislative compilation by Justinian, his contemporary. It is possible that the final model for the Saint-Germain-des-Prés Bible (Paris, BNF, lat. 11553) was a pandect from the middle of the fifth century (see also below).

Characteristics

Nomenclature

Some features of early appellation can be surprising and occasionally deceptive. For the Latin fathers (Jerome, Augustine), *Vulgata* designated the

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4 For a description of editing principles, see R. Gryson, *Repertoirc général des auteurs ecclésiastiques latins*, VL 1/1 (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), vol. 1, pp. 21–4, 36–9.
5 P. Petitmengin, 'Les plus anciens manuscrits de la Bible latine', in Fontaine and Pietri (eds.), *Le monde latin antique*, pp. 89–127; P. Petitmengin, 'Codex', in C. Mayer (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 1:7–8 (Basle: Schwabe & Co., 1994), cols. 1022–37; P. McGurk, 'The Oldest Manuscripts of the Latin Bible', in R. Gameson (ed.), *The Early Medieval Bible. Its Production, Decoration and Use* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 1–23.

common Greek text (unrevised) or its Latin translation (the word did not assume its current meaning until the sixteenth century). *Itala* is a term used by Augustine in passing to designate an Italian form of the *Vetus Latina*, which he admired. *Vetus Latina* (Old Latin) is today's accepted denomination for designating the various stages of biblical translations from the Greek (with the exception of those by Jerome); some revisions may be later than Jerome. *Eptaticus* designates the group Genesis–Judges (later with Ruth); *Jesu Naue* refers to Joshua; *1–4 Regnorum* (then *1–4 Regum*) designates 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings; *Paralipomenon* refers to 1–2 Chronicles; *1* and *2 Esdras* refers to 3 Esdras (A Esdras in Greek) and Esdras–Nehemiah (B Esdras in Greek); *Solomon* refers to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Canticles (sometimes with Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach). Our Baruch 1–5 always appears under the name of Jeremiah (the name of Baruch refers to lost apocryphal writings).

Capitula

Frequently, ancient witnesses to the *Vetus Latina* are provided with a reference system to help with consultation. Each book is divided into sections (*capitula*); these are given a number and a title (*breuis*, *titulus*). The title may be reproduced in red, certainly inside the work itself (rubric). Most often, the list of titles with their numbers is given at the start of the book. Some of these lists are extremely old; many, created for the *Vetus Latina*, owe their survival simply to the fact that they were copied intact at the head of Jerome's translations, since he and his first editors did not fall back on the *capitula* system. Later, some series were adapted in line with the new translation, and more appropriate ones were produced.

Prologues

Any prologue proper to the *Vetus Latina* is unknown, except for the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. The Gospels rely on the so-called Anti-Marcionite (mid-fourth century?) and Monarchian (last part of fourth century?) prologues; the Pauline Epistles rely on very early, possibly Marcionite, prologues. Whatever their origin, they were often copied because of their biographical content. The prefaces of Jerome would have a quite different tone. Also very early on, accompanying reading assistance was provided. A certain Peregrinus offered an edition of the Pauline Epistles together with a concordance taken from Priscillian and *Testimonia*. A further concordance was composed in Italy based on a series of *capitula* and was already known to Victor of Capua (first half of sixth century). The *Primum quaeritur* prologue introduced the revision which became the Vulgate of the Pauline Epistles.

Stichometry

The length of Biblical books (as with profane works) was measured in "stiches" (*versus*), each with the conventional value of the epic hexameter (sixteen syllables on average), for reasons which included fixing the price per copy. Mommsen's Stichometry (see below) thus gives the African value of each book in the middle of the fourth century, as opposed to that given in Roman book-shops. Some witnesses have conserved the final indication of the number of stiches (*versus*) at a period moment when it no longer served a purpose.

An example: Job

The way the book of Job is cited by the Latins is illuminating. It is known that the first translation of Job into Greek was shorter than the accepted text by at least 389 lines. Direct witnesses of the shorter text, either Greek or Latin, no longer exist. Greek manuscripts have supplements, marked by asterisks in Origenian (or Hexaplarian) witnesses. Sahidic Coptic translations (conserved) were made from the short Greek text, and also Latin (testified by fragments from Cyprian, Priscillian, Lucifer of Cagliari, the *De divinis scripturis* and Gildas). Jerome first translated the Hexaplarian Greek form with asterisks into Latin; his translation has been preserved in three manuscripts (VL 132, 160, 161; also mentioned in the eleventh-century Rebais manuscript catalogue). Augustine used it from 394 or 395 and Philip the priest also cited it in his commentary. Philip and Julian of Eclanum primarily used Jerome's translation from the Hebrew. However, Julian of Eclanum, marginal glosses in the Spanish manuscripts of the Vulgate and certain citations by the 'Anonymous Arian' (Africa, early sixth century; *PG* 17.371–522) demonstrate knowledge of the Antiochene (or Lucianic) revision of the Greek. Gregory the Great commented almost solely on the translation from the Hebrew, yet did not reject the ancient version. Job thus offers a strong and exemplary case for the gradual alignment of the *Vetus Latina* with the accepted text. In other places, variations – often infinitesimal – are more difficult to observe.

Lists, canon

A Donatist Bible?

There are serious arguments in favour of allowing for the possibility of a Donatist edition of the Bible. On the one hand, Carolingian and medieval Bibles have passed on sequences of *capitula* which betray their Old Latin,

African and Donatist origins (clearly the case with the Prophets and Acts). On the other, it now appears that the list of biblical books known as Mommsen's Stichometry, which dates from the middle of the fourth century and attests to the work of an African scriptorium, was transmitted in a Donatist literary context and may itself be Donatist. It is nevertheless of note that, during the course of Catholic and Donatist controversies, the scriptural canon and the wording of the text was not questioned by either party. At most, there was discussion over, for example, the division of the text between the players in Canticles 1:7, where *meridies*, 'noon', is understood locally to be Africa. It is through the slant of the *capitula* that the Donatists insinuated their doctrine on certain limited points where it differed from the Catholics.

Priscillian

Priscillian (executed 385/6) and the Priscillianists accorded high importance to the Apocrypha. It was probably in the context of Priscillian's condemnation that a need was felt to clarify the list of canonic writings. Their preserved treatises allow one to conclude that they read 4 Ezra and the Epistle to the Laodiceans, which for a long time claimed a marginal position in Latin Bibles.

The canon

The lists of Pope Damasus (d. 384) in the *Decretum Gelasianum*, of the Council of Carthage (397), of Augustine in book 2 of *De doctrina chistiana* (397), and of the letter from Innocent I to Exsuperius of Toulouse (405) are in agreement and mark the Latins' definitive incorporation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the stabilisation of a 'long' canon of the Old Testament with a subset of *historiarum* (with, certainly, Job, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1–2 Maccabees) and a corpus of Solomon in five books (with Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach). Jerome's favouring of the short canon according to the Hebrew (see below) did not markedly deter the use of the long one.

The order of the Gospels

The accepted order of the Gospels was not widespread among the Latins until Jerome's revision was received. The order of Matthew, John, Luke and Mark dominated in northern Italy, as various sources show: eight Old Latin manuscripts (*a*, *b*, *d*, *e*, *f*, *ff2*, *n*, *q*), Chromatius of Aquileia and a bas-relief from Spoleto; it is also the order in the *Liber de divinis scripturis*. The order Matthew, Mark, John and Luke is given in a fifth-century commentary on the Gospels (Pseudo-Theophilus) and in a witness to Mommsen's list. The other witness to this list and that in Codex Claromontanus give Matthew,

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John, Mark and Luke. Ambrosiaster, and occasionally Jerome and Augustine, give Matthew, Luke, Mark and John. The very early African codex *k* affirms the sequence Mark–Matthew, unknown elsewhere. Earlier still we find Tertullian and Victorinus of Petau's order: John, Matthew, Luke and Mark. We may suppose that the appending of Eusebius' canons, an initiative perhaps taken by Jerome for the Latins, helped to establish the order we know today.[6]

Jerome

Without Jerome's intervention, the history of the Latin Bible would have remained that of an indefinitely revised version of the Greek Bible. After taking the personal decision to become involved in the process by translating the Origenian, or Hexaplaric, version of the Septuagint, Jerome then introduced a new factor: the reference to Hebrew truth. What we now take for granted was only slowly accepted before passing into common use.[7]

Jerome, Bible translator
Jerome's prologues to his translations

As he progressed in the writing of his commentaries and translations, Jerome composed a preface for each and sent them to the friends in Italy who were also his guardians and literary agents. These prefaces provide information regarding Jerome's translation methods and, in addition, never conclude without a comment directed against those who criticised his theory of the *hebraica veritas*. Cross-checking these enables the charting of the steady progress of the great Bible translation enterprise – first from Hexaplarian Greek, then from Hebrew.

Chronology of the translations

The Gospels

Arriving in Rome in 382, Jerome dedicated the revised Gospels to Pope Damasus, who had requested them but who died in December 384. Today it is widely acknowledged that the Greek manuscripts which aided Jerome in his revision of the Gospels are not of the same type as the great uncial writings, Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (א), but rather koine (Antiochene).

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6 P.-M. Bogaert, 'Ordres anciens des évangiles et tétraévangile en un seul codex', *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 30 (1999), 297–314.
7 Kelly, *Jerome*; Kamesar, *Jerome*.

His revision was based on Italian Latin manuscripts from the *b ff2 q* group. Given that Jerome might have known other witnesses which were contaminated in different ways, the number of truly personal interventions on his part was relatively small.[8]

The psalters

Nothing is known about a light revision which Jerome said he made in Rome: certainly there is no reason to identify it with the Roman psalter. After 385, Jerome produced a revision of the accepted Latin psalter from the Greek, according to Origen's Hexaplaric recension, characterised by asterisks and obeli. This represented one part of the much greater undertaking to do the same for the whole of the Old Testament. The psalter's revision from Hexaplarian Greek was widely disseminated during and after the Carolingian empire. Around 390–2, or even only in 398, Jerome offered a new translation according to the Hebrew and with reference to Aquila and Symmachus; this represented one part of his great endeavour to translate the entire Old Testament from the Hebrew.

The remaining books

Settling in Bethlehem, Jerome turned to the translation of the Old Testament from Origen's Hexaplarian edition. This work, based on the *Hexapla*, offered a revised LXX text, and indicated the LXX 'pluses' by obeli, and those of the Hebrew by asterisks. Jerome began with the psalter and the books of Solomon, which he dedicated to Paula and Eustochium. Other than the psalter, Jerome's translations of Job (see above) and Canticles (in Epiphanius' Latin adaptation of Philo of Carpasia's commentary) have been conserved, as has the preface to the translation of Chronicles, dedicated to Domnion and Rogatianus.[9] It is probable that Jerome had at least made preparations for the translation of further works, Isaiah among them, but when Augustine wrote to Jerome in 404 to ask for the translation, Jerome replied evasively, mentioning the lack of scribes and someone's dishonesty. In reality, Jerome by this time had nearly completed his translation from the Hebrew.

The chronology of translations from the Hebrew is at all points difficult to establish. Jerome began the work in 390, with the Prophets and Job, which were dedicated to Paula and Eustochium. The famous *Prologus galeatus* preceded

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8 Fischer, *Beiträge*, pp. 51–73, 156–274.
9 A. Vaccari, 'Recupero d'un lavoro critico di S. Girolamo', in A. Vaccari, *Scritti di erudizione e di filologia*, Storia e letteratura 67, vol. II (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1958), pp. 84–146.

Samuel and Kings (in 393). In the same year, at the end of *De uiris illustribus* (section 135), he claimed to have his translations of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. Yet he was still far from achieving his goal. In 394, he was pleased that Pammachius was satisfied with his translation of Prophets and sent him back to Marcella for that of Job (*Ep.* 48.4). In 396, he dedicated Chronicles to Chromatius of Aquileia and in 398, the three books of Solomon again to Chromatius and to Heliodorus of Altinum. On a date difficult to pin down (but before 407), he sent his translation (or rather, adaptation) of Tobit and Judith to the same bishops. He dedicated Esther to Paula and Eustochium, and it was shortly after Paula's death (January 404) that he sent Joshua, Judges and Ruth to Pammachius. By then he had already completed the Pentateuch, which he dedicated to Desiderius.

The translator

To describe Jerome's translation method, we have to consider his remarks regarding principles, and practice. He used Aquila's Greek translations (very literal), and those of Symmachus (more literary), to a much greater extent than he acknowledges, but he took care to conserve Hebraisms. Overall, he succeeded in producing a faithful version of the Hebrew Bible, halfway between the Ciceronian prose of his own epistles and the laborious word-for-word style of the V*etus Latina*. Occasionally in Jerome's work, tendentious translation has been found, showing a somewhat questionable attitude towards women. When he agreed to produce Tobit and Judith in Latin, he largely paraphrased the *Vetus Latina*.[10] Nevertheless, it remains the case that it was his translations which led to the remarkable success of the entire enterprise. It was this achievement which overcame the serious theoretical prejudice which was raised by his theory of the *hebraica veritas* and his short canon, realised at the expense of the Septuagint's authority.

Jerome's canon: theory and practice

On several occasions, Jerome openly declared that he rejected the parts of the Greek Bible not transmitted by the Hebraic Bible of his time. He made some concessions, since he translated the additions to Esther and Daniel from the Greek, marking them with obeli. He agreed to adapt Tobit and Judith in Latin, arguing an Aramaic model as authority. In practice, he occasionally cited these books, as well as Wisdom and Ecclesiastes, particularly when using, translating or adapting the works of the Greek fathers.

10 P.-M. Bogaert, *Judith*, VL 7/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 2001), pp. 30–2, 62–4.

Jerome's authority: authority and Jerome

In spite of all subsequent generalisations, one thing is certain: Jerome dedicated his revision of the Gospels accompanying Eusebius' canons to Pope Damasus to whom he had been introduced in 382 and who died in December 384. After this, he was obliged to leave Rome. The preface, *Nouum opus me cogis*, leads one to understand that the pope had asked him to standardise the various Latin versions of the entire Bible from the Greek (not Hebrew). Jerome recalls the complex nature of the task, given the different families of Greek manuscripts and, with the Old Testament, the revisions from Hebrew. For the time being, Jerome confined himself to the Gospels. All this, Jerome wrote in the preface. Pierre Nautin has rightly stressed that the correspondence between Damasus and Jerome bears signs of later editing. Whatever the case, it is on the strength of this dedication that later tradition leans in defining Jerome's mission and the authority of his translation not only of the Gospels, but of the entire Bible (including those books he never touched).

'Jerome's New Testament': Rufinus the Syrian

On three occasions, Jerome let it be known that he had translated the whole of the New Testament. Augustine, in precise terms, wrote, 'you have translated the Gospels from the Greek'. Somewhat less specifically, Jerome replied, 'and if, as you say, you agree with me when I revise the New Testament' (this was in 403–4). He had already said as much in 393, in the final part of *De uiris illustribus*, adding that he had also translated the Old Testament, a task which he had not finished at the time. The real reasons which lead one to question Jerome's affirmations are the following: he did not write a preface to the rest of the New Testament, which was against his practice; he failed to cite the revision attributed to him, even quite late in his career; and the characteristics of the 'Vulgate' of Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse do not correspond with his manner of revision, such as found in the Gospels.[11] But who then is responsible for the revision of the Pauline Epistles, introduced by the *Primum quaeritur* preface? Strong pointers lead one to think that it might be the work of Rufinus the Syrian, influential member of the Pelagian group in Rome. Rufinus the Syrian, one of Jerome's disciples, went to Rome at his request, and lived in the home of the senator Pammachius to whom Jerome addressed many letters and dedicated certain of his works, and who was also Jerome's

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11 C. Cavallera, 'Saint Jérôme et la Vulgate des Actes, des Épîtres et de l'Apocalypse', *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* (1920), 269–92.

editorial agent.[12] One may apply the same reasoning for Acts, Apocalyse and the Catholic Epistles, despite the fact that no preface provides confirmation. Very early on, Jerome's affirmations led to a general conviction, and the entire New Testament became attributed to him.

The dissemination of Jerome's translations

From all that precedes, it is clear that Jerome himself did not provide a collected edition of his translations. During his lifetime and probably for some while after his death, the translations were in circulation in the form of separate codices. At the outset, Jerome merely made additions to the various translations circulating, but the remarkable Latinity of his translations from the Hebrew swiftly won over the 'line-by-line' nature of the *Vetus Latina*. As for the Gospels, Jerome's triumphant path is relatively easy to follow.

The Gospels with the canons of Eusebius

Jerome's revision of the Gospels together with his preface (*Nouum opus*) followed by Eusebius' canons – making the work easily recognisable and allowing comparison of parallel passages – gained quick success. A large part of a copy, considered by E. A. Lowe to have been made during Jerome's lifetime, but which is from the end of the fifth century, has been preserved, and was only broken up in 1461 (St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 1395, and scattered leaves; *CLA*, vol. VII, 984; initial Σ or S). It was not copied *per cola et commata*, but sections by Eusebius are carefully noted in the margin. Dissemination of the new revision took place almost immediately, notably in the south of Italy. Copies were carried beyond the Alps and across the English Channel. Several copies are in existence:

- Echternach's famous Gospels (Paris, BNF, lat. 9389) contain an ancient subscription in Anglo-Saxon minuscule, dated 558. The version's copyist claims to have corrected a codex said to belong to Jerome from the library of the priest Eugippius (probably the Abbot of Lucullanum, who died after 532).
- A sixth-century book of Gospels, whose Roman liturgical apparatus had been adapted for use in Naples, served as a model for the *Amiatinus* and several other codices of the Gospels, copied in Northumbria. The resulting text is excellent.

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12 W. Thiele, *Epistulae Catholicae*, VL 26/1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1956–69), pp. 100*–1*.

- Not only Lucullanum and Naples, but Rome, too. At the end of a codex of the Gospels, which was copied in Brittany around 900 (Angers, BM 24[20], fol. 125v), the writer transcribed a colophon in uncials, which stated that this was Jerome's revision (*secundum Hieronimum*) and mentions the Roman bookseller, Gaudio(sus) whose shop (*statio*) was close to St Peter in Chains. As found in one of Orosius' manuscripts from the sixth century (CLA, vol. III, 298), *statio* designates the bookseller's shop or workshop. The felt need to specify that the text was indeed Jerome's suggests that the colophon is from the sixth century at the latest.
- On the other hand, a manuscript copied in Italy in the middle of the sixth century is mixed, and interspersed with Old Latin lessons (London, BL, Harley 1775).
- One of the ancestors of a Gospels manuscript copied in southern Bavaria during the first third of the ninth century (Munich, BSB, lat. 6212) was copied in Ravenna; the colophon states that it was amended by a certain Patricius at the request of Ecclesius, archbishop from 521 to 534.
- We will return later to Victor of Capua's New Testament. For his harmony of the Gospels he turned to Jerome's revision with Eusebius' canons (the Neapolitan form, mentioned above).
- The great majority of the Gospels which can be dated between 500 and 600 contain the revision by Jerome.

Jerome's New Testament

With the aim of offering a complete New Testament under Jerome's authority, booksellers very early attached the Gospels to a revised translation of the missing sections. Taken as one, this then became the New Testament 'Vulgate' and, according to affirmations of Jerome (more programmatic than real), was circulated under his authority. Given that this kind of complete New Testament existed in the first half of the fifth century, it is easier to explain how Victor of Capua – who in 547 prepared the material for the famous New Testament codex now in Fulda (see below) – used the 'Vulgate' revisions. At about the same time, Cassiodorus, while not fully explicit, implied that the smaller pandect he had prepared included Jerome's translation of the Old Testament, with the addition of the New Testament's twenty-seven books (*Inst.* 1.12.2). The attribution to Jerome of the whole revision of the New Testament's revision may rest on his own statements; this could also be supported by a *per cola et commata* arrangement which Cassiodorus attributes to Jerome, but which came out of copiers' workshops. It was also the result of a natural process of generalisation. Finally, it was not

unjust to attribute to Jerome an edition of the Bible of which he was principal translator.

Translations from the Hexaplaric Greek

Alberto Vaccari has shown that, despite the dissemination of Jerome's versions according to the Hebrew, neither his translations of Job and the three *Libri Salomonis* (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Canticles) from the Hexaplaric Greek nor, clearly, Psalms (later Gallican) fell at once into oblivion.[13] They were used by various fathers in Africa (Augustine) and in the south of Gaul (Cassian), and their echoes could be heard in the liturgy. Further, they also served to complete the translation according to the Hebrew, as and when needed.

The Old Testament from Hebrew: the role of hybrids

The diffusion of Jerome's translations continued in the form of partial Bible codices, and in pandects which usually collected together all Jerome's translations.

One particular aspect of this type of circulation was the creation of hybrids; there are three obvious examples: Esther, 1–2 Samuel (1–2 Regum) and Proverbs.

Esther

Hybridisation started with Jerome himself, since with Esther and Daniel he translated the supplements from the Greek. The case of Esther is a particularly good one.[14] Around 400, several versions of the *Vetus Latina* were in circulation, including one consisting of considerable paraphrase. All versions may be traced back to a very particular Greek version, not preserved in that language. Shortly before 404, Jerome translated Esther from the Hebrew (preface *Librum Hester variis translatoribus*), making it follow translations of the Greek additions, marked with obeli (indicating a gap in the Hebrew). At about the same time, Rufinus of Aquileia offered an edition of the *Vetus Latina* with the missing Hebrew parts placed at the end (as Jerome had done), and with their location in the text signalled by Greek letters. Rufinus' short preface survives, but not the edition. The preface *Hunc librum*, made for an edition of Jerome's translation in which additions are placed as in the Greek, and indicated by obeli, can be attributed to Cassiodorus. Medieval manuscripts have this edition or have followed a similar procedure. Still in the sixth century in Italy, an edition appeared in which Jerome's translation is preceded by the beginning of the

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13 Vaccari, 'Recupero'.   14 Here we follow Haelewyck, 'Relevance'.

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Vetus Latina Esther (A1–2, 23 LXX). There are several witnesses to this; the earliest was copied in the north of Italy towards the end of the eighth century (Cologne, Dombibliothek 43).

1–2 Samuel

Again in Italy, probably in the fifth century, a large number of passages taken from the *Vetus Latina* were added to the text of 1–2 Samuel. One must remember that the Septuagint and therefore the ancient Latin version were often longer than the accepted Hebrew text, and therefore than Jerome's translation. That edition, unverified by any preface, was very widely distributed in Spain and Gaul alongside the pure text, which it gradually contaminated.[15] In Spain, the Cava Bible (ninth century) has only four interpolations; in France, the first Bibles from Tours (Alcuin) contain only nine, whereas Theodulf's Bibles move gradually from 72 to 104.

Proverbs

A similar process took place for Proverbs. A certain Peregrinus (see above) chose to open his edition of Jerome's *iuxta Hebraeos* with the two prefaces by Jerome, and his translation from Hexaplaric Greek. He added a brief signed commentary. He inserted numerous passages belonging to the Septuagint, using Jerome's (lost) first translation, from the Hexaplarian Greek.[16]

This style of working – obvious in certain books where the difference was great, but also to some degree elsewhere – should satisfy the grievances of some Septuagint supporters and, by its very existence, help unite them to the supporters of the version according to the Hebrew.

A Bible by Jerome: the pandect

Explicit attribution to Jerome for the Hebrew Old Testament and the New Testament is found for the first time in two subscriptions to the Saint-Germain-des-Prés Bible (Paris, BNF, lat. 11553), which are possibly earlier than Cassiodorus and go back to the booksellers responsible for the first distribution. The first is often called 'Esther's colophon':

> End of Esther. Deo gratias. Amen. Here ends the Old Testament, meaning all the canonical scriptures, numbering 24 books, which Priest Jerome translated

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15 R. Weber, 'Les interpolations du livre de Samuel dans les manuscrits de la Vulgate', in *Miscellanea G. Mercati*, Studi e Testi 121 (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946), pp. 19–39.

16 D. De Bruyne, 'Études sur les origines de la Vulgate en Espagne', *RB* 31 (1914–19), 373–401, at 385–93 (see also Fischer, *Bibelhandschriften*, pp. 50–3).

from the Hebrew truth. With the greatest care and interest, I have looked at the codices to find (his) editions. These I have collected into a single corpus and copied into a pandect. The remaining scriptures, which are not canonical but known as ecclesiastical, are the following: Judith, Tobit, the two books of Maccabees, the Wisdom known as Solomon and the book of Jesus son of Sirach, as well as the book of the Shepherd of Hermas.

The second subscription attributes the New Testament, in fact the whole of it, to Jerome: 'End of [Ep.] to the Hebrews. Read in peace. Book collection [read: Bible] of Priest Jerome of Bethlehem. According to the Greek from corrected copies. Beginning of the book of Shepherd'.[17] This is the context in which, through constant association with Jerome's translations, a form of the *Vetus Latina* of 1–2 Maccabees, Wisdom and Ben Sira became 'Vulgate'.[18]

Fifth- and sixth-century developments

The Psalter and Biblical Canticles in common use

Both the psalter and soon after, depending on region and time, the Biblical Canticles assumed a very significant role in the liturgy, in devotion and in study. People knew them by heart. Jerome's translation from the Hexaplaric Greek (the Gallican Psalter) only entered the liturgy later and more gradually. His translation from Hebrew never did so. The quantity of Latin patristic material which affected the Psalms is enormous. As with other books, it is helpful to distinguish between the ancient African text, witnessed by Tertullian and Cyprian among others; various forms of European texts; one particular European text which was known in Africa and used by Augustine among others; and a late African text. We should note that the most ancient numbering of Latin psalms was not the same as that of our editions of the Septuagint. Despite later normalisation, traces of this have been found. But the present numbering of the Psalms according to the Hebrew is not attested, not even by Jerome in his *iuxta Hebraeos* translation. Thus it remained thus throughout the Middle Ages. Properly biblical manuscripts of the psalter able to be dated earlier than 600 are extremely rare. We may only note: the Saint-Germain Psalter (Paris, BNF, lat. 11947) from the sixth century, a papyrus leaf originally from Egypt, an amulet (?), with parts of the Psalms according to the Augustinian text (Pap. Heidelberg, Inv. Lat. 5),[19] and the Lyon Psalter, copied in Lyon around 500 (η, VL 421), which gives a confused text – one part is Old Latin,

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17 Fischer, *Bibelhandschriften*, pp. 86–7.   18 See also Cassiodorus below.
19 R. W. Daniel and Fr. Maltomini, 'From the African Psalter and Liturgy', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 74 (1988), 253–65.

only slightly contaminated, the other follows Jerome's Hexaplaric translation with other influences.[20] Later local Latin psalters, often quite conservative, enable interpretation of certain patristic givens and manuscript fragments. The Old Latin psalter and certainly the Roman and the Mozarabic close with Ps. 151, as in the Greek. This is not found in Jerome's translation from the Hebrew, since it is not included in the Hebrew. It is difficult to say whether Ps. 151 finished Jerome's first translation from the Greek, but it was reinstated relatively early on at least in some copies.[21]

An important question is when and where the series of biblical canticles began to be used in the liturgy and, after that, when they were copied in to follow psalms.[22]

Bilingual manuscripts

Certain Latin churches kept in contact with the Greek world. The Greek Bible represented the standard work of reference, despite its variations, almost as copious as in the Latin translations. Bilingual manuscripts bear witness to this, particularly the famous Codex Bezae (D, d; VL 5), copied about 400 in Beirut or Lyon (where it was kept at the time of Florus, in the ninth century). It contains the Gospels, Acts and 3 John in a characteristic 'western' text.[23] For the Pauline Epistles, we have primarily the Codex Claromontanus (d, VL 75), copied in the south of Italy in the second half of the fifth century, and a fragment found at Antinoopolis in Egypt (VL 85; *CLA*, suppl., 1694). The model for the bilingual paschal lectionary known as *Liber commonei* (VL 111), from before Gregory the Great's reforms, might correspond to the return of the Byzantine presence to Rome in the mid-sixth century. The Verona Psalter (VL 300), which was copied in north Italy around 600, appears to have been used later for the study of Greek – a usage seen generally with bilingual manuscripts in the next centuries. The north of Italy is also very close to the Gothic Christendom, which explains the existence of bilingual Gothic–Latin

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20 The text of the Old Latin manuscript psalters was given in the margin of the Romanum edition: Weber, *Le psautier romain*.

21 P.-M. Bogaert, 'Le psautier latin des origines au xiie siècle. Essai d'histoire', in A. Aejmelaeus and U. Quast, (eds.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochter-Übersetzungen*, MSU 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000), pp. 51–8.

22 J. Mearns, *The Canticles of the Christian Church Eastern and Western in Early Medieval Times* (Cambridge University Press, 1914); H. Schneider, *Die altlateinischen biblischen Cantica*, Texte und Arbeiten 1 (Beuron: Hohenzollern, 1938), pp. 29–30.

23 *Bezae Codex Cantabrigiensis*, ed. with a critical introduction, annotations and facsimiles by F. H. Scrivener (Cambridge University Press, 1864; repr. Pittsburgh, PA: The Pickwick Press, 1978).

manuscripts for the Gospels (VL 10 and 36) and Paul (VL 79) at the end of the fifth century, and in the sixth.

Some examples

Augustine's Bibles

Augustine admits that he rediscovered the Bible late on, receiving it in Italy during his conversion. He did not know it by heart, and needed the *codices* (Dolbeau Sermon 23.19–20). Once back in Africa, he did not use one unique text. Today we know that at least for the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles, he most frequently cites the text brought back from Italy, his *Itala*. We also note that he occasionally reused an entire text cited by his correspondents and even his adversaries. When he went away from Hippo to preach, he used the *codices* from the churches he visited. It was thus that he gradually discovered the works of Jerome. From 394 to 395, he had available Jerome's first translation of Job, from the Hexaplaric Greek (produced around 387); after 415, he had the Psalms, also from the Hexaplaric Greek (produced around 385 or just after) and he used them in those *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, which he dictated. Attached to the Septuagint, Augustine greatly admired Jerome's first work and wanted to obtain it all, in preference to his translations from the Hebrew. He knew some of these: even before 397 the translation of Isaiah; later the Minor Prophets (he cites Amos 6:1–6, as a model of eloquence). But the public reading of Jon. 4:6 where the ivy (*hedera*) replaced the pumpkin (*curcurbita*) incited a riot in an African church (*Ep.* 71). Augustine's prejudices against Jerome's theories and his new translation did stop him from using it. (The 'Vulgate' biblical text of *Speculum quis ignorat* was the result of a later transfusion.) Occasionally, by way of synonymy or through recourse to the Greek, Augustine himself seems to intervene in the translation, but we can say no more than that Augustine was a Bible-reviser.[24]

Gildas

F. C. Burkitt and P. Grosjean have shown the full importance of biblical citations in the *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* by Gildas (date disputed).[25]

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24 For Augustine's Bible, consult numerous works by A.-M. La Bonnardière, such as *Biblia Augustiniana*; see also P.-M. Bogaert, 'La Bible d'Augustin. État des questions et application aux sermons Dolbeau', in G. Madec (ed.), *Augustin prédicateur (395–411)*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 159 (Paris: Institut des Études Augustiniennes, 1998), pp. 33–47; P.-M. Bogaert, 'Les Bibles d'Augustin', *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 37 (2007), 513–31.

25 F. C. Burkitt, 'The Bible of Gildas', *RB* 46 (1934), 206–15; P. Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique, 33', *Analecta Bollandiana* 75 (1957), 203–6.

With the Old Testament, he employed Jerome's new version for a number of books, but used the *Vetus Latina* for Chronicles, Ezekiel and the Twelve Prophets (except for the end of Malachi), for the wisdom books and Job. He cites 4 Ezra 15 twice. In the New Testament, he cites Matthew and Paul according to the *Vetus Latina*, the rest according to the new revision.

Victor of Capua

In 547, Victor, bishop of Capua, placed the last touches to a codex of the New Testament which later belonged to Boniface, the 'apostle of Germany', and is today preserved at Fulda (Codex Fuldensis, or Bonifacianus 1). B. Fischer[26] and P. Petitmengin[27] have shown its importance. This codex is preceded by a preface in which Victor explains that he had included parts of Jerome's translation into a harmony of Tatian in Latin and strengthened it with sections from Eusebius. He then had the Pauline Epistles copied (with the Epistle to the Laodiceans), which made a whole. Next came the Acts, the Catholic Epistles and Apocalypse. The text is largely that which would become the Vulgate, of better or worse quality. The whole is not attributed to Jerome. But the preface to the harmony names *sanctus Hieronymus*.[28]

Cassiodorus

Cassiodorus, whose influence was very great in the early Middle Ages, deserves to mark the close of this period. With respect to the text of the Latin Bible, he notably took care not to lose anything. In the *Institutiones* 1.12–14, Cassiodorus, who also had a Greek Bible, describes his three Latin Bibles. He requested that Jerome's translations be copied into a pandect of fifty-three quires of twenty-four pages each (*seniones*), using a very close handwriting (*minutiore manu*). He had a Bible of nine codices 'according to St Augustine': this was the *Vetus Latina*. He also asked for a third Bible to be copied into a large-format pandect (*codex grandior*) of ninety-five quires of sixteen pages each (*quaterniones*), following the early translation, which may also be understood to mean Jerome's translation from the Hexaplaric Greek. The *codex grandior* contained diagrams and painted pages. One of these depicts Cassiodorus with his three Bibles. Reaching Wearmouth and Jarrow, this *codex grandior* had a decisive influence on the external form, but not on the text, of the famous Codex Amiatinus (around 700). Also at Vivarium, alongside the usual psalters,

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26 Fischer, *Bibelhandschriften*, pp. 57–66.   27 'Les plus anciens manuscrits', pp. 107–10.
28 Arriving very early in Fulda, as early as the ninth century, the evangelical harmony was abundantly followed both in Latin and in Old High German.

was an archetypal psalter which Cassiodorus himself had revised (*Inst.* 1.15, end of paragraph 12). M. Cappuyns has attributed to Cassiodorus the preface of *Hunc librum* to Esther. If this is correct, it was probably incorporated into his codex *minutiore manu* of Jerome's translation. Cassiodorus also composed some of the *tituli* and *capitula* for the Paralipomenon and wisdom books (*Inst.* 1.1.13 and 5.7), which have not been identified.

Conclusion

During the period considered, the all-pervading presence of the *Vetus Latina* indicates its significance. Its origins, from before 200, provide an exceptional witness to the very earliest Septuagint and the earliest forms of the New Testament, often referred to as the 'western' text. It is possible, in favourable cases, to return from the Old Latin to the Old Greek and, for the Old Testament, from the Old Greek to the Old Hebrew. Whether these very early forms of the Septuagint do or do not enable one to return to a stage in the very early Hebrew, or whether the particularities of the 'western' text of the New Testament are or are not the original text, are important questions, yet secondary with regard to the intrinsic antiquity of the texts. One cannot compile the history of the Greek Bible without constant reference to the Latin. Above all, the Old Latin is the Bible of the Latin fathers. They used multiple, often heterogeneous, codices, and not the Gutenberg or the 'Vulgate' Bible in one volume. In order to understand their commentaries on some passages and to avoid misinterpretation, we have sometimes to forget our own reading, gained from the Hebrew. Standing before biblical codices, the fathers were in the same position as we are today, faced as we are by many available translations. For all these men, apart from Jerome, Greek was the authority. At the end of the period under review (*c.* 600), the absolute authority of the translations of Jerome had not yet been established, but their status was clear. At the end of the sixth century and the upheavals accompanying it, we shall meet Gregory the Great and Isidore of Seville on the eve of a new era.

The Syriac versions of the Bible

PETER J. WILLIAMS

Overview

One of the earliest languages to receive a translation of parts of the Bible was the dialect of eastern Aramaic known as Syriac. Syriac was the native language of Edessa (modern Urfa in Turkey) and its surrounding region, and is first recorded in an inscription from AD 6.[1] Speakers of the language became progressively Christianised and, from the fourth century onwards, the language was dominated by Christian literature. Syriac was also the principal church language associated with the expansion of Christianity eastwards into central Asia and China. The wide influence of Syriac-speaking Christianity is reflected in translations of the Bible in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Armenian, Ethiopic and Georgian, while actual translations based on Syriac originals are found in middle Persian, Sogdian and Arabic.

From the Old Testament Peshitta in the second century up until the Old Testament translation of Jacob of Edessa (c. AD 640–708), there were at least eight major Bible translation projects and some of these display evidence of further revisions. The Old Testament was the object of three translation projects, and parts of the New Testament the object of five.

The earliest Syriac Bible translation is probably the Peshitta Old Testament. Although a first century AD origin for this version is not out of the question, it is more often placed in the mid- to late second century, making it likely that Syriac received extensive translation of the Old Testament before either Latin or Coptic. By the fourth century, as seen from quotations in church fathers such as Ephrem and Aphrahat, the Peshitta Old Testament was well established. Most of it appears to be translated from a Hebrew original, which, while not identical with the consonants of the masoretic text, generally differs from the masoretic text only in minor matters. Studies of the textual history

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1 H. J. W. Drijvers and John F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene. Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 140.

and translation technique of the Old Testament Peshitta in recent decades have tended to increase rather than diminish the impression of the closeness of the Peshitta to the masoretic text, though it is possible to detect occasional influence from Greek translations of the Old Testament. The translation technique often appears reasonably literal, but the principal reason for this may be the closeness of structure between Syriac and Hebrew. No thoroughgoing philosophy of formal correspondence had been developed at this stage of Syriac Bible translation. Of the books based on a Hebrew original, the books of Chronicles appear to have been translated somewhat later than the others and show a greater divergence from the masoretic text. Peshitta manuscripts often contain a version of Ben Sira translated from the Hebrew, while other books now designated Apocrypha were translated from Greek and probably did not form part of the earliest translation. Since the translators of the earliest Old Testament Peshitta evidently had considerable facility in Hebrew and since parts of the Old Testament show knowledge of early Jewish exegesis, it has generally been concluded that the translators were Jews.[2]

The next translation of part of the Bible into Syriac is the *Diatessaron* of Tatian.[3] Tatian, who says that he was born in the land of the Assyrians,[4] had been a pupil of Justin Martyr in Rome. After Justin's death, Tatian revealed non-orthodox tendencies and became an encratite. It is probably, then, that he returned to the East and composed his *Diatessaron* or harmony of the four Gospels, perhaps *c.* AD 172. The original language of the *Diatessaron* is in dispute, with scholars supporting either Greek or Syriac as the original language. However, even if Tatian did not compose the *Diatessaron* in Syriac, the *Diatessaron* was certainly widely available in Syriac until the fifth century and it is not improbable that the Syriac text originated in the second century itself. Unfortunately, there is no extant version of the *Diatessaron* in Syriac and its text must therefore be reconstructed from indirect witnesses. These include gospel harmonies in other languages such as Arabic and Latin, and the commentary on the *Diatessaron* by Ephrem which survives in part in its original Syriac and as a whole in Armenian. It has been common to suggest that we can access Tatian's *Diatessaron* through medieval harmonies in European vernacular languages, but this remains questionable.[5] The *Diatessaron* did

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2 Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament*, pp. 244–6.

3 For an introduction to the complexities of *Diatessaron* scholarship, see Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron*.

4 Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 42.

5 Ulrich B. Schmid, *Unum ex Quattuor. Eine Geschichte der lateinischen Tatianüberlieferung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), pp. 21–2.

not present an equivalent of every element in one of the four Gospels. For instance, it had no equivalent of John 1:6, since such a brief introduction to John the Baptist would serve no purpose in a harmony which included extensive material from Luke about the Baptist's birth. It also often did not represent significant details of the original. However, the *Diatessaron* may well have been the main version of the Gospels used in the Syriac church during the early centuries.

In the nineteenth century two manuscripts of the Syriac Gospels were discovered, which appear to present a form of the text earlier than the received ecclesiastical text or Peshitta. The first manuscript was a fifth-century codex of the four Gospels (British Library Add. 14451) discovered by William Cureton, then assistant keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum, in a collection of material acquired from the Monastery of the Syrians in Wadi Natrun, Egypt, in 1843. The second was a late fourth- or early fifth-century palimpsest, Sin. Syr. 30, discovered during a visit to St Catherine's Monastery in Sinai by Agnes Smith Lewis in 1892. These two manuscripts are now known as the Old Syriac Gospels and between them the two witnesses cover most of the text of the Gospels. For some time scholars debated whether or not the Old Syriac Gospels had preceded the *Diatessaron*, but scholars have now overwhelmingly concluded that they did not. The Old Syriac Gospels must therefore be assigned to some time between the *Diatessaron* in the second century and the Peshitta in the fifth, probably in the earlier part of this period. In addition to the Old Syriac Gospels, which are directly attested by manuscript evidence, scholars often postulate an Old Syriac version of other parts of the New Testament, such as Acts or the Pauline corpus, though there are no surviving manuscripts of such. The existence of an Old Syriac version extending to Acts and Paul is deduced from patristic citations and signs of familiarity with these writings among early Syriac church fathers. Attempts have also been made to reconstruct these translations on the basis of biblical citations in Armenian translations of Syriac patristic works.[6]

The two extant Old Syriac manuscripts of the Gospels also show significant differences among themselves. For instance, the Sinaitic manuscript ends Mark's gospel at 16:8, whereas the Curetonian manuscript is extant for 16:17–20, though not for the transition from 16:8 to the longer ending of Mark. The Sinaitic manuscript is thought to attest more frequently the earlier textual form, but even it appears to show signs of revision. Thus between the time

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6 E.g. Josef Kerschensteiner, 'Beobachtungen zum altsyrischen Actatext', *Bib* 45 (1964), 63–74; J. Kerschensteiner, *Der altsyrische Paulustext* (Louvain: Secrétariat du CSCO, 1970).

of initial translation and the translation of the Peshitta there seems already to have been a tendency to revise, to bring the translation into greater conformity with the Greek.

The Peshitta New Testament is the next in the sequence of Syriac versions. It contains only the twenty-two New Testament books then accepted by Syriac Christianity, lacking 2 Peter, 2–3 John, Jude and Revelation. It is not cited at all by writers from the fourth century but signs of its use can be found in citations from the fifth. The version was made prior to the schism following the Council of Ephesus in 431 and after some time became the main ecclesiastical version of the New Testament which was used by all the Syriac-speaking churches. The translation of the Peshitta New Testament was connected by F. C. Burkitt with Rabbula, bishop of Edessa from AD 411 to 435,[7] whose anonymous fifth-century biographer (British Library Add. 14652) says that he translated the New Testament from Greek into Syriac, but this association has been subjected to vigorous challenges.[8] The earliest extant manuscripts of the Peshitta New Testament come from the end of the fifth century.

The Peshitta shows such a clear affinity to the Old Syriac translations that it can be seen as a revision of the Old Syriac on the basis of the Greek. Some scholars believe there is evidence for a form of the text intermediate between the Old Syriac and the Peshitta which has been named the Pre-Peshitta and would date to the second half of the fourth century. The Peshitta is not slavishly literal, but shows a moderate degree of formal correspondence with the Greek. While it has sometimes been said to be based on a form of the Byzantine Greek text, its conformity to the Byzantine text should not be exaggerated. For instance, it lacks John 7:53–8:11, the passage about the woman caught in adultery, and Luke 22:17–18. One subject of debate has been the degree of uniformity in the textual transmission of the Peshitta New Testament. Relative to other Bible versions, or works of Antiquity in general, there is little time between its composition and our earliest witnesses – less than a century. At the same time, the standard edition of the Peshitta Gospels by Pusey and Gwilliam depended heavily upon manuscripts now in the British Library, which largely came from a single location – the Monastery of the Syrians in Egypt.[9] It remains an open question whether the collation of further

7 F. C. Burkitt, *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe*, vol. II (Cambridge University Press, 1904), pp. 100–65.
8 See especially A. Vööbus, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac*, vol. I (Louvain: Durbecq, 1951), vol. II (Louvain: Peeters, 1987).
9 P. E. Pusey and G. H. Gwilliam, *Tetraeuangelium Sanctum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901).

witnesses will create a greater impression of diversity in the transmission of the Peshitta.

The next translation was the Philoxenian translation (completed around AD 507/8), so named because it was sponsored by Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbog (d. AD 523). It was a revision of the Peshitta New Testament carried out by one named Polycarp, and included the five New Testament books which had not been included in the Peshitta. The Philoxenian translation was the first translation in which the break with native Syriac idiom for the sake of literal representation of the original would have been clear. However, in literalism it was surpassed by the Harclean (see below) and in native Syriac idiom by the Peshitta, which probably explains why it has not survived in the manuscript tradition. It is therefore principally known (or inferred) from Philoxenus' own quotations of the biblical text – a subject with its own complexities. The one case where the Philoxenian may have survived is in the five New Testament books included in the Philoxenian but lacking in the Peshitta. For these five books there exists a sixth-century translation of uncertain origin, but which may be the Philoxenian translation. There are also traces of a Philoxenian translation of the Old Testament.

Although strictly beyond the chronological limits of this survey, the Syro-*Hexapla* for the Old Testament and the Harclean version for the New Testament can be seen as representing the culmination of the translation movements which are surveyed here. The Syro-*Hexapla* was produced around AD 615–17 by Paul of Tella on the basis of Origen's *Hexapla*, and the Harclean was produced by Thomas of Harkel in AD 616. These two translations are counterparts of each other and were scholarly works committed to extremely literal translation and presenting a marginal apparatus. In consequence, the ecclesiastical reception of these versions never attained to that of the Peshitta. Later in the seventh century, Jacob of Edessa attempted to make a translation of the Old Testament which combined the authority both of the Old Testament Peshitta and of the Greek.[10]

Manuscripts

Early Syriac Bible manuscripts were written in codices on leather, not on papyrus, generally with one or two columns per page. The writing, which is from right to left, tended to be justified on both right- and left-hand sides.

10 See, for instance, Alison Salvesen, *The Books of Samuel in the Syriac Version of Jacob of Edessa* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

Frequently in a two-column manuscript a line of text might consist of just two words. A typical sixth century biblical manuscript would be written in a very clear hand, with attention paid to the aesthetic effect of writing, but without illustration. The text would have no vocalisation marks, yet would contain basic punctuation and the plural marker *seyāme*. It might also display a limited number of diacritical marks, particularly intended to distinguish homographs belonging to the same grammatical category. In addition, the manuscript might contain some rubrification of lessons, numbering of quires and some running headers. If it contained the Gospels it would be likely to contain the Eusebian canons.

The earliest extant biblical manuscripts come from the beginning of the fifth century or the end of the fourth, and Syriac possesses the two earliest dated biblical manuscripts in any language – British Library Add. 14512, a palimpsest of Isaiah from AD 459/60, and British Library Add. 14425, a Pentateuch manuscript of which Genesis and Exodus are dated to AD 463/4. Beginning with the period when manuscripts appear with dated colophons, it is common for the scribe to name and locate himself, giving scholars a quantity of information about the transmission of the text not found until later in the transmission of the biblical text in other languages.

A seventh-century manuscript of the entire Old Testament is housed in the Ambrosian Library, Milan (Ms B. 21 Inf.). This manuscript contains various works of Apocrypha, and includes 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse of Baruch and book 6 of Josephus' *Jewish War*. A scholarly edition of the Peshitta Old Testament has been produced under the auspices of the Peshitta Institute in Leiden.[11] However, it has been claimed by Michael Weitzman that the ninth-century manuscript Or Ms 58 of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, even when it alone is closer to the Hebrew, often attests a more original form of the Old Testament Peshitta.[12]

Although there are not enough extant manuscripts prior to AD 600 to make firm assertions as to the sequence in which biblical books appeared in manuscripts, we can say a certain amount about the New Testament. Both Old Syriac and Peshitta manuscripts show the four Gospels as a unit. However, the unusual order of the Gospels in the Curetonian manuscript (Matthew, Mark, John, Luke) may indicate that the Old Syriac Gospels were not originally translated as a unit. On the whole, in Peshitta manuscripts, the

11 Peshitta Institute, Leiden, *Vetus Testamentum Syriace* (Leiden: Brill, 1966–).
12 M. P. Weitzman, 'The Originality of Unique Readings in Peshita MS 9a1', in P. B. Dirksen and M. J. Mulder (eds.), *The Peshitta. Its Early Text and History, Papers Read at the Peshitta Symposium Held at Leiden 30–31 August, 1985* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 225–58.

three Catholic Epistles (James, 1 Peter, 1 John) were placed directly after Acts, though the order of this unit in relation to the Pauline corpus was not fixed. The Epistle to the Hebrews occurred at the end of the Pauline corpus of which it formed a part. The Pauline corpus displayed the same order as in modern Bibles.[13]

Analysis

These translations varied through time in significant ways in line with changes in ecclesiastical situations, attitudes to the text and philosophy of translation. In the Old Testament, the first translation, the Peshitta, was essentially based on the Hebrew, the second, the Syro-*Hexapla*, on the Greek, and the third, that of Jacob of Edessa, offered a synthesis of the Greek Old Testament and the Peshitta. However, the later translations did not seriously challenge the central ecclesiastical position of the Peshitta Old Testament.

In the New Testament, translations became progressively more literal and conformed more through time to the Greek text and to the twenty-seven-book canon. At the same time, the type of Greek text used for translation varied from translation to translation. In general the later Syriac translations were not made *de novo* but were revisions of earlier translations according to new criteria. The Peshitta New Testament may be seen as standing at a mid-point from the beginnings of Bible translation to the later refinements of literalism. It had moved beyond the loose renderings of the *Diatessaron* and Old Syriac without moving to the rigorously literal translation seen in the Philoxenian and Harclean. That others felt the need to produce new translations demonstrates that the Peshitta was not felt everywhere to be adequate. However, its merits seem to have allowed it to win out over its rivals.

On the assumption that the *Diatessaron* preceded the Old Syriac Gospels, we may see a pattern represented by the five New Testament translation projects in which each previous version was challenged by a later version which sought greater conformity to the Greek, both in wording and in extent (canon). However, the earlier translations also enjoyed coexistence with the later ones. Ephrem's citations reflect both the *Diatessaron* and Old Syriac texts, but he chose to base his own commentary on the *Diatessaron*. In the

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13 William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, part 1 (London: British Museum, 1870), remains a vital and informative work on many of the most important biblical manuscripts.

fifth century Theodoret of Cyrrhus claims to have found and removed more than 200 copies of the *Diatessaron* in his diocese.[14] Yet it must have survived in Syriac well beyond that time since a version of the *Diatessaron* was used as the basis for a harmony of the Gospels in Arabic. Similarly, there was an overlap between the Old Syriac Gospels and the Peshitta, and the Old Syriac did not immediately fall into disuse after the production of the Peshitta. The Peshitta was certainly not superseded by the subsequent translation of the Philoxenian and Harclean versions.

A further complication is that certain New Testament versions underwent considerable revision. An example of this could be the way in which the Sinaitic palimpsest of the Old Syriac Gospels often translates Greek 'Jesus' by *māran* 'our Lord' in Matt. 8:3–11:7 (except in 8:26), but tends to use the name 'Jesus' elsewhere. The Curetonian Gospels use 'Jesus' here but there is enough identity in wording to establish that the two Old Syriac witnesses are definitely related genetically and their relationship can be explained by positing at least one light revision from the Sinaitic to the Curetonian text, though of course the actual historical reality would almost certainly have been more complex. It is not at all uncommon for a single verse (e.g. Matt. 2:22) to display agreements between the two Old Syriac witnesses against the Peshitta and between the Peshitta and each of the Old Syriac witnesses against the remaining witness. Thus, although it is right to speak of the Old Syriac, Peshitta, Philoxenian and Harclean as distinct translations, it is also right to regard some of the revision work on the Old Syriac as preparatory to the Peshitta, just as some of the Philoxenian's revision work on the Peshitta was preparatory to the Harclean.

Theological considerations sometimes played a role in the generation of Bible translations. These were not limited to questions of definition of an authoritative text and canon, but it is also likely that a reviser of the Old Syriac found an earlier rendering of Matt. 1:16 problematic in implying Joseph was physically the father of Jesus.[15] In the case of the Philoxenian translation, Christological controversy was also a factor.[16] Ecclesiastical alignments naturally also affected the reception of a version. Thus, whereas the Peshitta had been accepted by all the Syriac-speaking churches, since Philoxenus was a monophysite, his translation was not accepted outside monophysite circles.

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14 Theodoret, *Treatise on Heresies* 1.20.
15 P. J. Williams, *Early Syriac Translation Technique and the Textual Criticism of the Greek Gospels* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006), pp. 240–4.
16 See Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, p. 36.

Christian Palestinian Aramaic

A further version, which used to be classed as Palestinian Syriac or the Syro-Palestinian version, is now classed as Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA). This was the version of the Melkites, and has often been treated together with the Syriac versions. There are indeed similarities of writing style, and occasional indications of mutual influence between the versions, but the language is western Aramaic and this represents an entirely different translation from any of the Syriac ones.

The Bible was probably translated into CPA in the fifth century and the earliest extant manuscripts date to the sixth. The whole translation, Old and New Testaments, was made on the basis of a Greek original. In the case of the Old Testament, only about 10 per cent of which is now extant, this was influenced by Origen's *Hexapla*. Extant works of Old Testament Apocrypha include the Epistle of Jeremiah, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Song of the Three Children and Ecclesiasticus. Parts of most books of the New Testament survive. The translation is moderately literal and the text type mixed.[17]

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17 See further Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff, *A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic* (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1996–9).

The translation of the Bible into Coptic

WOLF-PETER FUNK

What we call 'Coptic' today is the last recorded stage of evolution of the ancient Egyptian language. As a written language it is the result of concerted efforts made in the third century AD to establish new writing systems that fully took into account the contemporary usage of the Egyptian language, for which the older systems had become more and more obsolete. To this end, the initiators used the alphabet of the Greek language (which by that time had been known and widely used in Egypt for centuries), to which they added a few signs from earlier indigenous scripts, and developed this mixed inventory of signs into several coherent writing systems in various regions of the country. The desire, among the ever-growing number of Egyptian Christians, to translate biblical texts from Greek and to record them in the native language of the majority of the populace is supposed to have played an important part in the creation of literary standards of the Coptic language.

The early beginnings in the third century are shrouded in obscurity: any mention of persons setting out to write in Coptic is scanty in our historical sources and, if made at all, does not contribute much to an elucidation of the actual social and cultural processes involved. What we have is the undeniable evidence of translation activities in terms of their result: the papyrus and parchment codices that have come down to us through various channels or were discovered in the past two centuries, and which through their abundance attest to an astounding amount of work undertaken in this field in various regions of Egypt during the third and fourth centuries. But the dating of early Coptic manuscripts is rather a delicate matter. Many of the more clearly 'ancient' or 'early' manuscripts are dated to the fourth century with greater or lesser confidence (in a few cases with certainty), though to which part of the century often remains unclear. The very earliest specimens, however, which possibly antedate the fourth century, are the ones for which the crucial question of 'before or after' the Constantinian turnround always lingers in the background. The most that can typically be said here is a vague verdict like

'probably early fourth or late third century', a statement that is often based on shaky palaeographical grounds and/or an appraisal of the particularly primitive make-up of a given manuscript. Nevertheless, and in spite of the fact that our judgement may be wrong in some cases, there is general agreement that a small number of the manuscripts we have in fact antedate the fourth century by a few years or decades, and prominent among these are translations of biblical texts.

The most puzzling aspect of the Coptic translation of biblical texts is probably the diversity of the literary dialects used. Especially in the last few decades, which have witnessed an ever-growing number of new discoveries, the recognition of these dialects, their distinction and definition have been and continue to be a subject of constant research and adjustment of our notions to new realities.[1] Without going into details, a couple of points need to be made here. In our present state of knowledge, the creation and codification of Coptic literary dialects on the one hand and the production of translations of biblical texts on the other can hardly be separated from one another on the historical level, but they are not identical matters and must not be confused. On the one hand, there are cases of more than one translation into a given dialect and, on the other, a single translation into Coptic (a 'version') may have come down to us in several distinct dialects. As far as the more technical language is concerned, a convenient way to distinguish these different matters is the way sigla are currently used in the two domains: single capital letters in italics (such as *B*, *F*, *M*, *S*, etc.), sometimes subdivided by adjoined numbers, for the dialects, and short two- or three-letter abbreviations for the corresponding dialect versions of biblical texts (such as bo, fa, mae, sa, etc. in the New Testament editions, and Bo, Fa, Sa, etc. in the Septuagint editions).

Another important issue is the different weight properly to be attributed to these dialect versions. Most scholarly chapters on Coptic Bible versions in the last few decades were authored by scholars whose primary interest is not the history of Coptic literature but the textual criticism of the Old and New Testaments – a line of research for which the Coptic documents provide excellent data material, reliable in great detail, because of the fairly precise nature of their translation from the Greek. In this perspective, all Coptic dialect

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1 For a brief overview of the dialectological situation that reflects our present-day state of knowledge and distinction, the reader is referred to R. Kasser, 'A Standard System of Sigla for Referring to the Dialects of Coptic', *Journal of Coptic Studies* 1 (1990), 141–51. See also W.-P. Funk, 'Dialects Wanting Homes. A Numerical Approach to the Early Varieties of Coptic', in J. Fisiak (ed.), *Historical Dialectology. Regional and Social*, Trends in Linguistics 37 (Berlin, De Gruyter, 1988), pp. 149–92.

versions – if they are taken into account on a large scale – are usually treated on a par. To be sure, they have to be of equal weight as a point of departure because their individual character and usefulness for present-day research are to be evaluated according to the amount of interesting readings they provide in support of textual variants. In a more general historical perspective, however, especially considering the impact these versions had on the history of Coptic literature and the Coptic church, the viewpoint must be somewhat different. It seems advisable to set apart those versions that had a life span of some length (extending from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages or even longer) from those that did not. Such a distinction may already be justified by the fact that, naturally, much more can be said about the history of the former than that of the latter. Most importantly, however, it is only for the former group that we are in a position to state with some confidence that a greater number of individual texts, available to us in separate manuscripts, in fact somehow *belonged together* and thus formed something close to what we would call 'a Bible', that is to say, in the absence of any large-size volumes that integrate the Bible in the way the Greek uncial codices do, at least a collection of books that contain one or several biblical texts as part of the same imaginary 'whole', assumed to have been at hand in the libraries of certain places as one editorial set of volumes. Such a status can be assigned with certainty to two ancient Coptic versions: the Sahidic and the Bohairic, to which the Fayyumic and the Mesokemic may be added in a more hypothetical manner, although only the first of these probably had a life span of some length.

The long-lived versions

The one Coptic version of biblical texts for which continuous usage throughout the classical period (and even later) can safely be asserted is the Sahidic version. What we call 'Sahidic' is a particular codified norm of written Coptic, which very soon – in the second half of the fourth century, at the latest – gained the social and cultural (though by no means 'official') status of a standard language of communication and literature over the whole of Upper Egypt, extending with time to the boundaries of the Delta region and thus also covering Middle Egypt. Its geographical origin is more difficult to define than that of any other Coptic literary dialect, since in many respects it appears to lie outside the natural continuum of regional variation. If it was most likely created and first codified in the northernmost region of Upper Egypt proper, perhaps around the city of Hermopolis, then its use and mastery must have been extended very soon to other important

cities in the south, notably Thebes. And so must the production of biblical as well as non-biblical manuscripts, once the primary translation work had been done.

Although a great number of Sahidic Bible manuscripts from the classical period have survived, most of these are incomplete or fragmentary.[2] For the Old Testament (in Egypt generally based on the Greek Septuagint rather than a Hebrew source text), what can be fully recovered from at least one complete manuscript of the ancient time is not much more than Psalms and a few minor books such as Judges, Ruth and Esther; but there are now also substantial continuous parts of other books, notably Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Jeremy, as well as some wisdom books, available in one or two manuscripts from the fourth and fifth centuries. As for the New Testament, we have had some remarkable discoveries and publications since the early twentieth century, so that we now possess complete ancient records of Mark, Luke and John among the gospels, as well as the Pauline Epistles and Acts. For scholars mainly interested in variant readings, these more recent text publications may represent just another witness to be added to the varied picture, but in fact they have put the entire philological research on the Sahidic version on a new basis. While some excellent ancient manuscripts survive also for most of the other major components of the Old and New Testaments, none of these preserve these books as wholes. For the painstaking work of producing comprehensive text editions, notably in the case of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, the first half of Matthew and the Catholic Epistles, modern editors have to resort in large measure to medieval manuscripts, of which those produced before the end of the first millennium usually preserve the Sahidic text form in a fairly reliable manner. For much of Revelation – a book of disputed canonical status in Egypt – very late manuscripts are the only ones available.

If the original translations, for the most important books of the Sahidic version, are likely to have been accomplished as early as the middle or end of the third century, this does not necessarily mean that the results of these primary efforts were fully identical with the texts we have now or can read in current editions. From the high degree of textual uniformity of the somewhat later Sahidic Bible manuscripts – irrespective of their place of origin and, in time, extending from the second half of the fourth century through much of

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2 Space does not allow for explicit references here to the widely scattered publications of Coptic biblical texts. The interested reader is referred to Nagel, 'Editionen koptischer Bibeltexte'; the latest instalment in a series of bibliographical lists begun by A. Vaschalde (*Revue Biblique*, 1919–22; *Le Muséon*, 1930–3); and set forth by W. Till (*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 1959/60).

the Middle Ages – we can infer that any production and distribution on a large scale was not begun until those translations had been subjected to careful revision and editing, presumably under the control of some church-based authority (whose identity and location is unknown to us), who also had access to reliable Greek manuscripts. It is difficult to think that such a huge effort could have been systematically undertaken before the time of Constantine. At any rate, while some rare specimens of the earliest fragmentary witnesses to the Sahidic version display features of a 'wild' text, those that can be dated to the late fourth or early fifth centuries usually already have the standard text. And this standard text form, which was probably attained for most, if not all, books of the Sahidic Bible in the course of the fourth century, lasted for a very long time without any substantial changes[3] – until this version gradually dropped out of use in the second millennium as a result of the gradual extinction of Coptic as a spoken and written language in Upper Egypt.

The history of the Bohairic (or northern) version is far more complicated and, regarding our present state of knowledge, in some respects still obscure. What became known as the 'standard' or 'classical' Bohairic version of the Bible and was perpetuated throughout the Middle Ages down to the present day (today the only Coptic Bible) was probably created only around the sixth and seventh centuries. If it was based on earlier materials at all, these must have undergone a thorough revision, both at the levels of text form (using more up-to-date Greek source texts) and dialect norm, although the precise circumstances of these processes are unknown. Regarding the earlier period itself, however, the data available to us has considerably changed since the 1950s: from nothing to a sizeable number of pieces of text. Thus, while there was a tendency among scholars in the first half of the twentieth century, still noticeable until recently, to discard everything Bohairic as a late product of limited value, there is no serious reason for such a point of view any more, since we became acquainted with inscriptions (notably

[3] This constancy over time can even be observed in those rare cases where a biblical text has come to be known in two slightly different recensions, which were copied and thus survived over several centuries (presumably at different places). A version of the book of Genesis has been known for some time from a very late medieval manuscript, which must be transmitting a parallel Sahidic recension of long standing. In another case, the Gospel of Mark, it has recently been shown not only that there are two slighly differing recensions but also that both these recensions, which may even be associated with different text types of the Greek tradition, can be traced through Sahidic manuscripts that were produced at very different times. Cf. A. Boud'hors, 'L'Évangile de Marc en copte-sahidique. Essai de clarification', in D. W. Johnson (ed.), *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies*, vol. II (Rome: CIM, 1993), pp. 53–65.

from the Kellia excavations) and other non-literary documents in Bohairic that date back at least to the sixth century – and also with biblical codices as early as the fourth. With the climatic conditions of the Delta (where Bohairic was the dominant language during the entire Coptic period) not favourable to the preservation of papyrus, the discovery of books and fragments from early times depends on the presence of isolated specimens of northern provenance in the larger ancient collections of the south, which are gradually being unearthed among the ruins of monasteries on the dry outskirts of the Fayyum and even in Upper Egypt. Not surprisingly, such discoveries are rare events.

The principal facts to be learned from the new discoveries can be summarised as follows. On the one hand, there is now sufficiently clear evidence for the translation of biblical texts into Bohairic Coptic (and, presumably, the reproduction and distribution of these translations in the Delta region), starting in the fourth century at the latest (probably earlier). The existence of early Bohairic translation practice had long been postulated by some scholars, and these postulates have now been fully confirmed. On the other hand, as far as the available evidence goes, these early versions are *not identical* with the later standard version of the Bohairic Bible. Thus it is inevitable that any supposed 'history' of the translation of the Bible into Bohairic must differ from what happened in Upper Egypt and in the Fayyum, where translations produced at an earlier stage were hardly changed over the centuries. In the few cases that have come to light so far of fairly extensive early Bohairic texts, that is, the Gospel of John along with the first three chapters of Genesis (P. Bodmer III) and most of the Minor Prophets (the unpublished Codex P. Vat. Copt. 9), we can now read substantial portions of biblical text ('pbo') in the early dialect ($B4$), with their general diction differing from the later standard version ('bo') as profoundly as any one Coptic translation may be seen to differ from another. We also have a single bifolio from a pocket-size parchment codex of the sixth century (Epistle of James – the codex may have contained the Catholic Epistles as a whole), which still writes out a specimen of this early version, being elevated in the meantime to a very classical format with standardised orthography. It remains unclear why and precisely when these early versions were abandoned or thoroughly revised, to be replaced for ever with the well-known medieval Bohairic version, which alone survives fairly completely.

Looked upon from the other angle, the very earliest fragmentary evidence for the medieval Bohairic version can be dated to some time around the eighth or ninth century, although its origins are probably somewhat earlier.

There still is a considerable gap in our documentation: in terms of complete biblical manuscripts from the late first millennium we only have the Bohairic Pentateuch, whereas for books as important as Psalms or even the four Gospels we need to rely on second-millennium manuscripts (which prove to be reliable for another two or three centuries). One of the most extensive and valuable Bohairic manuscripts from the ninth century, the Curzon Catena from AD 887, preserves many portions of the Bohairic Gospel text, but it is not clear to what extent it writes out the standard version instead of translating directly from the Greek. The exceptional case of the Bohairic Pentateuch may serve to show how much more can be learned about the history of the version when manuscripts from several centuries and including the first millennium are available: here, one can trace through the ages two manuscript groups, distinct but interestingly connected, one of which preserves a substantial part of Deuteronomy in an abridged version that does not seem to be represented by any known Greek manuscript of the Septuagint, but which it is difficult to imagine as the work of inner-Coptic redaction.

The history of the principal Fayyumic version appears to parallel that of the Sahidic version in that it may have remained constant over a long period, from the fourth century to the early Middle Ages. Due to the extremely fragmentary state of its preservation, however, this constancy can be verified only for a very limited number of Gospel passages, where witnesses from different periods are available (as for John 3–4); in other cases such as Psalms, where we have many fragments from different periods but without overlapping passages, the same constancy seems probable. Similar to what happened in the Bohairic domain, the life span of the Fayyumic version embraces certain changes in the written dialect norm, but in this case the same text form was maintained during the editing process, which appears to have taken place some time around the sixth century. This principal Fayyumic version was, however, not unrivalled even within the narrow confines of the Fayyum oasis. The texts attested by the recently published Coptic texts of the bilingual Hamburg Papyrus (probably from the late third century) are not only written in a slightly different variety of dialect but also represent – for Lamentations and Ecclesiastes, where they can be compared – translations from the Greek that have not much in common with the principal Fayyumic version. On the other hand, there is also some evidence that for certain parts of the New Testament such as the Pauline Epistles, at some place and time much later in the Middle Ages, the standard Fayyumic version was replaced with a rather imperfectly executed transposition of the Sahidic version into some sort of Fayyumic. But the historical processes involved – at a time when manuscripts were

exchanged between monasteries in the Fayyum and Upper Egypt – appear unusually complicated and as yet difficult to assess.[4]

The short-lived versions

The early Bohairic version, created at unknown places in the Delta in the third or fourth century but abandoned some three hundred years later in favour of the 'classical' medieval version, has already been mentioned. From the southern tip of the Delta, a sole fragmentary folio survives of a manuscript of high culture, originally containing the Catholic Epistles in what may be termed 'semi-Bohairic' (or dialect *K*), with passages from Philippians for which no early Bohairic manuscript is extant; therefore we cannot say whether it is an indirect witness to that version or rather represents one of its own. Similar reservations are warranted in the case of most other translations of single texts into dialect varieties of northern Middle Egypt, the part of the Nile valley more or less parallel to the Fayyum oasis. But adding the P. Mich 3520 (Ecclesiastes, 1 John and 2 Peter) to what we can read in the bilingual Hamburg papyrus (mentioned above) and fragments of the classical Fayyumic version, we may note the striking fact that there is evidence of three different Coptic versions of the book of Ecclesiastes, independent of one another, in what is virtually the same geographical region. In a similar vein, the Fayyumic version of the Gospel of Matthew can now be paralleled by two different versions from the Middle Egyptian Nile valley, one of which is apparently based on a source text for which no Greek witness has survived. Again, any possible relationship of one of these with an early Bohairic version cannot be verified for the time being – which is also true for the Acts version preserved in Middle Egyptian proper ('Mesokemic' or dialect *M*) by the Glazier Codex, which counts among the most important witnesses to the peculiar D-type (or 'western') text form of that book; it can be shown to be independent only in comparison with the early Fayyumic version (which may or may not be related to early Bohairic). The only case that allows comparison is the Gospel of John, where it is clear that neither the normal Fayyumic version nor the one attested in a unique Middle Egyptian manuscript of the fourth century (Mich. 3521, dialect *W*) is directly related to the early Bohairic that we know.

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4 For the latest research about the relationships of some of the most important manuscripts see, A. Boud'hors, 'Réflexions supplémentaires sur les principaux témoins fayoumiques de la Bible', in L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier (eds.), *Coptica – Gnostica – Manichaica*, BCNH 'Études' 7 (Quebec: Presses de l'Universite Laval, 2006), pp. 81–108.

Among all these particular witnesses from Middle Egypt, one group of manuscripts stands out and may well be considered representative of another homogeneous Bible, comparable to the Fayyumic one: this is the Mesokemic version. Apart from the great codices of Psalms, Matthew, Acts and the Pauline Epistles, we have fragments of similar manuscripts erstwhile containing Genesis, 4 Kingdoms, Job and Romans. The high quality of these manuscripts, which all display the same standardised literary dialect norm, leaves hardly any doubt that they are the result of a centrally organised translation effort, the final products of which were in use as a Middle Egyptian Bible in the region north of Oxyrhynchus – outstanding examples of a geographically rather limited literary culture, of which also non-biblical texts have come to light and which flourished probably around the late fourth and early fifth centuries.

In the remaining huge part of the country that is Upper Egypt (from Hermopolis all along the Nile valley up to the southern border), the picture is strikingly different. The Sahidic Bible seems to have prevailed here virtually in all places, but not always in its proper dialect form. Rather, it appears to have been used as an extensive playground for dialectal transformations during the third to fifth centuries. The best-known examples come from what is traditionally called the 'Akhmimic' version (dialect *A*, even though it probably originated from places further south than the city of Akhmîm). Whether this can indeed be considered a more or less unified version of the Bible is by no means clear, but in terms of attestation this dialectally defined group of manuscripts clearly comprises the most important remainders of biblical texts from Upper Egypt outside Sahidic proper, most of which have been known since the end of the nineteenth century and received a great amount of attention. They range from parts of Exodus, Sirach and 2 Maccabees over fairly complete manuscripts of Proverbs and the Minor Prophets to some excerpts of the New Testament (notably, of the Gospel of John and the Epistle of James). And it is here, especially in the cases of Proverbs and the Minor Prophets, that the culturally remarkable phenomenon of interdialect translation has been demonstrated in the clearest possible manner: the exceptional oddity of a few phrasings can only be satisfactorily explained on the background of the Sahidic *scriptio continua*, which was occasionally resolved in the wrong way and thus in the process gave rise to a 'false' sentence in the goal text of dialect *A*. For other biblical books such as Exodus and the Catholic Epistles, where the Akhmimic version is virtually identical with the Sahidic, the same kind of dependence can be safely assumed; exceptions from this rule have so far been found only among the Gospels.

Though clearly the result of translating from Sahidic, not Greek, one constituent of the Akhmimic corpus has played an important role in Septuagint research because of its peculiar text form: the book of the Minor Prophets. Its text form, which for some time was puzzling because in numerous details it is closer to the Hebrew than the Greek Bible, is in reality the property of the Sahidic version, for which only lesser fragments survive in the dialect proper so that its 'daughter versions' need to be taken into account to complete the picture. This Upper Egyptian version has in the meantime proved to be a crucial witness to a thoroughly revised text of the Minor Prophets part of the Septuagint (named the 'R-type' text after the Quinta column of Origen's *Hexapla*), which in part is also known from the Codex Washingtonensis and fragments of another Greek codex discovered a few decades ago in Palestine.[5] Therefore, the apparent closeness of the Coptic version to the Hebrew text does not mean that it was translated from anything other than the Greek Septuagint, albeit in a peculiar revised form.

As to the rest of what survives of biblical texts in non-Sahidic dialects of Upper Egypt, there is to date only one example of an independent translation from the Greek: the ancient version of a substantial part of Proverbs in dialect *P*, probably linked to the region of Thebes, preserved by a unique parchment codex (P. Bodmer vi, fourth century or even somewhat earlier). Apart from this remarkable manuscript, there are numerous other examples of very much 'southern' dialect versions, but none of these can be said to be independent. They include, first of all, the relatively well preserved Gospel of John in dialect *L5* (witnessed by two different manuscripts of the fourth century) as well as fragments of Genesis and Galatians in dialect *I7* (each preserved in a single folio) and also parts of Hebrews in two distinct fragments of codices written in as yet undefined dialect varieties of the *L* family. All of these represent texts that are virtually identical with the Sahidic version, only transposed into another literary dialect of Upper Egypt. Unlike the situation in Middle Egypt, there really is not much evidence from Upper Egypt for original translation activity based on the Greek in any dialect other than Sahidic, the two exceptions being the Proverbs of P. Bodmer vi and the Akhmimic Gospel excerpts.

The historical (and sociolinguistic) issues raised by the multitude of Coptic dialect versions of biblical texts remain largely unsolved. In one or two cases

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5 See D. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila. Première publication intégrale du texte des fragments du Dodécapropheton*, VTS 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1963). The close relationship between the Sahidic/Akhmimic version and the text of the Washington Codex had already been studied earlier, by W. Grossouw, *The Coptic Versions of the Minor Prophets*, Monumenta Biblica et Ecclesiastica 3 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1938).

the communicative need for a more easily comprehensible text may have been a factor, but this can hardly have been the prevailing motive for the complexity of the situation we are gradually reassembling from the disparate pieces of evidence we discover. The idealised picture that orthodox historiography tends to draw of the early history of Egyptian Christianity is hardly of any help when we wish to come to terms with the striking variation among the remaining monuments. Differences in doctrine do not appear to have played a major role in this variation, as far as the biblical texts are concerned. The evidence rather suggests a number of decentralising forces at work at the level of church organisation. For example, a certain resistance still seems to have been at work in some places during the fourth and early fifth centuries against the acceptance of Sahidic as the general literary language of the Upper Egyptian communities, although we do not know why. Or there may have been a strong desire on the part of certain bishops to distinguish their diocese from the others, to assert their own 'identity'. There are no definite answers to such questions for the time being, but if we could assume that some sort of political motivation played a role here, the complex manuscript and dialect situation we are facing with Coptic Bible versions would more easily be accounted for.

PART V

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THE RECEPTION OF THE
BIBLE IN THE POST-NEW
TESTAMENT PERIOD

The interpretation of the Bible in the second century

JAMES CARLETON PAGET

Introduction

Extant second-century Christian literature is strongly biblical in content. When many literate Christians came to articulate an understanding of their identity, whether in inner-Christian settings or in apparent conversation or dispute with non-Christian Jews or pagans, passages from scripture often played an important role. This is evident both at the beginning of the century in 1 Clement; and at its end in the writings of Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. Significantly, what was understood as scripture expanded as the century progressed. When Christian writers of the first part of the century spoke of 'the scriptures', they meant what Christians came to call the Old Testament. Towards the century's end some began to include in that term a distinctively Christian creation, the New Testament.

The period under discussion is one of the most significant in the history of the Christian Bible and its interpretation. It witnessed, as noted above, the start of the creation of a New Testament, consisting of a slightly varying list of specifically Christian writings; and the first known debate about the abiding place of the Old Testament in that evolving canon. It saw the beginnings of a discussion about the *text*, that is, the wording, of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, customarily used by Christians, and about the Septuagint's legitimate place as a reliable translation of the original Hebrew in the face of the writing of competing Greek versions by non-Christian Jews. It was also in this century that Christians began, in a developed way, to use scripture as a tool in polemical encounters with Jews, and with those who came to be called pagans. Indirectly related to this development, and deriving from ideas found in the writings of Hellenistic Jews such as Aristobulus and Philo, was the creation of a biblical *paideia* or culture, which promoted a view of the Old Testament as a foundational cultural document and argued from this that what was best in pagan culture derived from Moses and the prophets.

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Bound up with this came the beginnings of a philosophical encounter with the Bible, aided in particular by allegorical exegesis, a process which, vitally, enabled the scriptural world to become the intellectual universe of Christian writers, just as the writings of Homer and others had been and continued to be for non-Christian pagan writers. Inner-Christian dispute on a variety of broadly doctrinal issues led, however inchoately, to more self-conscious reflection on the rules of exegesis, out of which would emerge a rule of faith under whose constraining influence order would be brought to an apparently chaotic body of conflicting exegetical opinions. In short, by the end of the century the parameters within which future discussion of the Christian Bible and its interpretation would take place had already been laid out.

While acknowledging the century's significance for the history and interpretation of the Bible, writing an account of this subject is complicated. First our information is piecemeal. Eusebius, writing in the early fourth century, stated, for example, that Melito of Sardis (d. 190) wrote seventeen different works (*Hist. eccl.* 4.26.2), yet we only possess one homily and fragments of some others, and for other authors the evidence is even less.[1] A second, related point is the fact that many of our extant sources were clearly dependent upon anonymous, but important, predecessors whose works have disappeared. The content of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, for instance, has very little precedent in extant Christian works and yet, in writing it, Justin used a variety of sources which no longer exist. Similarly, the existence of a list of books, resembling what was to become the New Testament, in the so-called Muratorian Fragment, generally held to be a second-century document, probably assumes a developed and involved prehistory on the subject of the contents of the canon of which there is only limited knowledge. A third problem arises from identifying a 'mainstream' in the second century. Certainly the existence of several varieties of Christianity in the period has been commented upon as has the discursive creation of something called 'Christianity' as opposed to 'Judaism' and the equally amorphous paganism which was developed by anti-heretical writers like Justin and Irenaeus. In any discussion of second-century exegesis, we have to be aware of the fact that all our comments in some sense assume that what we have reflects a representative mainstream.[2] My comments below

1 Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie*, p. 32, estimates that 85 per cent of second century texts about whose existence we know are missing, and what we know existed is only a small fraction of what was written.
2 On the complex issues of diversity and identity and how they encroach upon our understanding of early Christianity, see Lieu, *Christian Identity*. For difficulties connected with the writing of any grand narrative of the second century see Löhr, 'Das antike Christentum'.

will mainly limit themselves to the works of the so-called 'proto-orthodox', those whom later tradition regarded as orthodox, but this should not be taken to imply that I consider those called heretics as non-Christian.[3]

The evolving Christian Bible

The Old Testament

The writer of 1 Clement, a text dated towards the end of the first century, assumes, like the writers of the New Testament, that central to any exposition of the Christian message are the scriptures, or what Christians came to call the Old Testament. This body of texts, according to Clement are 'holy and true . . . and given through the Holy Spirit' and, therefore, contain nothing 'unjust or counterfeit' within them (1 Clement 45.2–3). The sense of the authority of these texts and their primacy in Christian reflection is a recurrent theme. When the anonymous author of the fragmentarily preserved *Kerygma Petrou* asserts that 'we say nothing apart from the scripture' (frag. 10 cited by Clement of Alexandria at *Strom.* 6.128.3), here clearly referring to the Old Testament, he reflects a widely held Christian sentiment. Intriguingly, Justin (*Dial.* 8.1), Justin's pupil Tatian (*Oratio ad Graecos* 29), and Theophilus (*Ad Autolycum* 1.14), when explaining their grounds for converting to Christianity, could assert that their decision arose from reading the Old Testament, in particular the prophets, whose antiquity, moral precepts and doctrines appealed to them.[4] Establishing the truth of such statements is difficult, but the very fact that these men could speak about their conversions to Christianity as primarily influenced by reading texts normally associated with Jews is a strong indication of the integral role that they played in the exposition of the Christian message.

The Septuagint in particular was held in high esteem by the early Christians, an attitude inherited from diaspora Jews. This is evidenced in the frequency with which Christians repeated, in variant forms, the legendary story found in the Letter of Aristeas about the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek by seventy-two bilingual Jews at the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus;[5] and in the fact that, by and large, when quoting the Old Testament, they

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3 For so-called heretical exegesis see Löhr in this volume, pp. 584–604.
4 For similar sentiments, see Clement of Alexandria, *Prot.* 8.77.1.
5 See Justin, *1 Apol.* 31.1–5 for a somewhat loose summary of the narrative in Aristeas; see also *Dial.* 71.1, 84.3 and *passim*. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.21.2, and Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.149.3, also refer to the story in Aristeas, but here, like the Jewish Philo before them (*V. Mos.* 2.37f,), emphasising its miraculous nature.

quoted the LXX version. However, as witnessed also in the New Testament, there was plenty of evidence of what one might term creative transmission of the LXX with Christians feeling 'free to pick and choose between variant readings . . . and to combine, modify and expand Biblical quotations'.[6] It was only with Justin that the discrepant character of these readings began to be taken into account. While many of his shorter citations from scripture, especially as these occur in the *1 Apology*, reflected what one might term the freer attitude noted above, his longer citations, mainly witnessed in the *Dialogue*, cohere more closely with the LXX text.[7] Interestingly, Justin implies that these latter citations are Jewish and the shorter and modified ones are properly septuagintal or from the seventy.[8] What is important in the present context is that Justin was beginning, for the very first time as far as we know, to take seriously the question of textual witness, and apparently to do so under Jewish pressure. While he attacked his Jewish opponent, Trypho, for openly questioning the Christian reading of some important messianic texts,[9] the fact that he mentioned these alternative readings, and quoted longer passages from the LXX which did not reflect the shorter Christianised excerpts he thought more accurate,[10] is an indication of the importance to him of the textual question. Justin's claim, for instance, that Trypho's apparent modification of Ps. 95:10 so as to remove the Christianising words 'from a tree' was equivalent to the worship of the golden calf (*Dial.* 73.1) indicates the significance of the matter for him. But it is notable, in spite of Justin's defiant tone, that a movement towards septuagintal citations and away from modified ones is discernible in later second-century authors such as Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

A sense that not just Christian 'readings' of the LXX were being questioned but also the use of the Septuagint itself is implied in Justin's *Dialogue* where Trypho objects to the reading of Isa. 7:14 with the LXX 'parthenos' or virgin, preferring the more neutral 'neanis' (young woman), which better reflects

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6 Skarsaune, 'Scriptural Interpretation', p. 444.

7 Compare in this respect the quotation of Gen. 49.10–11 in *1 Apol.* 32.1 with that in *Dial.* 52.2. The latter citation of the text is expanded (Justin quotes Gen. 49.8–12) and represents the standard LXX text, reading Gen. 49.10 as 'until those things come which are made ready for him' rather than the non-LXX 'until he comes for whom it is made ready', reflecting a messianic reading, and witnessed in the shorter quotation found in *1 Apol.*

8 See *Dial.* 71.2, where Justin states that 'I proceed to carry on my discussions by means of those passages still admitted by you.'

9 See *Dial.* 43.3–8 and 66.2–4 and for the Jewish response, see 67.1, 68.9, 71.3, 77.3, 84.1. Note how Justin accuses the Jews of falsification and omission.

10 See *Dial.* 120.3–5 and 124.2–3 (here citing Ps. 81.6–7).

the original Hebrew.[11] But, while Justin mentioned no named versions of the Old Testament which were understood as rivals to the Septuagint,[12] Irenaeus, writing a generation later, referred explicitly and critically to the Jewish Greek versions of Theodotion and Aquila (*Haer.* 3.21.1). Describing these individuals as Jewish proselytes, he attributed to them the reading of Isa. 7.14 with 'neanis', and responded to the presence of such versions by repeating the story of the origins of the LXX found in Aristeas, here with miraculous additions not found in Justin. Interestingly, Jews emerge here as the faithful transmitters of the Greek text and yet also as those who would deny its message (the contradiction is also in Justin, where faithful Jewish transmission is implied in the repetition of Aristeas in *1 Apol.* 31.1–5, but attacks are launched upon Jewish manipulation of the text only in the *Dialogue*). But evidence of the need to defend the place of the Septuagint in Justin and, more explicitly, in Irenaeus did not lead to text-critical reflection, or what the ancients called 'diorthotikon' (correct reading), although there does seem, as we have noted, to be some evidence for greater attention to the accuracy of the LXX's transmission from the period of Justin onwards. Christian exegesis would only begin to manifest a technical commitment to the implications of some of these second century textual concerns in the third century with the work of the grammatically trained Origen.[13]

While we can observe the beginnings of a discussion about the *text* of the Christian Old Testament, a discussion about its *contents* is less in evidence. A view that in broad terms these conformed to a mooted Jewish canon of twenty-two books as, for instance, evidenced in Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.40, is supported by the observation that, aside from Clement of Alexandria, it is very difficult to find any citations, rather than allusions or non-formal citations, from works of the so-called Apocrypha of later LXX codices. Moreover, there is no evidence of any debate with Jews about the content of the canon (Justin in *Dial.* 120.5 states that he has not attempted to find proof about Christ from passages not accepted by the Jews). In this connection, Origen, possibly reflecting Jewish opinion (in the citation of the relevant passage in Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.1f., it is stated that 'these are the twenty-two books according

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11 At *Dial.* 71.1 Justin states that 'I am far from putting reliance in your teachers, who refuse to admit that the interpretation made by the seventy elders . . . is a correct one.' See also 43.8, 67.1, 68.7, 84.3, 131.1, 137.3. Justin's point may be not unfounded as it seems clear that he knew of Jewish revisions of the Twelve Minor Prophets, the so-called *kaige* recension.

12 See Bobichon, *Dialogue avec Tryphon*, pp. 766–7, for a discussion of the origin of the non-LXX reading of Isa. 7.14.

13 See Dorival in this volume, pp. 605–28; and Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*.

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to the Hebrews'), gives a list of Old Testament books, differentiating it from what he terms 'outside books', here associated with 'the Maccabees'.

The above thesis, which accepts the existence of a Jewish canon in the second century and holds Christians to respect its contents, is, however, questionable on a number of grounds. How, for instance, do we explain the fact of a strong Christian interest in a text like the Wisdom of Solomon, not included among the twenty-two books, but probably referred to in the Muratorian Fragment[14] and in a list of Old Testament books cited by Melito (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.13)? What is the implication of the fact, referred to in the passage from Eusebius mentioned above, that Jews in Sardis, Melito's own town, appeared to be less well informed than those in Palestine of the contents of their canon? And what of the presence in Justin of passages of an apocryphal Esdras and a falsely attributed text of Jeremiah, both of which Justin defends against his Jewish detractor (*Dial.* 72.1)?

But none of the above arguments conclusively refute an essentially Jewish view of the Christian Old Testament canon. As has been argued, the presence of the Wisdom of Solomon in the Muratorian Fragment may better reflect the view that it was an Old Testament book of the second order, a bit like Maccabees in Origen's list (Clement of Alexandria, who never presents a list of Old Testament books, frequently cites Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom but again possibly as books of the second order, an attitude exemplified in a number of later Alexandrian writers). Onesimus' question to Melito, quoted in the passage from Eusebius cited above, relating to the contents of the 'Law and the Prophets', may reflect genuine ignorance rather than a desire for elucidation in the face of a multitude of possibilities (it is interesting that in the preserved fragment Melito nowhere refers to contradictory opinion, including that of some Jews, and that the list he gives conforms with the Hebrew Bible list minus Esther and the Wisdom of Solomon). Moreover, it is clear that Justin thought that the passages falsely attributed by his source to Esdras and Jeremiah were genuinely from those texts, and that it may well have been the case that in the sources he was using what he took to be part of the text of Esdras and Jeremiah was in fact commentary.[15]

Testimony books

For many years it has been suggested that Christians read their Bible, in particular the Old Testament, not only directly from biblical scrolls, but also

14 For the possibility that this fragmentary document comes from the fourth century, see Verheyden in this volume, p. 399.
15 Skarsaune, 'Scriptural Interpretation', pp. 446–7.

from collections of citations or testimony books.[16] The theory emerges from a number of observations: the general popularity of florilegia in Antiquity; the appearance in works apparently independent of each other of citations with the same 'Christianised variant', and/or the same list of citations, often centred around a particular theme; the obvious practical advantage of such collections (scrolls of biblical books were heavy and expensive); and the presumed need for them in debate with Jews or in internal Christian settings. Some support for this view also comes from evidence, already cited, that Melito had been asked by a certain Onesimus to make selections ('eklogai') from 'the Law and the Prophets', which Melito duly did and compiled them in six books (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.13–14); and from a third-century treatise attributed to Cyprian, entitled *Testimonies against the Jews*, which, in three books, lists biblical citations under various headings. Those who oppose the theory stress the fact that no such testimony book exists, except possibly the Cyprianic collection which in any case is datable to the beginning of the third century; and that the criteria used for determining the fact that a citation had emerged from a testimony book are not fool-proof. So, for instance, the appearance of the same sequence of quotations in two authors need not imply that they had been found in a testimony source but rather that they were dependent upon each other or a source intermediate between them. In this view the reference in Melito is treated as exceptional, and it is noted that Melito showed no knowledge of any previous collections. The discovery at Qumran of the fragment known as 4QTestimonia (4Q175), a collection of messianic citations with short commentary from the Hebrew Bible, led some to think that the first objection was no longer valid, though others simply responded by stating that this was a Jewish collection. Oskar Skarsaune argued, as noted earlier, that the shorter Christianised citations found in Justin which differed markedly from his longer citations of the same passages, which agreed closely with the text of the LXX, pointed strongly to the existence of something like testimony literature, although in this instance he argued for testimonies with interpretation (like 4QTestimonia), and not just for lists of unadorned citations. He went on to note that, rather than simply talking about testimony sources, we should refer to source material which has now been lost. 'This means that the "testimony tradition" . . . should not be located exclusively to a separate literary channel of (now lost) quotation anthologies'.[17] Skarsaune also argued that the evidence from Justin pointed to the fact that testimony-like

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16 For discussion of testimonies see Skarsaune, 'Scriptural Interpretation', pp. 418–21.
17 Skarsaune, 'Scriptural Interpretation', p. 420.

material was better known in this period than the LXX itself, although Justin's concern for LXX readings, as noted earlier, pointed to a gradual change in this state of affairs.[18]

In the absence of unambiguous evidence for the existence of testimony books, certitude about their existence is impossible. To be sure there may have been a need for such testimony books; and there were people who wrote things which appeared to look like testimony books (Melito is a case in point, as is Pseudo-Cyprian). The evidence probably does not allow us to talk about a *genre* of testimony books; and we cannot be certain whether such books were simply collections of citations or contained commentary. Definition of their form should probably be looser than has sometimes been the case.

The New Testament

Material looking like the canonical Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, and some other New Testament books appears to have been known and used by Christians in the first half of the second century. This conclusion emerges from extant manuscript evidence, in particular evidence relating to the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles, from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and Papias, although we cannot be certain whether knowledge in all of these instances came from oral or literary transmission, or whether references to a "Gospel" imply a written document. Papias is the first extant writer to show any *explicit* interest in the Gospels and their origin, and to imply the existence of a fourfold gospel (Eusebius' quotation of Papias at *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.14–16 only mentions Mark and Matthew). What this tells us about his understanding of the authority of these texts is unclear, although it is wrong to see his statement, recorded in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.3–4, that things from books would benefit him less than things from 'a living and abiding voice', as indicating a dislike of *written* Christian testimony.[19] It is Marcion,[20] however, whom some have thought was the first Christian author to introduce a collection of texts called the New Testament, admittedly consisting of something much more circumscribed than the later orthodox Christian canon, in this case an edited form of ten epistles of Paul (the Apostolikon) and the Gospel of Luke. But this is not

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18 Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*, pp. 27–9.
19 It seems clear that in stating this Papias was picking up on a well-known trope in which personal instruction in anything, be it a craft or a subject like rhetoric or philosophy, was preferred to instruction from books. See Gamble, *Books and Readers*, pp. 31–2; and Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie*, p. 250.
20 On Marcion see Löhr in this volume, pp. 594–9.

proven and Marcion's influence on canon formation has, according to some, been overplayed. Those who think this draw attention to the absence of a clearly fixed canon in the second century as a response to Marcion, and suggest that his collection of books may not have been definitively fixed. In this light his collection appears more typical of what one might expect in the first half of the second century, namely attachment to a collection of Paul's epistles and one Gospel.[21] By contrast, Justin possibly knew four Gospels,[22] which he refers to with this term (*1 Apol.* 66.1; see also *Dial.* 10.2 and 100.1), but also more frequently with the term 'memoirs of the Apostles'.[23] In addition he also possibly knew a collection of Paul's letters, which may have been gathered together at a relatively early stage,[24] and sundry other New Testament documents, including Revelation. But while quotations of New Testament passages exist in his oeuvres, as well as knowledge of similar passages mediated through Christian sources and compendia,[25] Justin did not see them as having an equivalent authority to texts from the Christian Old Testament. In his opinion they are sources of information about Jesus whose reliability and authority lie in the fact that they go back to the apostles.[26] Their exact wording, however, is of no real concern, unlike that of the biblical prophets (Justin, although he knows of different readings of the same New Testament passage, nowhere appears concerned about such textual variation), and they are never the subject of detailed commentary. As one scholar has noted: 'In the case of the *Memoirs*, it is the event itself that matters. It is the event that fulfils the text of the prophecy, not a new text.'[27] A clearer sense of the existence of an authoritative body of texts called the New Testament may be evidenced with Melito. At one point he speaks of 'the books of the Old Covenant' (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.13–14), a phrase which may imply the existence of a collection of

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21 Gamble, 'Marcion and the "Canon"'.

22 The matter is disputed with some scholars doubting knowledge of John in particular. The claim is also sometimes made that Justin shows knowledge of a harmonising text of the Gospels similar to the *Diatessaron* on which see n. 31 below.

23 The term (see *inter alia Dial.* 103.8, 106.3) may have been derived from Papias' description of Mark's Gospel as based on Peter's memories, and on a desire to emphasise their reliability.

24 For the popularity of Paul's letters, see the story of the Scillitan martyrs (180 CE) where the martyr Speratus carries a chest inside of which are the letters of 'a just man called Paul'; and the words of Abercius, bishop of Hieropolis, contained in an inscription from before 216 which states that 'everywhere Paul was our companion'.

25 See *1 Apol.*15–17 where we have a collection of Jesus' sayings taken mainly from the Sermon on the Mount.

26 Note Justin's use of the Gospels in his commentary on the meaning of Ps. 22 at *Dial.* 98–107.

27 If we still possessed Justin's lost *Syntagma*, which was addressed to a Christian audience, we might find that the authority of these texts as well as their interpretation was more clearly emphasised.

books from the New Covenant or New Testament.[28] But the relevant Greek words could be translated *books containing the old covenant* rather than *books of the Old Testament*.[29] The Muratorian Fragment, a text generally thought to be from the second century, seems to witness to a list of New Testament-like books, but whether it constitutes a canon or not is unclear – the word 'canon' as applied to a list of authoritative books only first appeared in the middle of the fourth century.[30] In fact it is only when we reach Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria at the beginning of the third century that the New Testament appears as a literary collection whose constituent parts are being used in a way parallel to the Old Testament. So for the first time Irenaeus asserts that there are four Gospels.[31] Both he and Clement have bunches of citations in which passages from the Old and New Testaments sit side by side and in which the actual wording of passages from the New Testament is important.[32] But it is Clement, not Irenaeus, who for the first time in extant Christian literature unambiguously speaks of a 'New Testament' next door to an 'Old Testament' (*Strom.* 1.44.3, 3.71.3, 4.134.4, 5.85.1, 7.100.5).[33]

The above should not be taken to indicate that the contents of what was later to be called the New Testament 'canon' had been decided upon everywhere – the fact that Eusebius and others are unclear about this matter in the early to mid-fourth century is proof of this.[34] It is, however, probably true, on the basis of the evidence, that by the end of the second century in its essential core the contents of the New Testament had been decided upon, even if there is some evidence of variation. Clement of Alexandria, in spite of being the first known Christian to refer to a 'New Testament', is sometimes thought to

28 See Trobisch, *New Testament*, p. 44.
29 In the passage cited by Eusebius these are unambiguously referred to as 'the Law and the Prophets', although it is possible that this phrase is parallel to the expression 'books of the old covenant'.
30 See Verheyden in this volume, pp. 370–1.
31 Justin's pupil, Tatian, wrote a work called the *Diatessaron*, which constituted a harmony of the canonical Gospels. Some assume that the work is evidence of a canon of four Gospels before Irenaeus, but others are more cautious, citing, among other things, the presence in the *Diatessaron* of passages from non-canonical works.
32 E.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.8 and 9. Note also the witness of the anonymous writer against Montanism, quoted by Eusebius at *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.1, who expresses his concern about adding a new article or clause to 'the word of the New Covenant of the gospel'. But the phrase probably refers to the whole message of the Gospel, that is, the Christian era is marked out as a 'new covenant' stamped by the Gospel.
33 See also Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.3, who quotes the same anonymous polemicist against the Montanists, as stating that 'they [the Montanists] cannot show that any prophet, either of the Old Testament or of the New Testament, was inspired in this way'.
34 On Eusebius' discussion of the New Testament canon see Hollerich in this volume, pp. 633–6.

witness to a looser understanding of the term, not least on the basis of the number of supposedly non-canonical Christian sources he quotes (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.13.6 notes that Clement appeals to the 'disputed texts'). But this matter has probably been exaggerated, and if anything Clement witnesses to something like a graded set of scriptures where books of the first rank, which were to become 'canonical', are differentiated from books of a second rank.[35] A better example of variation might be seen in the story of the visit of Serapion, bishop of Antioch, to the community of Rhossus in Syria. Christians there included the Gospel of Peter among those texts it read out in church; and while Serapion initially thought nothing of this, subsequently, when the 'unorthodox' character of the book became clear to him, he sought to ban it (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.12.3). But it should be noted that it is not clear that the document was in fact being treated as scriptural.

This latter story raises interesting questions about how books came to be considered as scripture.[36] The tendency to see liturgical practice as a significant factor[37] is possibly supported by the Serapion story, but not by the Muratorian Fragment where the Shepherd of Hermas is clearly read out in the churches but not as a text among the Prophets or the Apostles, which seems to be a shorthand reference to something like the canon. But doubting this often favoured solution does not mean that another one is obviously better.[38]

Institutional settings of interpretation

Worship

Frances Young is probably right to assert that '(t)he really crucial setting for Christian use of scripture . . . was the reading and telling, explaining and exhorting, that went on in Christian assemblies'.[39] Nevertheless, Young's assertion is not straightforwardly supported by the contents of second century Christian literature. On her view one might expect homilies, however defined, to be frequently attested but, aside from Melito's *Homily on the Pascha*, itself possibly based upon a known Jewish Passover liturgy, and sundry other writings, such as possibly 2 Clement, the century is homily-light. However,

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35 On this see Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie*, pp. 269–78. He shows how Clement's quotations from apocryphal works are often differentiated from quotations from conventionally canonical works. See especially his discussion of Clement's quotations from the so-called Jewish–Christian Gospel of the Egyptians and Gospel of the Hebrews.
36 See Verheyden in this volume, pp. 389–411.   37 See Gamble, *Books and Readers*, p. 215.
38 On this see Verheyden in this volume, pp. 389–411.   39 Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, p. 221.

it stands to reason that in a culture where the vast majority could not read or write, a communal assembly was the most likely place in which Christians would learn about their scriptures. Perhaps because this was the natural setting for scriptural communication, following the example of Jewish synagogal practice,[40] something taken for granted by all, we hear almost nothing about it. In fact Justin is the only person from the century to shed light on this subject. When describing what he terms worship on the first day of the week, he states that 'the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits' and that then, 'when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things' (1 Apol. 67.3). This is a parsimonious account and begs a number of questions.[41] We remain unclear about the presence or absence of a cycle of readings (how was it decided what to read?), the problem of whether there were two readings, the length of the reading (what does 'as long as time permits' mean?), the precise content of the readings (the 'memoirs' refer to the Gospels[42] but some have suggested that 'the prophets' refers to Christian prophets rather than Old Testament prophets, although this seems unlikely if we go by Justin's normal use of the term) and the nature of the instruction given by the president (it is probably right to assume that the sermon related to the text or texts read out; and it is worth at this point noting Young's view that it may have been in such a liturgical context that something like a rule of faith (see below) began to evolve not least so as to enable Christians to understand how to read texts which must have sometimes seemed unintelligible). Despite these abiding questions, Justin's text more than hints at the central role scripture played in the evolving Christian liturgy.

Schools

From an early stage of its history, Christianity appeared to spawn a large number of independent teachers (see Didache 11.1). As these teachers began to emerge from the more educated ranks of the Roman empire, a phenomenon which appears to have become more common in the second century, some of them set up independent institutions which looked like schools. In Rome we hear that Justin, who wore the philosopher's cloak (pallium), set up a

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40 Gamble, *Books and Readers*, p. 15, assumes a synagogal background for the practice, that it stretched back into the first century, and that it would have been widespread from a very early stage.
41 J. Ch. Salzmann, *Lehren und Ermahnen*, pp. 241–57.
42 We should not assume that only the Gospels were read out. Other texts may have been. See in this respect Eusebius' reference to Dionysius of Corinth reading out 1 Clement in a similar service (*Hist. eccl.* 4.23.11).

school above the baths of Myrtinus in Rome (*Acta Justini* 3) and gathered together pupils. In Rome similar schools associated with Valentinus, Cerdo and Marcion also arose, all of whom could be understood as doing something similar to Justin, in spite of the view of some that they were heretics.[43] On the basis of what we know of the works of these second century Christians, it seems evident that at the heart of their enterprise lay the exegesis of scripture. This point becomes explicit when we read Eusebius' description of the school set up by Pantaenus at Alexandria, which was later to be associated with Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Here Eusebius states that in his school Pantaenus 'expounded the treasures of the divine doctrine' (5.10.4), and following this states that Clement was famous in Alexandria for his study of the scriptures with Pantaenus (*Hist. eccl.* 5.11.1). This gives a sense of the central role played by scripture in such a school; and it was no doubt in this context that we first witness attempts at a more philosophically orientated exegesis of the scriptures, a point which emerges from Justin's background and Clement's own Platonically and Stoically oriented exegesis. It may also have been in this setting that we first find the beginnings of a commitment to the establishment of a correct text of scripture based upon classical grammatical training.[44]

It is unlikely that such 'schools' were officially sanctioned by the bishop or leading churchman of the city or area (Eusebius' view that the school of Pantaenus functioned as the catechetical school of Alexandria is generally rejected), or that they constituted a school in the sense of a place where young Christians learned the rudiments of the faith. Rather they were places where Christians of some education or *paideia* sought to interpret their evolving Bible in a manner not dissimilar to the way in which non-Christian pagans studied Homer or Hesiod or other classics of the past (it was precisely the exegetical character of Christian activity that gave Christian gatherings the appearance of a school). In this such educated Christians had already been given a substantial lead by their Hellenistic Jewish predecessors, especially the philosophically literate Philo, and it is not, therefore, a coincidence that it was probably in a school setting that Philo's works were first used by Christians as aids to scriptural exposition (it is Clement of Alexandria who first gives us unambiguous evidence of the use of Philo, although the latter may previously have been used by Justin).

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43 Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, pp. 376f.
44 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, p. 229, repeats the judgement of Zuntz that by the middle of the second century Alexandria possessed its own scriptorium dedicated to producing the best possible copies of scripture.

Modes of interpretation

Genres

Exposition of scripture appears in a variety of literary settings in the second century. One of the distinctive features of Christian literature of this period is the conscious attempt to address a non-Christian audience. This is seen in particular in the appearance for the first time of apologetic writings, and the related genre of the dialogue. Some have argued that, in spite of appearances, the intended audience of such works was not outsiders,[45] whether Jewish in the case of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* or pagan in the case of Aristeides' *Apology* or Tatian's *Oratio ad Graecos*, but Christian. A decision on this matter is very difficult to arrive at – the tone of such works oscillates between, on the one hand, something defensive or properly apologetic, and something, on the other, better described as assertive or protreptic, a term originally used to describe works inviting people to adopt a particular philosophical way of life.[46] It is true, however, that they are presented as addressed to non-Christians, and that in many of them, in particular those addressed to Jews, exegesis of scripture plays a significant role.[47]

Scriptural content is found in *epistles*, here probably following a Pauline example, which may well have been read out in communal, and possibly liturgical, contexts (see the quotation of Dionysius of Corinth at Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.11, and the reference to the reading out of the Shepherd of Hermas in the Muratorian Fragment); and *homilies* (see 2 Clement and Melito's *Peri Pascha*). Scripture also features in *martyrological* writing. So in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, possibly dating from the middle of the century, scripture, in particular the passion narrative of the Gospels, has a significant role in framing the presentation of Polycarp's death.

Commentary, understood as the citing and commenting upon individual lemmata of scripture, has its beginnings in this century. Prominent in this context are writers who were later dubbed 'heretical'. Herakleon, in his 'hupomnēmata', gives us the first commentary on an individual book, the Gospel of John,[48] and it is another Gnostic, Basilides, who betrays knowledge

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45 Note, for instance, the remark of the third century Tertullian in *De test. an.* 1.4 that Christian literature was read only by those who were already Christian.

46 Note in particular Clement of Alexandria's *Protreptikos*, where the assertive character of the text is explicit.

47 Note how in some anti-pagan literature scripture plays almost no role (see Aristeides' *Apology*). Where it plays a role it is often in discussions about God, cosmology and ethics whereas anti-Jewish literature is generally concerned with christological issues.

48 For a discussion of the form of this work see Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus*, pp. 32–4.

of rules associated with the technicalia of commentary as developed in the classical tradition.[49] Among the proto-orthodox, Eusebius mentions a work of Melito with the title *On the Apocalypse* (*Hist. eccl.* 4.26.2), a treatise of Rhodo on the Hexaemeron (*Hist. eccl.* 5.13.8), and in the same passage a work by Tatian entitled *Problēmata*, described as setting out what was unclear and hidden in the scriptures. These lost works, as was the case with much commentary in the classical tradition, may have proceeded in a question-and-answers style ('problemata kai luseis'), seeking to elucidate problems of whatever kind in scripture, possibly imitating Philo's *Questions and Answers in Genesis and Exodus*.[50] Clement of Alexandria's *Hypotyposeis* is understood by some as a kind of commentary on New Testament books; and there are places in individual extant works which have the feel of commentary. For instance, Justin's extended observations on Ps. 22 constitute a kind of Christocentric commentary on most of the psalm (*Dial.* 97–106). Irenaeus engages in close investigation of particular Old and New Testament verses in the face of conflicting heretical readings, sometimes, as in his interpretation of 2 Cor. 4.4, with its potentially problematic mention of the 'God of this world', calling into play known grammatical rules (*Haer.* 3.7.1–2). Clement of Alexandria, in his *Prophetic Eclogues*, hints at the existence of a commentary on Ps. 19, possibly from the hands of Pantaenus (*Proph. Ecl.* 55f.). This reference in Clement implies the existence of a much more extensive engagement in commentary in Alexandria in the second century where, as noted, Philo's works, now being used by Christians, and in particular by Clement, provided a paradigm for biblical commentary. But, while all of this indicates the beginnings of a 'scientific' approach to the text, it is some distance from the brilliant technical accomplishments of the grammatically trained Origen.[51]

Emergence of exegetical rules

The mention of commentary raises the issue of hermeneutics. It is possible in the second century to discern the beginnings of a systematic engagement with this question. Much of this remains implicit, however. So, for instance, a reading of Justin's surviving works indicates the importance for Justin of close scrutiny of the actual words of scripture[52] (note his use of etymology

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49 See Löhr in this volume, pp. 590–2.
50 On this see Scholten, 'Ein unerkannter Quaestioneskommentar', who draws particular attention to the 'question and answers' style of a part of Clement of Alexandria's *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, which is commenting on the Transfiguration narrative. Scholten argues that this section of the *Excerpta* was removed by Clement from another source.
51 See Dorival in this volume, pp. 605–28; and Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*.
52 Note *Dial.* 33.1, 62.2, 70.5; and Bobichon, *Dialogue avec Tryphon*, pp. 112–13.

and homophones at *Dial.* 125.3 and *Dial.* 19.6 respectively) and the need, particularly in the face of its apparent contradiction (see *Dial.* 65, where Justin denies that scripture contradicts itself), to interpret scripture as a whole (here understood as the Old Testament) and against a particular hypothesis or rule, originating with the apostles.[53] While discussion of a rule may have been more to the fore in Justin's lost *Syntagma*, *explicit* reflection on these matters is first evidenced in Irenaeus. In large part what he has to say would appear to emerge out of reflection on Gnostic exegetical method. He characterises this method as in essence a disregard for 'the order and connection of scripture'. 'By transferring passages, and dressing them up anew, and making one thing out of another, they succeed in deluding many through their wicked art in adapting the oracles of the Lord to their opinions' (*Haer.* 1.8.1). Such a method, Irenaeus maintains, serves by specious means to falsify texts and allows one to make texts say things which were never intended (*Haer.* 1.9.2, 2.25.1), or, as he states, to make the beautiful image of a king into the form of a dog or a fox.[54] And not dissimilar accusations against heretical exegesis can be found in the later Clement of Alexandria who speaks of the selective use of scriptural passages, the wresting of ambiguous phrases from their context, and interpretations based on the change of a tone of voice, the relocation of an accent, or marks of punctuation (see especially *Strom.* 7.96.1–3).[55]

As far as Irenaeus is concerned, scripture, like Homer, must be read as a whole, individual passages contextualised within that whole, and words examined closely (it is precisely a characteristic of Gnostic exegesis, according to Irenaeus, to twist the meaning of words, phrases and names of scripture; see *Haer.* 1 Pref. 1–2, 1.3.6, 1.9.4). Nothing in scripture is unimportant – everything unites in a harmonious exposition of the truth. Such sentiments, which in different ways reflect the underlying assumption of pagan expositors of Homer that Homer should be clarified out of Homer himself, are embedded in Irenaeus' exegesis in which texts from different parts of the Christian Bible are used to expound such truths as the oneness of God (see *Haer.* 3.6.1–12.11). It is precisely the fault of the heretics, according to Irenaeus, that they create collections of sayings to support their own views which fail to take account of the wider scriptural context (see *Haer.* 1.9.1–2).

53 See in this respect *1 Apol.* 50.12; and *Dial.* 100.2 where Justin makes plain that what he teaches has its origins in teaching delivered by Jesus to the apostles after his resurrection.
54 For a more detailed engagement with Irenaeus' characterisation of heretical exegesis, see Le Boulluec, *Notion*, pp. 218–30.
55 For other negative characterisation of 'heretical' exegesis, see Eusebius' account of the teaching of the Theodotii in Rome towards the end of the century at *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.13f.

However, the application of a method which has as its assumption the unitary voice of scripture will, Irenaeus appears to concede, not always lead to the right results (*Haer.* 1.9.4), and the type of accusations that can be made against his opponents can often be made against their accusers.[56] The text in the end is not self-interpreting and the only way it can be correctly understood is against some external rule of faith (canon) or hypothesis. Gnostics had already argued for such an overarching rule transmitted in secret by Jesus to his disciples (see *Haer.* 3.2.1–2) and on to the founders of their schools. Justin, perhaps taking up a hint in Matt. 28, Luke 24 and Acts 1–2, had appeared to locate such a tradition in words spoken by Jesus to his apostles, possibly in the period following his resurrection (see above), and Irenaeus develops this idea in his own formulation of the origin of the rule (see especially *Haer.* 3.2.2) and its faithful preservation by those who succeeded the apostles.[57]

Much ink has been spilt determining the precise contents of this rule (in essence it constitutes an affirmation of God the creator, his son and the Holy Spirit).[58] Further questions have been asked about the way Irenaeus conceives the relationship between it and scripture itself. Certainly Irenaeus is clear that the rule emerges from scripture – after all, it had been precisely his claim that the heretics gave primacy to their own doctrine, and only secondarily, as a piece of seductive artifice, had they sought to justify it by relating it to scripture (*Haer.* 1.1.3).[59] But there are certainly occasions when a good case can be made for the view that tradition is prior (see especially *Haer.* 3.4.1) and that the rule itself is not a summary of scripture but an abstract imposition, and it may be right to locate the cause of the difficulty in the failure of Irenaeus to link scripture and the rule of faith in his own discussion. Whatever the judgement, it is important to note the strongly ecclesial character of the hermeneutic expounded. What one scholar has described as 'the homely biblical hermeneutic of the church'[60] assumes that right reading is determined by the context in which that reading is done and not simply by the context of the passage under discussion. 'One must take flight to the church, be brought up in its bosom, and be nourished from scriptures' (*Haer.* 5.20.2). The implication of this statement is that reliable interpretation has its presupposition in the church and tradition, which itself emerges from scriptures. It is possibly this strongly ecclesio-centric approach to biblical

56 Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, pp. 230f.
57 For the view that the idea of apostolic succession and the rule of faith are first formulated by Justin, see Le Boulluec, *Notion*, pp. 84–91.
58 See *Haer.* 1.10.1, 22.1, 3.4.1; and *Dem.* 6. It should be noted that the rule is not a creed as such.
59 Le Boulluec, *Notion*, p. 220.   60 Brox, 'Irenaeus and the Bible', p. 487.

interpretation which distinguishes Irenaeus from Clement of Alexandria. The latter, while at one point attacking his Gnostic opponents for 'not learning the mysteries of ecclesiastical knowledge' (*Strom.* 7.97.4), and on other occasions referring to a 'gnosis' handed on by the apostles from Christ, tends in his arguments to appeal less to tradition and the church. More tellingly, the gnosis to which he appeals is secret (see *Strom.* 5.61.1, 6.61.1, 6.61.3).

Goals of interpretation: the character of scripture

Ethics

When Justin states that the instructor who preached about scripture in the Christian service 'exhorted to the imitation of the good things' (*1 Apol.* 67.4), he gave voice to the strongly ethical character of Christian exegesis of the second century and to the sense in which Christians could be understood as living out scripture's contents. The author of 1 Clement calls upon scripture in precisely such a paranaetical way when he exhorts the community at Corinth to recreate their harmonious relationship with their leaders. Scripture here provides hortatory *exempla* of both good and bad behaviour and a body of helpful maxims, taken from a range of Old Testament books. 2 Clement, while keen to show that Christians are the saved community referred to in Isa. 54.1, is still keen to use the same scripture to stress the potentially disastrous fate that awaits 'the people who honour me with their lips but their heart is far from me' (Isa. 29.13). Didache 2 and *Barnabas* 18f. present a version of what originally may have been a well-known piece of Jewish paranaesis in the form of a discourse on the two ways, itself based upon a well-known passage in Deuteronomy. Here, in an allusive way, scripture becomes the source for presenting the ways of light and darkness. While Christian attitudes to the Law of the Old Testament were to exemplify a tension, as we will see, Pentateuchal texts, in particular those relating to the Ten Commandments, are regularly cited as embodiments of the most excellent of precepts with universal application. Also important in this respect was the Wisdom of Solomon, passages from which are cited or alluded to in a number of Christian sources, including the *Sentences of Sextus*, a collection of Christian moral maxims (where allusions to New Testament passages are also found) bearing a close relationship to pagan gnomologia, and Clement of Alexandria. The prophets, while principally used for their predictions of the coming of Christ and God's church, are also extolled for the precepts they teach. Jesus also emerges as a significant moral teacher and there is evidence of his words being collected together in carefully

constructed compendia which often featured sayings from the Sermon on the Mount.[61] The popularity in the second century of Matthew's Gospel with its strongly ethical content fits into this general concern with Jesus as a teacher, or, as Clement of Alexandria, admittedly in a somewhat more complex setting, would call him, a *paidagogos*. This sense of Jesus as a teacher may be captured in Lucian's polemical description of him as 'a crucified sophist'.[62]

Scripture as proof from prophecy

The Christians of the second century, like their New Testament forebears, looked upon the writings of what they came to call the Old Testament as prophetic. For instance, Christian accounts of the translation of the Septuagint no longer reported what they found in Aristeas, namely an account of the translation of the Pentateuch or the Law of Moses, but rather the whole of scripture understood as 'the prophecies',[63] and often the Old Testament scriptures are described without argument as 'prophetic'. These prophetic scriptures had the effect, in the minds of Christian apologists and others, of proving the validity of Christian assertions. 'For what reason should we believe in a crucified man that he is the first-born of the unbegotten God, and himself will pass judgement on the whole human race,' asserts Justin, 'unless we had found testimonies concerning him before he came and was born as a man?' (*1 Apol.* 53; see also *1 Apol.* 30); and Athenagoras (*Apology* 9) could claim that 'the voices of the prophets confirm our arguments' (see Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 1.14).

Something of the content of these promises is found in frag. 9 of *Kerygma Petrou*, quoted by Clement of Alexandria at *Strom.* 6.128.1, where we read that the books of the prophets mention Christ Jesus, partly in parables, but also in straightforward and plain words. The writer goes on: 'There we found mentioned his coming, his death and his cross and likewise his resurrection, and ascension to heaven.' A similar list of predicted events is found in Justin's *1 Apology* 31.7, and this is followed by a series of citations and commentary in which scriptural passages are shown to cohere with credal assertion. Inchoate forms of such claims are found in the New Testament, in particular in 1 Cor. 15.3–4, but the second century witnessed a detailed and painstaking effort,

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61 See especially *1 Apol.* 15–17, where we find a collection of sayings of Jesus, mainly taken from the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5–7.
62 See Lucian, *Peregrinus* 13. Sensitivity to this charge may be reflected in Justin's words at *1 Apol.* 14.5 where he states that Jesus 'was no sophist, but his word was the power of God'.
63 See Justin, *1 Apol.* 31.1–3. See also, *inter alia*, Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 1.14, 2.9 and 34 for talk of the scriptures as prophetic.

often involving the rewording of Old Testament citations, and developed forms of commentary. So, for instance, Justin goes to quite some length to show that Isa. 7.14 does not refer to King Hezekiah (the eighth-century BCE Israelite monarch), first by defending the view that the prophecy refers to a virgin giving birth. How otherwise, Justin asks, could the prophecy be a sign (see *Dial.* 84.1f.)? And second, by reference to Isa. 8.4, which he interpolates into Isa. 7.16, which states that a child will 'take the power of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria' before the child 'knows how to call father and mother'. Such a verse, claims Justin, can only refer to the baby Jesus who sets men free from the power of Satan, a point demonstrated by the worship of Jesus by the Magi, recorded in Matt. 2 (*Dial.* 78.9f.). Elaborate examples of this kind which show up the Christocentric focus of the Old Testament could be multiplied; and all of them give voice to the firm conviction, expressed in a variety of places, that Christ, as Irenaeus put it, is the treasure hid in the scriptures whose coming unlocks their secrets (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.26.1).

Such Christocentric interpretation does not only carry a predictive force. Taking up clear indications in the New Testament of Christ's pre-existence, Christian writers sought to multiply the places in scripture where such intimation of the presence of a second Lord or God appeared. In this context passages such as Gen. 18, the appearance to Abraham of the angel at Mamre and the theophany to Moses of God in the thornbush become particularly important, and involve Justin and others in sometimes intricate interpretations in which they attempt to differentiate the God mentioned in these passages from God the father (see especially *Dial.* 56–60).

Also important were predictions of the coming of the church, particularly as a body constituted of Gentiles. At the end of his list of the various points that scripture had predicted as found in *1 Apol.* 31, Justin notes as the final thing that has been predicted 'that men sent by him would proclaim these things to every race of mankind, and that men of the Gentiles especially would believe in him'. And there is also much effort expended by a variety of interpreters showing that such Christian rites as baptism had their origin in passages which spoke of water or renewal (Barnabas 11).

Christian interpreters of the second century did not believe that the scriptures only spoke predictively of things that had happened or were happening, but also of things that would happen in the future. The author of Barnabas, in a somewhat convoluted passage, understands the rituals relating to the two goats on the Day of Atonement, one sacrificed in the temple, the other thrown down the cliff to Azazel, as referring to the two advents of Christ, one in suffering and the other in future glory at his parousia (Barnabas 7–8). A

clearer version of the same idea appears in Justin, first as a credal statement at *1 Apol.* 52.3, and in more detail at *Dial.* 40.4f. and in numerous other places in the same work. Justin, probably like Barnabas and many others before him, uses scripture to support a belief in a millennial kingdom (see Barnabas 15 and *Dial.* 80f.). Such passages multiply in Irenaeus where, especially in the section running from *Haer.* 5.25f., he shows how the millennium predicted by John in his Apocalypse and Jesus will be the scene of the literal fulfilment of many Old Testament promises.[64]

Typological exegesis

Typological exegesis can be seen as another manifestation of the prophetic view of scripture. Barnabas, for instance, can use the term 'tupos' to point to the prefiguration in certain Old Testament passages of events in Jesus' life, or Christian rituals such as baptism (see especially Barnabas 7, 8, 13). While the correspondence between Old Testament type and its later fulfilment is to the fore in Barnabas, we meet something different in Melito's *Peri Pascha*. The work is a kind of paraphrase of the Exodus story which points forward to its fulfilment in New Testament events. Early on in his work (34f.) Melito writes:

> What is said and done is nothing . . . without a preliminary sketch . . . This is just what happens in the case of a preliminary structure: it does not arise as a finished work, but because of what is going to be visible through its image acting as a model. For this reason a preliminary sketch is made of the future thing . . . in order that what will soon arise, taller in height, and stronger in power . . . may be seen through a small and perishable sketch.

In one sense Melito is affirming the predictive power of scripture (what is said and done is nothing without a preliminary sketch) and much of the *Peri Pascha* is taken up with producing 'types', 'preliminary sketches' of the salvific actions of Christ, seen in particular in his death. But at the same time, there is a strong sense in which Melito is keen, precisely through his understanding of the word 'tupos', to make plain the manner in which what has preceded is only a sketch for 'when that of which it is the model arises, that which once bore the image of the future thing is itself destroyed as growing useless' (37). The life that Christ has led and the salvation that he brings, understood through an elaborate interpretation of the exodus construed as redemption from evil, far exceed anything that has appeared in history even if they were predicted in texts from the past. Here then we are in the presence not just

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64 Skarsaune, 'Scriptural Interpretation', p. 428.

of prophetic correspondences, but of a complex attempt to express both the continuities and the discontinuities between the prophetic scriptures and the subject of their prediction.

Scripture's inscrutability and allegory

Already by the second half of the second century, the pagan critic of Christianity, Celsus, had noted that 'the more reasonable Jews and Christians' allegorised those parts of the Old Testament which seemed rebarbative or difficult (*Contra Celsum* 1.17, 4.38, 4.48). We see early evidence of allegorical exegesis in the Epistle of Barnabas, especially in chapter 10, where the author presents non-literal readings of the Jewish food laws, but elsewhere, too (see esp. chapters 7 and 8). The author of the *Kerygma Petrou* hints at the need for allegorical exegesis in his claim that the scriptures, here referring to the Old Testament, speak in parables (frag. 9 quoted by Clement of Alexandria at *Strom.* 6.128.1), and further evidence of allegorical exegesis is found in Justin, again, as in Barnabas, applied to the interpretation of certain aspects of the Mosaic law, interpreted in christological terms (see *Dial.* 40f.).

It is possible to see all of this as in continuity with what we find in Paul (Gal. 4.24) and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, although neither straightforwardly interprets the Jewish law allegorically. What is new in the second century is the frequency with which allegorical exegesis appears and the fact that the method itself becomes a subject of discussion and reflection, just as it had been in the writings of the Jewish Philo to whom Celsus may allude in the quotation above, and whose influence on Christians in the second century was, as we have noted, to grow.

Such discussion and reflection are not seen in the authors mentioned above but rather in the later Irenaeus and, in particular, in Clement of Alexandria. The former's engagement with the subject is piecemeal and appears ambivalent.[65] On the one hand, Irenaeus attacks allegorical exegesis, seeing it as a sign of the cavilling methods of heretics (*Haer.* 5.35.5) and their means of claiming intimate knowledge of the mysteries of God (*Haer.* 2.28.6–7). Scriptural interpretation, so he asserts, must start from what stands before our eyes and what is set forth openly and unambiguously word for word in the scriptures (*Haer.* 2.27.1; see also 2.10.2, 20.1–24.3). One ambiguity cannot be interpreted by another (*Haer.* 1.10.1). Granted there are parables in scripture, but these agree with what is expressly said (*Haer.* 2.28.3), and on occasion Irenaeus eschews allegorical exegesis in favour of reading a passage eschatologically. On the other hand,

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65 See Brox, 'Irenaeus and the Bible'; Le Boulluec, *Notion*, pp. 234–5.

however, Irenaeus can engage in forms of allegorical interpretation, explicitly admitting in general terms, as had the author of the *Kerygma Petrou*, that the prophets spoke for the most part in parables and allegories (*Haer.* 2.22.1), distinguishing, for example, between those speeches of the Lord concerning the father which speak 'in parables' and those which speak in unambiguous words (*Haer.* 4.41.4). And examples of detailed allegorical interpretation are present within his writings: see, for instance, his interpretation of the parable of the treasure in the field (*Haer.* 4.26.1) or of the story of Lot (*Haer.* 4.31.1–3 and 21.7–9), or the parable of the wicked husbandmen (*Haer.* 4.36.2).

While this apparent evidence of contradiction can be resolved by appealing to Irenaean ecclesiology – allegory from within the church is justified by dint of its origins; its practice outside the church is necessarily flawed – the ambivalence of its endorsement contrasts with the more full-blooded discussion we find in Clement of Alexandria. The fact of the divine origin of scripture has the consequence, Clement asserts, that scripture speaks symbolically (understood as allegorically). Symbolism is a form of concealment and the concealment we find in scripture is also, he asserts, evidenced in Greek and Egyptian writings. For Clement, therefore, the enigmatic and symbolic character of scripture can simply be assumed: 'It would be tedious to go over all the prophets and the law specifying what is spoken in enigmas; for almost the whole of scripture gives its utterance in this way' (*Strom.* 5.32.1). Or similarly, in the context of a discussion of the story of the rich man in Mark 10.17–31, 'we are clearly aware that the saviour teaches his people nothing in a merely human way, but everything by a divine and mystical wisdom' (*QDS* 5). Clement justifies this central element of the scriptural witness in part by reference to an elite argument – only those of real intelligence should be able to apprehend scripture's deeper truths; and in part by reference to the view that the pursuit of truth should not be an easy matter (*Strom.* 6.126.1). Scriptural exegesis, then, at its most profound level, is a pursuit of that which is concealed, or, put another way, exegesis is an advance from the body of scripture to its soul (*Strom.* 5.90.3), an image already found in Philo (*V. contempl.* 78). Appropriating the language of those he opposes, Clement suggests that the one who has advanced in such a way is the true Gnostic (*Strom.* 7.95.9), a person capable of viewing scripture in its truly mystical or 'epoptic' quality, a term from classical Greek associated with the ultimate vision of the initiate into the mysteries.

In all of this we should note one vital point. Christians of the second century were keen to emphasise that their capacity to understand scripture as it should be understood was precisely a result of the fact that the divine Logos, Christ, the creative word of God, had come to earth and revealed scripture's truths.

Such revelation was the result not just of what he had said but of who he was, the inspirer of the prophetic word and its very subject. As Clement was to put it: 'The sense of the mysterious scriptures was not to be revealed until the coming of Christ' (*Strom.* 5.90.3). This meant that Christians were those who, in the words of Justin, had been given 'the grace to understand the scriptures' (see *inter alia Dial.* 30.1, 92.1, 100.2). Here christology and hermeneutics are connected in an explicit way where they had only been connected in an implicit way in the New Testament (see especially John 1.18; 2 Cor. 3.13–14).

The old and the new

Christians, Jews and Marcionites

Christian attempts in the second century to refocus the lens of what they came to call the Old Testament onto Christ and his people, a process already witnessed in the New Testament, could sometimes be carried out with no sense that there were people who opposed them. The author of 1 Clement, for instance, implies the immediate continuity of Old Testament people and institutions with his own Christian community without hinting that there might be a conflicting view.[66] However, there was opposition from a number of quarters. Non-Christian Jews were represented by Christians as objecting that Christ was not the promised messianic figure of the scriptures, and that Christians had applied Old Testament texts to Christ which in fact referred to the still hoped-for Messiah or, alternatively, to known figures from Jewish history.[67] Flawed Christocentric interpretation, which invariably involved Christians in accounts of God and his son which impugned the former's unity, was compounded, in the opinion of these Jews, by the fact that members of the increasingly Gentile-filled church did not observe the Jewish law in spite of their claim to being its true expositors (see Justin, *Dial.* 10). In response to these objections there arose for the first time in the second century a type of literature dedicated to refuting these claims, sometimes described as *adversus Judaeos*. While it is only with Apolinarius of Hierapolis that we have the first explicit reference to a document, now lost, with such a title (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.27.1, where two works against the Jews are attributed to Apolinarius), one of the earliest examples of this literary phenomenon is the so-called *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*. Again the work is now lost, but Origen

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66 See 1 Clement 64.1 where Clement refers to his addressees as 'God's special people'.
67 See Justin, *Dial.* 83f., and the claim made by Trypho that a number of passages applied by Justin to Christ were more applicable to Hezekiah, king of the Jews.

(*Contra Celsum* 4.52) states that 'in it a Christian is pictured as disputing with a Jew from the Jewish scriptures and as showing that the prophecies about the Messiah fit Jesus and yet the adversary resists vigorously and in conformity with his Jewish character'.

Similar concerns were expressed in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. Here not only were Christian claims about Jesus supported through scriptural exegesis, but robust attempts were made to show why Christians were justified in no longer observing the Jewish law. More aggressively, Jewish failure to respond to the Christian message was shown to have been predicted in the Old Testament, where plenty of examples of Jewish disobedience existed, and it was argued that they, the Christians, were now the legitimate people of God (*Dial.* 119–20) and the rightful owners and correct expositors (*Dial.* 32.5) of the Old Testament scriptures (*Dial.* 29.2). While there has been much discussion about whether such literature reflects actual encounter between Christians and Jews rather than perceived tensions inherent within early Christian theology, or attempts on the part of a Christian elite artificially to define who Christians were by constructing who they were not,[68] the literature makes clear the fact that Christians had a sense of the contested character of what they were asserting. In the second century they began to give expression to this sense of difficulty and to respond to it in a systematic way.

In essence the difficulty arose from two conflicting desires on the part of some Christians. On the one hand, they wished to assert the arrival of something new in the world which had led to a new belief and the formation of a new people. The language of 'newness', already a feature of the New Testament (see *inter alia* Mark 1.27; John 13.34; 1 Cor. 11.25; Heb. 8.8), appears frequently in second-century Christian texts where, for instance, we often find the expressions 'new covenant', 'new law', 'new people'.[69] The last of these phrases was often voiced in the assertion, either originally a Christian self-designation or a pagan insult aimed at Christians, that they were a third race, differentiated from both Jews and Greeks.[70] On the other hand, Christians

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68 See Boyarin, *Border Lines*.

69 See *inter alia* frag. 5 of the *Kerygma Petrou* quoted by Clement of Alexandria at *Strom.* 6.41.4–6; *Diognetus* 1; Barnabas 2.6; Melito, *Peri Pascha* 19–20; Justin, *Dial.* 11.

70 For references to Christians as a 'third race', either directly or by implication, see *inter alia* *Kerygma Petrou* frag. 5 referred to in n. 69 above, although the phrase here could refer to a third type of worship; *Diognetus* 1.1 where Christians are differentiated from Jews and Greeks, although there is no reference to them as a third race; and Tertullian, *Ad nat.* 1.1 for a negative use of the term in the mouths of pagans. The references in *Kerygma Petrou* and *Diognetus* might lead us to think that the term was originally a Christian self-designation but the derogatory

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were, as we have seen, keen to assert that they fulfilled promises and hopes associated with an old set of writings with whose interpretation their ostensible owners disagreed.

It was not just from outside (non-Christian Jews) that these tensions were to generate controversy. Ignatius of Antioch, writing before there was anything approaching a New Testament, voices some of them in his *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (8.2). Responding to opponents who claimed that they would only believe what he asserted if it found warrant in 'the archives' (understood as the Old Testament), Ignatius replied, 'But there is something distinct about the Gospel – that is, the coming of the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, his suffering and resurrection. For the beloved prophets made their proclamation looking ahead to him' (9.2). While Ignatius' response to his adversaries should not be read as a rejection of the Old Testament, it clearly assumes the priority of the events associated with Christ and the salvation he brings, for that is what the 'Gospel' is here. His opponents, however, assume, if not the priority of the former, a strong sense that all claims about Christ must be grounded in the Old Testament scriptures. The unity of the two, expressed in terms of the Law and the Prophets, on the one hand, and the Gospel, on the other, is assumed by both but the balance of emphasis is differently conceived.[71]

This sense that the new has priority over the old, that the Gospel is quite different from the Law, becomes clearest in the work of Marcion whose opinions represent what one scholar has called 'the radicalisation of newness'.[72] His attack, contained within his no longer extant *Antitheses*, upon the idea that there was continuity between the contents of the Old Testament, whether pertaining to its God, its law, or its promises and hopes concerning the Messiah, and the new message of Christianity, which in Marcion's opinion speaks of the different God of Jesus Christ, indirectly reflected observations already made by Jews (it is a feature of anti-Marcionite works that they look in parts very much like *adversus Judaeos* literature; the point is best made by comparing the third century Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* and his *Adversus Judaeos*). For Marcion, who may also have been motivated to adopt his views by a tendentious reading of Paul and some philosophical impulses,

reference in Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2, to Christians as a 'genus' might point to an originally negative use adapted by Christians. For a recent discussion of the term see Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana*, pp. 145–71.

71 Similar kinds of tensions can be discerned in *Ep. Eph.* 19.1–3 where the Christ event is described as 'a novel thing' but one that has been prepared by God.

72 Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana*, p. 140. Note how Tertullian quotes Marcion at *Adv. Marcionem* 4.28.8 speaking about the 'novae doctrinae novi Christi'.

reflected in the fact that his critique of the Old Testament God bore strong resemblances to pagan critiques of mythological deities, it is clear that the newness of the Christian dispensation implied its absolute difference from the Old Testament. This view was helped in part by Marcion's rejection of allegorical exegesis, which in various ways, as noted, had helped to preserve the unity and coherence of the Christian scriptures and had allowed exegetes to overcome difficulties connected with some of their more rebarbative or problematic contents.

While moderated forms of the 'Marcionite' solution to the problem of the old and the new appeared in Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* and in the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*,[73] the proto-orthodox sought, in the face of Marcionite and Jewish criticism, to preserve the tie which they thought bound them together.

On the problematic issue of the law, the proto-orthodox moved in a number of directions. Some, like the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, implied that the new law was the same law as the old law, just properly interpreted (2.6). In this explanation Christians were presented as understanding the Old Testament text as it always should have been understood. In a sense this was a solution to which the ideology of allegory lent itself. Others, taking up language found in Paul, asserted that the old law, which had gone unobserved by the patriarchs, had only been given temporarily as an accommodation to the idolatrous behaviour of the Jews exemplified in the incident of the golden calf (see especially Justin, *Dial.* 18.2, 19.5, 20.4, 21.1, 22, 46.5). This temporary law had been abrogated by the coming of Christ and replaced by a new law (see Justin, *Dial.* 11). A softer version of broadly the same view contrasted the ceremonial aspect of the law, sometimes referred to as the law of servitude, with the Ten Commandments, often described as 'natural precepts'. Once Christ arrived, so the argument went, the law of servitude ceased to be, with only the Ten Commandments continuing to be of relevance in the new era (see Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.16.3–5). Such a position, which ceded some ground to the Marcionites, could be stated in terms of the fulfilment and extension of a previous law,

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73 Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*, quoted by the fifth-century heresiologist Epiphanius of Salamis (*Panarion* 33.3–7), seeks a middle way between Marcion and orthodox views. Ptolemy divides the Mosaic law up into three parts: legislation from God (understood as the demiurge or creator God), Moses and the so-called elders. Ptolemy then divides up the legislation from God into three parts, the first of which is fulfilled by the saviour, the second of which is cancelled and the third of which is meant symbolically or allegorically. The relevant sections of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, 2.38–40 and 3.41–51, assert that certain texts in the Pentateuch which attribute to God inappropriate characteristics were added after Moses' death by elders. The author is hesitant, however, to divulge this opinion to all and sundry for fear of its misuse.

here taking up language found in Matt. 5:17 and 20 (*Haer.* 4.13.1),[74] and could be expressed in terms of a contrast between law and Gospel (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.9.1), law and word, here alluding to Isa. 2.3 (see Melito, *Peri Pascha* 2–3), or, as in Clement of Alexandria, between a period marked by fear and one marked by love.[75]

Another approach, emerging from the bold belief that the Logos was both the subject of and the inspiration behind the scriptures, held the incarnation to be a revelatory event in which, to quote one image, the concealed treasure of the Old Testament was now revealed, here taking up an image found in a well-known Matthean parable (Matt. 13.44; see *Haer.* 4.26.1). Here Christ's arrival was conceived of as the bringing to light of what had previously been concealed, as the revelation of the Logos face to face (the language of Clement of Alexandria at *Paid.* 1.59; see also *Strom.* 4.134.4), as the harvesting of what had originally been sown (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.26.1). Language which, according to Irenaeus, had once been in parables and types, now gave up its secrets. The truth of the scriptures lay in their fulfilment. A more extreme version of this lay in placing special emphasis on the pre-existence of the Logos, and on occasion the church, and arguing that what Christians were talking about was not new in the sense that a vessel or house might be considered new, as Clement of Alexandria states, but new in terms of what it revealed (see Clement, *Prot.* 1.7.3–6).[76]

Those who spoke of the events and characters of the Old Testament as 'types' also fitted into this same category of explanation. Simple correspondences as we find in Barnabas contrasted with Melito's typological schema where the difference between the type and its fulfilment, here conceived of in terms of the relationship between the preliminary and the final sketch, is emphasised. Here, as in the discussion in the preceding paragraph, difference can be understood in terms of progression, however qualified a view we need to have of that term.[77]

A view of the relationship of the two covenants in terms of progress, implicit in some of what has been described above, could be taken to suggest a narrative; and it was precisely the telling of a coherent story of salvation

74 'And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man is justified but that he extended and fulfilled them, is shown from his words.' There then follows a quotation from and exposition of the antitheses.
75 See *Strom.* 3.82.4, 7.86.3.
76 Something of the same sentiment is captured in Irenaeus' assertion that Christ brings novelty 'by bringing himself who had been announced' (*Haer.* 4.34.1).
77 Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana*.

which would best counter the disjunctive arguments of Marcion and of other Gnostics and Jews while at the same time making plain what was new in Christianity. While such a view of the matter is implicit in Justin, it is much more obviously present in Irenaeus. The latter's work is built around the concept of recapitulation and probably takes its inspiration from Paul in Rom. 5, or directly from Justin who himself appears reliant upon Paul. Such a story presents itself as one of loss and recovery, of a movement from Adam's disobedience in paradise, and of Christ, 'the new Adam, going over the same ground again, but this time being obedient, reversing the process, bringing salvation to humanity'.[78] In this story, which is conceived of as taking place in various stages in which God helps his people in ways appropriate to the situation in which they find themselves (see our comments above about the law, and also *Haer.* 4.16.3; and *Haer.* 3.12.12), creation and redemption are linked, in contrast to Marcionite and Gnostic schemes, where they are divided.[79] This is probably the linchpin of Irenaeus' scheme of scriptural unity, for the old scriptures set the scene of human disobedience and prophesy the remedy, and the new scriptures give testimony to the fulfilment of prophecies and promises.[80]

In defending 'unity' as opposed to disjunction, Irenaeus was the first extant author to seek to demonstrate unity between the Old and the New Testaments understood as bodies of *texts* (as opposed to old and new covenants, understood as different periods of time), even if he never used these two terms to refer to them.[81] He fills his work with citations from the New Testament, particularly from the lips of Jesus, which proved this point, and interlinks Old Testament and New Testament citations in defence of the same point (*Haer.* 3.6.1–12.11, 5.36).[82] Here, in contrast to Justin, where the legitimacy of events associated with the New Testament is dependent upon their fulfilling prophecies found in the Old Testament, it is precisely the validity of the latter that is

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78 Young, *Art of Performance*, p. 55.

79 For a detailed discussion of Irenaeus' theory see Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana*, pp. 210–38.

80 This quest for unity is well summed up in Theophilus: 'One can see how consistently and harmoniously all the prophets spoke, having given utterance through one and the same spirit concerning the unity of God, and the creation of the world, and the formation of man' (*Ad Autolycum* 2.35).

81 Something of this can be seen in Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 3.13, where quotations from Prov. 4.25 and 6.27–9 stand in parallel with quotations from Matt. 5.28 and 32. On this see Le Boulluec, *Notion*, p. 212.

82 'He was prepared to constitute collections of new scriptures to take their place alongside the old, perhaps taking a leaf out of Marcion's book, certainly articulating a consensus that had probably been long emerging concerning which books belonged to the apostolic tradition . . . His activity would ensure a fairly rapid shift of perception, so that the old scriptures were subordinated to the new' (Young, *Art of Performance*, p. 54).

proven by its conformity with the former (see *Haer.* 4.34.3). Much of this has to do with the audience being addressed – Justin is ostensibly addressing Jews, who have no doubts about the validity of the Old Testament witness; Irenaeus is addressing the arguments of those who would diminish the importance of the Old Testament by claiming it describes the workings of a lesser God. But such a phenomenon also reflects the growing status of the New Testament understood as holy scripture. This never led in the second century, at least among the proto-orthodox, to a straightforward attempt to extol the virtues of this set of texts above the Old Testament. In fact Clement asserted that their harmony was an 'ecclesiastical canon' (*Strom.* 6.125.2–3 and 7.94.5).[83] But such a thing was implied in the developing view that the New Testament was the prism through which the vastly larger and more ancient canon should be read.

Within the pale of Antiquity: Christians and pagan culture

Exegesis by Christians of their evolving Bible did not limit itself to addressing an inner-Christian or Jewish audience, and this is seen in the fact that texts, ostensibly addressed to pagans, are filled with citations from the Old Testament in particular.[84] For instance, Justin refutes the claim that Jesus was a magician by asserting that he was foretold by the prophets (*1 Apol.* 30f.). While citation of such material appealed to pagan appreciation of oracles, to which, among others, Celsus refers (*Contra Celsum* 4.88–96, 7.2–7, 8.45f.),[85] other factors also played an important role. The pagan world in general did not appreciate novelty – as Tertullian (*Apologeticum* 19.1) put it, here trying to summarise pagan attitudes, 'that is true which is prior'. Christians were easily portrayed as something new,[86] and, as we have seen above, they could be seen to encourage such a view. The claim to being a 'third race', if originally a positive self-designation, could easily become a negative one, as Christians were portrayed as renegade Jews;[87] and Christian assertions of 'newness', including their claim to a set of writings called the 'New Testament', probably fuelled this negative view.[88] By arguing strongly for the claim that Christianity was

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83 Carleton Paget, 'Christian Exegesis', p. 491   84 See Droge, 'Self-Definition', pp. 230–44.
85 See Horbury, 'Old Testament Interpretation', p. 743. Note also the way in which Theophilus of Antioch likens the prophets to the Sibyl by stating that both were inspired by the Holy Spirit; and Clement of Alexandria's assertion at *Prot.* 6.71.4 that the Sibyl was a Hebrew prophet, something already asserted by Jews.
86 See above for references.   87 See *Contra Celsum* 2.1, 4.6, 5.33.
88 For harsh comments on Christian newness see Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2, by implication Tacitus, *Annales* 15.44, and Celsus in *Contra Celsum* 5.25–33. For an attempt to convey something of the risk Christians ran by declaring the arrival of something new, see Stroumsa, 'Christian Hermeneutical

the legitimate fulfilment of the Hebrew scriptures, Christians could, in the face of these concerns, lay claim to ancient roots.

But second-century Christian writers were not simply intent upon proving that they were heirs to Jewish promises (the true Israel) and by extension old and legitimate. Like some Jews before them and other writers from the so-called barbarian or non-Greek tradition, they wished to demonstrate that they had an older pedigree than the Greeks and that the latter were in fact dependent upon them for their ideas and discoveries.[89] So Justin in his *1 Apol.* 23.1 declares that it is his intent 'to present the evidence that what we say is alone true and older than all the writers who have ever lived'. Such 'proof' involved Justin in demonstrating the dependence of Plato on Moses. So, for instance, Justin argues that Plato's words in *Rep.* 617e, which state that 'the blame is his who chooses, and God is blameless', have been copied from Deut. 30.15, 19 which states, 'Behold before thy face are good and evil: choose the good.' And more examples follow.[90] But such dependency, however, did not imply equivalence of status between Greek philosophy and the Christian message – it was Christians, after all, who alone spoke the truth, seen in Justin's contention that philosophy, with its different schools and internal conflicts, was but a poor shadow of the true philosophy from which it derived, namely the prophets (*Dial.* 2.1–2; 7.1–2). In all of this it is important to note that Justin's arguments had a Christocentric aspect. While pagans who had spoken the truth had lived 'with the Logos' (*1 Apol.* 46.2–3), or according to the seed of the Logos planted in them (*2 Apol.* 8.1), they had done so only according to a part of the Logos whereas Christians lived through the contemplation of the whole Logos understood as Christ (*2 Apol.* 8.3).

Justin's pupil, Tatian, argued a similar case but somewhat differently. He lists many of the discoveries of the Greeks, attributing them all to various barbarian peoples. He, like Justin, holds Moses to be the earliest representative of an original divine truth but seeks to prove Plato's dependence upon Moses by way of a complex piece of archaeological calculation, precisely the scientific

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Revolution', p. 13: 'For the Christians, the past was not simply idealised, depicted as golden and by nature superior to what came later. On the contrary, for them, it was essentially thanks to what came *after* the Hebrew scriptures, and which the scriptures were supposed to announce, clearly or in veiled fashion, that these scriptures were valued . . . The past . . . was no longer . . . assumed to be better than the present. Christian hermeneutical behaviour thus reflects a radical change of attitude towards the past, and quite a new approach to scripture. This change of attitude is tantamount to a revolution.'

89 See Droge, 'Self-Definition', p. 231, who cites numerous witnesses, including Herodotus, Manetho and Philo of Byblos, to the idea that Greek culture was temporarily secondary to, and dependent upon, barbarian culture.

90 See *1 Apol.* 59.1–5, here showing Plato's reliance upon Gen. 1.1–3 in his *Timaeus*.

method other 'barbarian' writers used (*Oratio ad Graecos* 36–41). Like Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch argued for the derivative character of Greek culture on the basis of calculations (*Ad Autolycum* 3.16–29),[91] but he went further than Tatian in attempting to show how the account of the creation of the world and paradise in Gen. 1–3 far exceeded in the quality of its content what was to be found in Hesiod, even if, in subtle and interesting ways, his account of paradise betrays the influence of Hesiod.[92]

Clement of Alexandria also expressed similar ideas. Utilising Tatian, he, too, argues strongly for the absolute priority of the Mosaic wisdom, praising its author in strong terms and emphasising the dependence upon him of Homer and Plato in particular, and the Greeks more generally, at one point even claiming that Plato possessed a copy of the Pentateuch from which he took his ideas (*Strom.* 1.101.2f.).[93] The whole of Greek wisdom, Clement states, is clearly derived from barbarian philosophy (*Strom.* 5.140.2). On occasion he attributes this 'derivation' to theft, reading the 'thieves and robbers' of John 10.8 as a reference to plagiarising Greeks, but on occasion he attributes such a phenomenon to 'a trace of wisdom and an impulse from God' present among the Greeks (*Strom.* 1.87.1–2). On this more positive note Clement is quick to defend the view that philosophical reasoning has a role in the exposition of the Christian message against those who would see it as the devil's work. Clement feels at ease quoting Greek works in expositions of scriptural passages, and while it is clear that such exposition subordinates Greek wisdom to Moses and ultimately to the incarnate Logos,[94] Christ – Greeks received certain sparks but did not arrive at the full flame, and have in any case fallen away from the truth (*Prot.* 7.74.7) – Clement's willingness to see philosophy as an aid to biblically based theological reasoning is striking, as is his repeated opinion that the gift of philosophy constituted God's covenant with the Greeks and his way of preparing them for the reception of truth (*Strom.* 1.80.6, 6.42.1–3). In the case of Clement, appropriation of Greek *paideia* is no less absolutist than what we find in his most important predecessor (see *Strom.* 3.70 and

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91 See *Ad Autolycum* 3.26: 'Hence one can see how our sacred writings are shown to be more ancient and true than those of the Greeks and Egyptians, or any other historians.' Note also how the teaching of the prophets finds confirmation, or at least parallels, in pagan poets and philosophers (*Ad Autolycum* 2.36–8).

92 Droge, *Homer or Moses*, pp. 102–18, who shows how Theophilus' account reflects aspects of Hesiod's account of the golden age.

93 At one point Clement claims that Moses is older than the Greek deities (*Strom.* 1.107.6). Note also that the dependence upon Moses runs not just to philosophy but also to legislation (*Strom.* 1.170.4) and military strategy (*Strom.* 1.160.3–5).

94 On Clement and the Greek philosophical heritage see Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, pp. 201f.

7.107.3), Justin, but the tone is more positive and the result more obviously philosophical.

Such claims, however expressed, showed a breathtaking boldness, even if we can discern their origins in a well-known preoccupation with the history of culture, already articulated in the writings of Alexandrian Jews such as Aristobulus and Philo, and by pagan writers of barbarian origin such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus.[95] It constituted a form of cultural supersession, an attempt to relativise the prevailing culture with its established classics, and to replace it with what has been termed a 'substitute', in this instance, biblical, *paideia* or culture. In an age, termed the Second Sophistic by the third century writer Philostratus, which was profoundly influenced by the idea of *paideia* and which located that *paideia* in the classic literature of Greece's essentially Attic past, such claims would have appeared preposterous and offensive, even if, in their ambivalent attitude to Greek *paideia*, some Christians reflected the sentiments of a pagan writer like Lucian.

A sense of the outrage caused by such claims is seen in Celsus' *True Word*, the first extant pagan attack upon Christianity. Celsus declares precisely that he has 'nothing new to say except ancient doctrines' (*Contra Celsum* 4.14). And those 'ancient doctrines' come from Plato and other pagan luminaries. In Celsus' riposte to Christian assertions of being the prior and superior culture, he attacked the apparently repellent contents of the Jewish Bible and sought to show how the same biblical writers as well as Jesus and Paul had plagiarised pagan authors.[96] What is striking about all of this is not so much the substance of Celsus' argument but rather that he felt the need to respond at all. By no later than approximately 175 CE, Christian claims about the superiority of biblical culture had gained sufficient traction for a pagan critic to think it necessary to respond to them at some length.[97]

Conclusions

The second century witnessed the beginnings of a more self-conscious, formal approach to exegesis than that which is present in the New Testament. At

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95 Note Droge, *Homer or Moses*, p. 196: 'In one sense, therefore, the writings of the apologists represent only a later, indeed the last, phase of the Hellenistic "war of books", instigated by the publication of Hecateus' history of Egypt.'

96 See, *inter alia, Contra Celsum* 4.11, 41–2, for the view that the story of Noah's flood had been based upon the story of Deucalion; 6.16 for the idea that Jesus had read Plato; and 6.12 for the idea that Paul had read Heraclitus.

97 See Kinzig in this volume, pp. 756–60. Some scholars argue that Celsus is responding to Justin whose works he knew, although this is not certain.

a technical level this manifested itself in a growing concern with the *text* of scripture, in particular the Septuagint, with the contents of scripture (the canon) and with its precise meaning (commentary). Engagement with these technical issues appears only partial when compared with what we see in the writings of the third-century Origen, but the second century marked the beginnings of an important process. A burgeoning interest in what would now be called hermeneutics, or the subject of interpretation, is also a feature of the century. Some of this was taken up with justifying certain approaches to scripture such as allegory. Some of it, partially inspired by the realisation that the espousal of rules would not in the end lead straightforwardly to a 'right' interpretation, concerned the creation of a rule of faith, supposedly based on scripture, and acting as a criterion for the establishment of sound opinion about the contents of scripture. Equally self-conscious was a growing interest in a detailed justification of Christian appropriation of the Hebrew scriptures, witnessed most obviously in *adversus Judaeos* literature but also in other writings which responded to the observations of Marcion and some Gnostics. Central to this discussion was an attempt to make sense of the continuities and the discontinuities between, first, the old and new covenants, and then, as the canon took on a more specifically Christian character, the Old and New Testaments.

Much of what I have referred to above is connected with what has been called the 're-referencing' of scripture, the transformation of scripture into a text which had at its centre Christ, the word of God, and his church.[98] Re-referencing is obviously there in New Testament books, and the creation of the New Testament, however its contents were conceived, was a part of that same process ('Old' Testament begins to be seen through the prism of a 'New' Testament), which was carried out with a striking vigour and intent in the second century. In part the forms this re-referencing took may have owed something to the increasing arrival within the church of more educated people, such as philosophers like Justin and Clement of Alexandria. These individuals sought not simply to re-reference a text, the scriptures, but also the history of culture, by showing that the authors of the Old Testament, themselves inspired by the Logos, were the sources of whatever was good in Hellenistic culture, in particular, philosophy. It was these and other arguments which enabled some Christian writers of the second century to justify a philosophically oriented exegesis, which in turn contributed to making the scriptural world their intellectual one. In much of this Christians were

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98 Young, *Biblical Exegesis*.

following a path well ploughed by non-Greek authors, both pagan and Jewish, who had also showed a similarly ambivalent attitude to things Greek, both absorbing them and asserting them to be derived from older, 'barbarian', cultures. But in locating their ultimate source in the pre-existent Logos who had become the carpenter from Nazareth, Christians were attributing to themselves, his followers, unprecedented access to the truth uniquely contained in the scriptures.

The developments described above, which should be regarded as tendencies observed in a select number of writings which in the main are the product of a literate elite, can be seen to emerge out of, and contribute to, a growing sense of the Christian 'genos' or nation understood as a third race, distinct both from pagans and from Jews. What is less clear is whether these developments were the result of defensive reactions to arguments and objections from within or from outside, or whether they are better described as emerging from self-generated thoughts naturally occurring in the rising body of the self-confident Christian church. Was, for instance, the decision to create a New Testament, or at least to have an authorised list of books for reading in a liturgical setting, defensive or simply the result of an internal tendency to prefer some early Christian books over others? And related to this, did the emergence of a rule of faith have its origins in the presence of competing rules of faith or in the need to explain, possibly in liturgical contexts, difficult scriptural passages which would otherwise appear unintelligible? Whatever the answer to these questions, it is clear that the second century, by whatever processes, was an extraordinarily significant period in the history of the Christian Bible, in relation to both its content and its interpretation.

Gnostic and Manichaean interpretation

WINRICH LÖHR

From the second century onwards a number of Christian teachers sought to interpret and propagate Christianity as a philosophy in the ancient sense of the word: Christianity, they claimed, conveys a true conception of the world and man's place and destiny within it. Based on this true account of reality it teaches the true way of life that leads men to the goal of human existence, the blessed, the perfect life.

Modern scholarship has usually called some of these Christian philosophers and their followers 'Gnostics'. As has been pointed out by several scholars, the meaning and scope of the terms 'Gnostics' and 'Gnosticism' are highly problematic; no agreed and convincing definition is available.[1] For our purposes, suffice it to say that 'Gnosticism' does not designate a distinct religious tradition as, for example, Judaism or Christianity. Here the term 'Gnostic' is used to identify a cluster of Christian authors and writings that distinguish between the highest and transcendent God on the one hand and the creator of this world (the 'demiurge') on the other hand. Most of these authors formulated their theologies with reference to, or in the form of, more or less elaborate narratives of salvation history (myths).[2]

Christian Gnostic teachers and schools are at the origin of the Christian interpretation of the Bible. For all their creativity in producing new scriptures, Gnostic theologians probably did not create a Gnostic Bible as a replacement for canonical Jewish or Christian scripture.[3] Gnostic teachers were among the first to write commentaries on New Testament writings; they also inaugurated serious reflection on the premises of biblical interpretation. Thus they are at the origin of biblical hermeneutics.

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1 See Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*; King, *What Is Gnosticism?*
2 Williams, however, wishes to replace the term 'Gnostic' or 'Gnosticism' with the term 'biblical demiurgical': 'It would include all sources that made a distinction between the creator(s) and controllers of the material world and the most transcendent divine being, and that in so doing made use of Jewish or Christian scriptural traditions' (*Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*, p. 265).
3 Perkins, 'Gnosticism and the Christian Bible', pp. 361–3.

Early Gnostic commentaries

The emergence of the first commentaries on writings of the New Testament (as it was later called) marks an important watershed in the history of the Christian Bible. As the writings of the New Testament came to be invested with authority, they attained canonical status. The growing authority of Christian scripture can be traced by analysing the practice of quotation in the second century: whereas first the four Gospels or the letters of Paul were quoted freely, the text being adapted to the new context, during the course of the century quotations became more and more precise and the text came to be viewed as something unalterable, to be quoted without any change of words.[4] Disciples of the Gnostic teacher Valentinus, like Ptolemy, were leading this trend. This growing philological sense was also an important premise for the emergence of the commentary: commentary is a mode of interpretation that renounces adaptation or rewriting – it adds to the text only by acknowledging that the text is complete as it stands, is authoritative. The emergence of the commentary mode did not, however, mean that other modes of engagement with the biblical text disappeared at once.

One of the earliest Christian Gnostic exegetes was the Alexandrian teacher Basilides, who lived during the time of Hadrian. Writing in the latter half of the second century, a certain Agrippa Castor mentions Basilides as the author of, among other works, twenty-four books *eis to euaggelion* (Greek for 'about the gospel'), that is a commentary on the Gospel comprising twenty-four books. Clement of Alexandria quotes a passage from the twenty-third book of the *Exegetica* (Greek for 'commentaries') of Basilides – it is a reasonable conjecture that this is precisely the commentary mentioned by Agrippa Castor. Likewise, a fragment preserved in the fourth-century *Acts of Archelaus*, which purports to quote from the thirteenth book of a 'book of treatises' (Latin: *liber tractatuum*) of a certain Basilides, can also perhaps be attributed to this work. It is unclear which Gospel is commented upon; a remark by Origen could be taken to suggest that Basilides is here dealing with a Gospel text which he himself had revised. If the fragment in the *Acta Archelai* belongs to Basilides' commentary, it is possible that the Gospel text of Basilides was a recension of the Gospel of Luke.[5]

4 B. Aland, 'Die Rezeption des neutestamentlichen Textes in den ersten Jahrhunderten' in J.-M. Sevrin (ed.), *The New Testament in Early Christianity* (Leuven University Press, 1989), pp. 1–38.
5 Löhr, *Basilides*, pp. 4–14, 30–4, 126, 223–30; pace Kelhoffer, 'Basilides's Gospel'.

As to the form and contents of this early Christian commentary, little can be surmised from the extant fragments. It seems that the commentary did not proceed verse by verse and was not in the form of short glosses. Rather, it dealt with philosophical / theological questions suggested by the Gospel text. One of the fragments discusses the suffering of those Christians that are persecuted.[6] The other explores the question of the origin of evil in the world, citing the teaching of exotic 'barbarians'.[7]

It is in the school of Valentinus that we encounter the most conspicuous example of early Gnostic commentary literature: a certain Herakleon, who wrote a commentary on the Gospel of John.[8] This is probably the most impressive exegetical work of second-century Christianity, of which substantial parts are preserved by Origen in books 2, 6, 10, 13, 19 and 20 of his *Commentary on John*. Origen quotes and discusses altogether about fifty fragments of Herakleon which comment on various verses from John 1–8. It is possible that in the lost books of his commentary Origen discussed further passages from Herakleon's exegesis. Apart from Origen's quotations, two other fragments are preserved by Clement of Alexandria (one of them containing a sophisticated exegesis of Luke 12:8–9, 11; see below).

Origen designates Herakleon's work as *hypomnêmata*: the Greek term possibly indicates commentaries within the setting of a school.[9] It is difficult to gain a clear picture of the form and method of Herakleon's commentary from the extant fragments. Recently an attempt has been made to demonstrate that Herakleon adopted the methodology of contemporary Homer philology as reconstructed by the German nineteenth-century classicist Hermann Usener:[10] ancient philology attended to the persons speaking (Greek: *to prosôpon to legon*). The question of whether and how the words they utter fit their character was discussed. Moreover, ancient Homer exegesis tried to heal the contradictions between different lines of Homer by suggesting a so-called *lysis ek prosopou* (Greek for 'a solution by means of the person'): it claimed

6 Löhr, *Basilides*, frag. 7 = Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 4.81.1–83.1 (*Clemens Alexandrinus. Vol. II: Stromata Buch I–VI*, ed. O. Stählin et al., 4th edn, GCS (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), 284.5–285.3. See Löhr, *Basilides*, pp. 122–37.
7 Löhr, *Basilides*, frag. 19 = Hegemonius, *Acts of Archelaus* 67.4–12 (*Hegemonius. Acta Archelai*, ed. C. H. Beeson, GCS (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906), 96.10–97.24. See Löhr, *Basilides*, pp. 219–49.
8 See A. E. Brooke, *The Fragments of Herakleon* (Cambridge University Press, 1891). See also Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus*; A. Bastit, 'Forme et méthode du Commentaire sur Jean d'Héracléon', *Adamantius* 15 (2009), 150–76.
9 Herakleon, frag. 4 (= Origen, *Comm. Joh.* 6.15). See Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus*, pp. 32–4.
10 See Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus*; H. Usener, 'Ein altes Lehrgebäude der Philologie', in H. Usener, *Kleine Schriften*, vol. II (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1913), pp. 265–314.

that it is not the poet who contradicts himself, but rather the literary persons the poet employs in order to express different points of view.[11] For example, commenting on John 1:27, Herakleon discerns John the Baptist as the *persona* of the demiurge.[12] *Lysis ek prosôpou* was also practised by other Christian theologians. The Logos theology of Justin Martyr offers a conspicuous example of its usefulness: words and actions that would violate the transcendence of God the Father (such as the theophanies in the Old Testament) could safely be attributed to his Logos Son.

Other instances of ancient philological methods in Herakleon's commentary could be listed. However, judging from the extant text, Herakleon did not follow slavishly the steps identified by H. Usener and his focus was on theological exegesis rather than on philological explanation. Some of his comments take the form of paraphrases or short glosses on the biblical text. He likes to focus on the specific phrasing of a verse, for example the use of the Greek preposition *dia* in John 1:3 (fragment 1), or the Greek preposition *para* in John 4:40 (frag. 38).

In the background of this allegorical exegesis there is a pronounced Valentinian theology which distinguishes between the true God on the one hand, and on the other hand the creator god venerated by the Jews in Jerusalem, the demiurge (frag. 21 commenting on John 4:21). According to Herakleon, John 1.3 talks of the demiurge creating everything except the divine and transcendent world of the *aiôn*. The demiurge is acting here as the unwitting functionary of the Logos (frag. 1). He is identified as the official (*basilikos*) of John 4:46: a little king, subject to the universal king, worthy to exercise his ephemeral rule over a kingdom that is small.

Besides his commentary on the Gospel of John, Herakleon possibly wrote another commentary on the Synoptic Gospels. In *Strom.* 4.70.1–72.4, Clement of Alexandria first quotes in this order Luke 12:8–9, Mark 8:38, Matt 10:32, Luke 12:11–12. He then continues with a long quotation from Herakleon which ostensibly comments on Luke 12:8–9, 11–12.[13] The synoptic lemma may have been Herakleon's work. If so, he would have written a commentary on the Gospel of Luke (or selected passages of it), comparing the synoptic parallels.

The *Exegetica* of Basilides and the *Hypomnēmata* of the Valentinian Herakleon represent two different forms of commentary. Other, similar

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11 Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*, pp. 263–4; Procopé, 'Greek Philosophy', pp. 473–4.
12 Brooke, *Fragments of Herakleon*, frag. 8.
13 W. Löhr, 'Valentinian Variations on Lk 12,8–9 / Mt 10,32', *VC* 57 (2003), 437–55.

commentaries have completely disappeared: Origen explicitly notes that the Gnostics published many commentaries on the words of the Gospel and the apostle.[14] In the Nag Hammadi writings, of the four Synoptic Gospels it is Matthew that is most often alluded to. This finding agrees with the general predominance of Matthew in the Christian literature of the second century.[15]

Recently a further form of biblical commentary has been identified in the Valentinian *Excerpts from Theodotus*: this is the literary genre of *erotapokrisis*, the commentary by questions and answers which was used, for example, to comment on difficult passages in Homer. Philo of Alexandria wrote *Questions and Answers on Genesis* and *Questions and Answers on Exodus*.[16] *Excerpts* 4.1ff. deals with the earthly appearance of the saviour. It is emphasised that he did not appear as an angel, but as a human being, and that the transfiguration on the mountain was not done for his own sake, but for the sake of the church in order to demonstrate the progress he has made after his death. Moreover, it is said, his earthly existence does not separate the saviour from the Father: he is and remains with the Father, being the power (Greek: *dynamis*) of the Father. In *Excerpts* 4.3 an alternative explanation is offered (already ancient Homer exegesis had offered alternative solutions), indicated with the key word *allôs* (Greek for 'differently'): the saviour had appeared in order to fulfil the promise uttered in Matt. 16:28; before their death, Peter, James and John had the opportunity to see the saviour. The next exegetical question follows in *Excerpts* 5.1: How is it possible that the apostles were not already shocked when they saw the luminous appearance, but fell down only when they heard the voice? Again alternative explanations are offered.[17]

It is remarkable that we know of no commentary on any of the non-canonical Gospels, either by the Gnostics or by their orthodox adversaries. And, despite the substantial role that the Old Testament played for Gnostic Christians, no Gnostic commentary on any book of the Old Testament is known to us.

Other forms of Gnostic exegesis

A more or less continuous commentary was, of course, only one of several ways in which Christian Gnostic theologians could engage with biblical texts.

14 Origen, *Comm. Joh.* 5.8 (Origen, *Commentaire sur saint Jean*, trans. C. Blanc, SC 120 (Paris: Cerf, 1966), p. 388.
15 C. M. Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1986), pp. 151–2.
16 Dörrie and Dörries, 'Erotapokriseis', cols. 343–4, 347–8.
17 Scholten, 'Ein unerkannter Quaestioneskommentar'.

The bulk of Gnostic interpretative praxis is known to us in different form. Here we must mention the *Excerpts from Theodotus* of Clement of Alexandria, which present fragments from the writings of a certain Valentinian called Theodotus (of whom we know nothing) and some other Valentinians. The *Excerpts* quote, allude to and comment on biblical verses. Other snippets of Gnostic or Marcionite exegesis are cited by Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromateis* or by Origen in his exegetical works.

A considerable number of Gnostic and Marcionite interpretations have also been preserved by those church fathers who – like Irenaeus of Lyon, Tertullian of Carthage and Hippolytus of Rome – relate various versions of Gnostic salvation history in order to comment on them or refute them. In these cases the original wording and meaning of 'heretical' exegesis has to be carefully extracted from its highly polemical context.

Irenaeus of Lyon intersperses his account of Ptolemy's version of salvation history (*Haer.* 1.1–8)[18] with chapters that relate the biblical exegesis which was meant to confirm the grand narrative (*Haer.* 1.1.3, 3.1–6, 8.1–5). For example, a fair number of these interpretations identify in the biblical narrative the *personae* of the divine agents of Valentinian salvation history: the daughter of Iairus (Luke 8:41–2) is a type of the Sophia Achamoth, the lower wisdom that is outside the transcendent sphere of the divine *plêroma*, awaiting the saviour who should lead her to the perception of light (*Haer.* 1.8.2).

Gnostic exegetes liked to focus on those passages of scripture which seemed to demand an allegorical explanation. Chief among them were, of course, the parables of the Gospels: the story of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4–7) is explained by the Valentinians as the Sophia Achamoth outside the divine *plêroma*. And the woman who sweeps her house, finding a lost coin (Luke 15:8–10), symbolises the Sophia that has remained inside the *plêroma*, being separated from her *enthymêsis* but going to find her again at the coming of the saviour. In this way, both parables indicate episodes in the Valentinian version of salvation history (*Haer.* 1.8.4).

Gnostic exegesis could use conventional exegetical terminology in order to refer to, or quote from, the Bible: the book of Genesis is referred to as the *nomos*, the 'five books of the Law that have been given by Moses' are mentioned. Other sources agree with non-Gnostic exegesis in designating Moses or David as 'prophets'. Sometimes scripture is considered to be inspired, for example

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18 See F.-M.-M. Sagnard, *La gnose valentinienne et le témoignage de Saint Irénée* (Paris: Vrin, 1947).

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by the Holy Spirit.[19] Ptolemy, in his *Letter to Flora*, provides the first attestation of the term 'Pentateuch' (*Flor.* 4.1).

Gnostic exegetes also carefully attend to numbers that are mentioned in the text – number speculation had already been used in the allegorical exegesis of Philo of Alexandria:[20] according to the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20.1–7), some workers are hired at the first hour, others at the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours. By adding up these figures you obtain thirty as the sum – which happens to be the exact number of eons that constitute the divine *plêroma* (*Haer.* 1.1.3). Another common exegetical technique strings together texts that are connected by a key word (*Haer.* 1.8.2).

Gnostic theologians did not only deal with biblical texts by way of commentary or quotation, they also paraphrased and renarrated key biblical stories; in this way, 'allegorical interpretation sometimes takes the form of new composition'. Indeed, it can even happen that 'in its most subtle . . . form, this mode of allegorical interpretation as composition seeks to efface all evidence of its origin as commentary'.[21] L. Painchaud distinguishes between 'expositional and compositional uses of biblical elements' and emphasises the importance of allusions to biblical passages in Gnostic narratives.[22] Gnostic versions of the crucifixion story exemplify this type of narrative exegesis.

Here is Irenaeus' report of the passion narrative proposed by second-century disciples of Basilides (*Haer.* 1.24.4):

> When the Father who is unborn and without name saw the perdition of the creator angels, he sent his first born *Nous* (and this is the one who is called Christ) in order to liberate those who believe in him from the power of those who have fabricated this world. And to the nations of the angels he appeared as a man on earth and accomplished miracles. Accordingly, he also did not suffer, but a certain Simon Cyrene was pressed into carrying the cross for him and it was this one who was crucified according to the ignorance and the error [of the angels]. And Simon had been transfigured by him, so that it was believed that he was Jesus, and Jesus himself had donned the appearance of Simon, and was standing and laughing at them. Since he was a bodiless power and the *Nous* of the unborn Father, he could transfigure himself as he liked and in this way ascend to him who had sent him, mocking them, because he could not be retained and was invisible to all.

19 Rudolph, 'Bibel und Gnosis', pp. 193, 197.
20 See Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', p. 178.
21 For both quotations, see Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, p. 129. See also C. Markschies, 'Welche Funktion hat der Mythos im gnostischen System', in J. Frey (ed.), *Heil und Geschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), pp. 513–31.
22 L. Painchaud, 'The Use of Scripture in Gnostic Literature', *JECS* 4 (1996), 129–46.

The claim that it was in fact Simon of Cyrene who was crucified instead of Jesus probably relied on a close reading of Mark 15:21–5: Simon's name is mentioned in 15:21, and the personal pronouns in the following verses can all be referred to him instead of to Jesus, whose name is omitted.[23] The claim that the crucifixion was the product of ignorance was probably based on an exegesis of 1 Cor. 2:8. G. Stroumsa has claimed that the motive of the laughing Christ presupposes a highly creative exegesis of Gen. 22: the binding of Isaac (Hebrew: *akedah*) in Gen. 22, the fact that Isaac's sacrifice had been averted in the last moment and that no human blood had been shed, figured largely in first-century Jewish theology. Moreover, for Christian exegetes, Isaac became a type of Christ. The biblical etymology of Isaac (Hebrew: *jizhak*) can be translated as 'he will laugh'. One may also follow R. M. Grant and detect here a reference to Ps. 2:4.[24] But more than biblical motives can be surmised: in Homer, Hesiod or Euripides, sometimes the 'image' (Greek: *eidôlon*), that is to say, the 'ethereal double of a living person', is introduced in order to improve on the received version of myths. In this way, the poet 'solves the problem of an unworthy behaviour on the part of the (usually divine) hero or of his (or her) intolerable fate'.[25] The laughter of the Basilidean Christ shows him to be a true philosopher who even in the face of death triumphantly scorns his enemies. Celsus, the Platonist adversary of Christianity, criticised the biblical Christ for meekly submitting to his fate on the cross instead of making fun of his enemies (*Contra Celsum* 2.33–4, 6.53). Moreover, our passion narrative may have adapted Aristotle's concept of the intellect (Greek: *nous*): the Aristotelian *nous* is 'the place of forms' in potentiality, not in actuality. It is active by becoming 'each thing in the way that the actualized knower is said to be'.[26] The *nous*-Christ with his mimicry can thus be decoded as the Aristotelian intellect on a soteriological mission. What looks at first sight like a rather naive (or nasty) piece of Gnostic mythology on closer inspection reveals itself as a carefully thought out composition, interweaving scholarly if debatable exegesis with philosophical doxography.

The Basilidean exegesis of Mark 15 is further developed in a Nag Hammadi writing: *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII.2.55–6) presents in the form of a revelation dialogue a highly idiosyncratic version of the crucifixion.

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23 R. M. Grant, 'Gnostic Origins and the Basilidians of Irenaeus', *VC* 13 (1959), pp. 121–5, at p. 123.
24 G. Stroumsa, 'Christ's Laughter. Docetic Origins Reconsidered', *JECS* 12 (2004), 267–88; Grant, 'Gnostic Origins'.
25 R. Goldstein and G. Stroumsa, 'The Greek and Jewish Origins of Docetism. A New Proposal', *ZAC* 10 (2007), pp. 423–41, at pp. 425, 429.
26 Aristotle, De an. 3.4 (trans. H. Lawson-Tancred, London: Penguin, 1986). Cf. Philo, *Op. m* 69.

Here again the central idea is the deception of the archons (1 Cor. 2:8). It is not the saviour who suffers, but another: another one is punished, another one drinks the vinegar, another one is flogged, another one receives the crown of thorns, another one carries the cross – only in this instance Simon Cyrene is mentioned.[27] Further narrative exegesis of Christ's passion can be found in *The Letter of Peter to Philip* (NHC VIII.2) and the Apocalypse of Peter (NHC VII.3).[28] However, writings such as *The Interpretation of Knowledge* or *The Gospel of Truth* envisage a saviour who dies on the cross.[29]

The stories from Genesis, too, were subjected to Gnostic narrative exegesis. For example, one Nag Hammadi treatise, *The Hypostasis of Archons* (NHC II.4), presents a complicated retelling of Gen. 1–6. Another Nag Hammadi treatise (perhaps a kind of homily), *The Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX.3), exhorts to an ascetic and celibate life and offers this narrative interpretation of the baptism of Jesus:

> But the Son of Man [came] forth from Imperishability, [being] alien to defilement. He came [to the] world by the Jordan river, and immediately the Jordan [turned] back. And John bore witness to the [descent] of Jesus. For he is the one who saw the [power] which came down upon the Jordan river; for he knew that the dominion of carnal procreation had come to an end. The Jordan river is the power of the body, that is, the senses of pleasures. The water of the Jordan is the desire for sexual intercourse. John is the archon of the womb.[30]

As a preacher would do in a homily, the author interprets the Jordan scene by applying an allegorical interpretation that works with substitutions. The figure of John the Baptist signifies 'the archon of the womb', a lower power that rules over the realm of carnal procreation. The Jordan river signifies the 'senses of pleasures', the Jordan water sexual desire.[31] Already Herakleon had interpreted John the Baptist as a type of demiurge, and the disciples of Basilides had proposed a similar exegesis.[32] For these Gnostic exegetes John the Baptist is a biblical figure who, on the one hand, is clearly more than an ordinary

27 Translation: NHL, p. 365. See L. Painchaud, *Le deuxième traité du grand Seth* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1982), pp. 38–41, 104–6.
28 See also Zosimus of Panopolis, *Hypomnemata* 1.13 (*Zosime de Panopolis. Mémoires authentiques*, trans. M. Mertens (Paris: Belles Letters, 1995)).
29 NHC XI.1.5.30–8; NHC I.3.18.24–7. See Prieur, 'La croix et la crucifixion'; M. Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), pp. 149–56.
30 NHC IX.3.30–1. Translation: NHL, p. 450.
31 For similar allegorical substitutions in Philo of Alexandria, see Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation', p. 185f.
32 Herakleon, frag. 8 (= Origen, *Comm. Joh.* 6.39); Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.36.1. See also Löhr, *Basilides*, pp. 61–78.

human being, but who, on the other hand, is not on the same spiritual level as the saviour. This ambiguous role called for first exegetical and then narrative clarification.

In another passage of the same treatise, the author first gives a free paraphrase of the story of the fall in Gen. 3. He then continues:

> But of what sort is this God? First [he] maliciously refused Adam from eating of the tree of knowledge. And secondly he said: 'Adam, where are you?' And God does not have foreknowledge, [otherwise], would he not know from the beginning? [And] afterwards he said: 'Let us cast him [out] of this place, lest he eat of the tree of life and live for ever.' Surely he has shown himself to be a malicious grudger. And what kind of God is this? For great is the blindness of those who read, and they did not know him. And he said, 'I am the jealous God; I will bring the sins of the fathers upon the children until three [and] four generations.'[33]

Here the author clearly applies the question of *to prosopon to legon* to the story of the fall: he wishes to clarify what kind of God it is that is speaking and acting in the story. Focusing on the character, the persona of this god, he comes to the conclusion that it is certainly not the highest God that is involved here.[34]

From these and other examples it becomes clear that Gnostic exegesis and Gnostic myth-making are closely intertwined: Gnostic exegesis draws on the scholarly resources of philology in order to solve those difficulties that the biblical texts presented to ancient readers who were offended by their anthropomorphisms. If scripture does not talk about God in a manner that is 'fitting for God' (Greek: *theoprepēs*), it has to be either rejected or interpreted. Both options remained open – but the ingenuity of Gnostic exegetes made it possible to integrate a large amount of deficient scripture. This could happen in a number of ways: by formal citation (comparatively rare in the Nag Hammadi Library), by allusion (which presupposes a sufficiently educated readership), by a creative play with biblical phrases, metaphors and motives.[35] Moreover, Gnostic exegesis also provided elements for those Gnostic myths or salvation narratives that reconfigure and recompose the great narratives of the biblical tradition.

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33 NHC ix.3.47–8. Translation: NHL, p. 455.
34 See Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*, pp. 68–72. See also B. A. Pearson, 'Gnostic Interpretation of the Old Testament in the Testimony of Truth (NHC ix,3)', *HTR* 73 (1980), 311–19; Kaestli, 'L'interprétation du serpent'.
35 Perkins, 'Gnosticism and the Christian Bible', 363–9.

Gnostic and Marcionite hermeneutics

Is it possible to discern a set of consistent principles or a more or less coherent attitude behind Gnostic exegetical practice? Modern scholarship has tried to define a recognisably Gnostic hermeneutics, or at least a typical Gnostic attitude to the biblical texts. Sometimes it has been suggested that Gnostic Bible exegesis, particularly of the Old Testament, can be characterised as polemical or 'protest exegesis'.[36] More recently, however, it has justly been pointed out that it would be quite wrong to reduce Gnostic attitudes towards the Old Testament to polemical rejection.[37] Focusing on the Gnostic exegesis of Gen. 2–3, P. Nagel has proposed to distinguish six ways of Gnostic reception of the Old Testament:[38]

1. outright rejection of figures and episodes from the Old Testament;
2. subversive interpretation that alters the roles and functions of certain Old Testament figures;
3. corrective interpretation;
4. allegorical interpretation;
5. citing of single Old Testament verses in support of Gnostic teaching;
6. etiological and typological interpretations of the Old Testament.

Nagel's differentiated sketch of Gnostic hermeneutics has been adopted by other scholars. Sometimes it has been reduced to just three types of Gnostic exegesis:

1. negative;
2. positive;
3. median, ambivalent.[39]

By a comprehensive analysis of the Gnostic interpretation of some of the principal figures and key events in Genesis, M. A. Williams has been able to establish a surprising conclusion: it is impossible to maintain the view that Gnostic sources adopt a hermeneutic 'program of systematic reversal', in other words that they consistently subject biblical figures and events to a polemical exegesis reversing the values of the text. While some events and figures are more often revaluated, in other cases only a minority of Gnostic

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36 See Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*, pp. 54–79, 276–82 (with ample bibliography).
37 See Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel*, pp. 90–105 (chapter 3).
38 Nagel, 'Die Auslegung der Paradieserzählung in der Gnosis', p. 51 (I paraphrase); Rudolph, 'Bibel und Gnosis', pp. 190–209.
39 Rudolph, 'Bibel und Gnosis', p. 201.

sources employ a polemical hermeneutics.[40] Moreover, Williams has justly observed that Gnostic exegesis often operates with hermeneutical 'reversal' when it is confronted with particularly difficult texts. Focusing on the Gnostic exegesis of certain 'scriptural chestnuts' like Gen. 1:26–7, Gen. 2–3, Gen. 6 (flood) or Gen. 11, Williams demonstrates that in all these instances Gnostic exegesis tries to come to terms with problematical anthropomorphisms. But – and this is important – biblical anthropomorphism (a god with a face, or an arm, or hands and feet, a god that expresses emotions like anger and jealousy) constituted a serious problem not only for Gnostic theologians, but also for intelligent Jewish and pagan readers of the Bible.[41]

Marcion, the theologian from the Black Sea, added to his edition of the New Testament a work called *Antitheses* which systematically confronted verses from the New Testament with verses from the Old Testament.[42] In this way, Tertullian informs us, Marcion compared the two gods, their respective characters (*ingenia*), laws (*leges*) and miracles (*virtutes*).[43] The *Antitheses* were meant to prove that the jealous and irascible god of the Old Testament, the creator of this world, the legislator and judge, is not identical with the true God, the patient and good father of Jesus Christ. It is possible to understand Marcion's hermeneutics in the *Antitheses* as a theologically motivated attention to the question of *to prosopon to legon*: Marcion denied that the character, words and actions of the god of the Old Testament agree with the character of the father of Jesus Christ as attested by his New Testament.[44] He therefore must have concluded that they have to be attributed to two different divine persons.

If Gnostic exegesis did engage constructively with the Old Testament, it is with Marcion's disciple Apelles that we meet a second-century theologian whose hermeneutical attitude to (parts of) the Old Testament was wholly negative. In a work called *Syllogismi* (originally thirty-eight books of which only about thirteen fragments have survived), Apelles developed the antithetical method of his master Marcion and subjected biblical stories like the fall (Gen. 2–3) to a trenchant logical critique. In order to expose their inner contradictions, he constructed syllogistic arguments in question form.[45]

There is, then, no reason to assume a uniformly polemical attitude towards biblical texts or to conjure the mirage of a Gnostic 'protest exegesis'. Rather,

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40 Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*, pp. 60–3.
41 Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*, pp. 64–75.   42 Aland, 'Marcion / Marcioniten'.
43 Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem* 2.29.1; Braun, *Contre Marcion II*, p. 172.
44 See J. Barton, 'Marcion Revisited', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 341–54.
45 K. Greschat, *Apelles und Hermogenes* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 45–72.

what looks like a special Gnostic hermeneutics at closer inspection reveals itself as a sophisticated exegesis that draws on the methods and techniques of contemporary philological and philosophical exegesis.

Gnostic theologians apparently liked to stress that scriptural exegesis is fundamentally a process of exploration and research. To their opponents they seem to be forever intent on detecting obscure passages in order to propose their allegorical explanations (they cite Matt. 7:7).[46]

Irenaeus of Lyon points out that the Gnostics start their allegorical exegesis by formulating exegetical questions with regard to those obscure passages of scripture that are susceptible to conceal a more profound meaning. They solve these questions, Irenaeus complains, by raising another, larger, impious question, namely whether above the demiurge of this world there exists another, higher god.[47]

Moreover, Irenaeus likes to parade specimens of Gnostic exegesis as examples of abusive, atomistic eisegesis. Summarising his polemical judgement, Irenaeus characterises Valentinian hermeneutics in the following way (*Haer.* 1.9.3–4):

> Therefore, after they have invented their own subject matter [Greek: *hypothesis*],[48] they assemble scattered phrases [Greek: *lexeis*] and names [Greek: *onomata*] and transfer them . . . from a natural meaning to an unnatural meaning. They do the same thing as those authors do who set before themselves any subject they hit upon and then try to treat it with verses drawn from the poems of Homer. Those who are inexperienced then believe that Homer really did make verses on this subject matter which they have made up offhand.

Irenaeus here compares the Gnostic exegesis to the work of poetic virtuosos that reconfigure Homeric verses in elaborate and artful centos. In this way Irenaeus implicitly acknowledges the creativity of Gnostic Bible interpretation. But his attitude is clearly critical: Gnostic deconstructionist hermeneutics distorts biblical passages for its own ends; it uses Bible verses to adorn a fiction.

Valentinian hermeneutics claimed Jesus Christ as its centre, as its hermeneutical key. One of the disciples of Valentinus, Ptolemy, wrote a letter to a certain lady Flora which presents a sophisticated introduction into the Christian interpretation of Old Testament Law. Ptolemy, who discerns different parts of the

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46 Koschorke, 'Suchen und Finden'.
47 Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.10.1–2, in Rousseau and Doutreleau, *Irénee de Lyon*, SC 294, pp. 86–8).
48 See Harl, 'Le mot *hypothesis*'.

Law, tries to determine their respective authors.[49] In a first division Ptolemy distinguishes between (i) the law of God, (ii) the law of Moses and (iii) the law of the elders of the Jewish people. The criterion for this division is the words of Jesus himself (i.e. Matt. 19:8, 6 and Matt. 15:4–9). A second division proposes further distinctions within the law of God: (i) that part of the divine law that was not entwined with evil and which the saviour did not abolish but fulfil (i.e. the Decalogue), (ii) that part of the divine law that was mixed with evil and injustice and was abolished by the saviour and (iii) the typological law which the saviour revealed as symbolising and mirroring higher, transcendent realities. It is first Jesus Christ himself and then his apostle Paulus who provide the hermeneutical rationale: Matt. 5:21–37 confirms the Decalogue, Matt. 5:39 abolishes the law of talion, Eph. 2:15 and Rom. 7:12 provide further scriptural support. Moreover, the apostle Paul proposes a symbolical interpretation of circumcision (Rom. 2:28) and of the Passa and the unleavened bread (1 Cor. 5:7). Near the end of his letter Ptolemy addresses Flora with the following words:

> For if God grants it, you will receive in proper order instruction concerning the principle and the generation of these [i.e. the second and third nature after the transcendent Father] as well, when you are deemed worthy of the apostolic tradition, which we also have received by succession along with the requirement to prove all our statements through the teaching of our Saviour.[50]

With this programmatic remark Ptolemy underlines the hermeneutical centrality of the teaching of Jesus.

Some Valentinian theologians viewed Jesus as the source of a secret tradition.[51] Irenaeus of Lyon writes (*Haer.* 2.27.2):

> Regarding the 'Father' who has been invented by the opponents . . . they themselves say that the Saviour has taught this in secret, and not to all, but only to those of his disciples who could grasp it and understand what was signalled by him through myths and riddles and parables.

According to Valentinian hermeneutics, oral tradition supplements the (four) written Gospels. The Valentinian argument consists of three propositions:

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49 Ptolemy, *Flor.* Translation: Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 37–43.
50 Ptolemy, *Flor.* 7.9. Translation: Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 43.
51 For the following see W. Löhr, 'Kanonsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von mündlicher und schriftlicher Tradition im zweiten Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 85 (1994), 243–48.

1. The preaching of the apostles happened before the apostles received the perfect gnosis.
2. The scriptures used in the churches are unreliable and full of mistakes and equivocations. Oral tradition is needed in order to distil the truth from them (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6).
3. The tradition of the apostles (as contained in scripture) is not trustworthy, for two reasons: on the one hand, the apostles inserted into the words of the saviour certain precepts of the Jewish law. On the other hand, the apostles and the saviour himself were not always inspired by the highest God and Father, but occasionally talked under the influence of lower levels of transcendence, like the demiurge and creator of this world. Moreover, the apostles accommodated their teaching to the spiritual capacity of their respective audiences. Only the Valentinians can lay claim to the pure and unalloyed truth (*Haer.* 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.5.1).

The first proposition views the Gospels as the written record of the apostolic teaching before the apostles had received the full gnosis. The second proposition highlights the deficiencies of scripture and indicates the recourse to oral tradition as a possible solution. The third presupposes the knowledge of the oral tradition and offers it as a criterion for distinguishing different levels within scripture: the Gospels do not only contain words from the highest God and Father. Here the concept of an oral tradition that is distinct from deficient scripture is key: it provides Valentinian hermeneutics with a perspective on the text of the Gospel. The scope and contents of this oral tradition, however, remain vague: it was not important to be more precise in this respect – it was the very possibility of an alternative to deficient scripture that counted.

The Valentinians were not the only Christian theologians who highlighted the role and importance of oral tradition: Basilides claimed to be a disciple of a certain Glaukias, who allegedly had been the interpreter of Peter (*Strom.* 7.106.4). This Basilidean claim probably attempted to rival the tradition about Mark the evangelist as the interpreter of Peter. The disciples of the Alexandrian teacher Carpocrates also claimed the authority of a secret tradition emanating from Jesus himself for their scriptural interpretation, for example their exegesis of Luke 12:58–9 / Matt. 5:25–6 (*Haer.* 1.25.5). In these instances oral tradition has no value in its own right, but is meant to provide a hermeneutical perspective on obscure and difficult passages of scripture. The stress on orality as opposed to scripturality can also be found in non-Gnostic theologians, like, for example, Papias of Hierapolis, writing *c.* 120 CE (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4).

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Valentinian hermeneutics was probably devised in full knowledge of an alternative solution to the hermeneutical problem: Marcion apparently put no faith in tradition, oral or otherwise.[52] For him the hermeneutical key of scripture lies buried in scripture itself, namely in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Taking his cue from verses such as Gal. 1:7 and Gal. 2:4–5, Marcion rejected the authority of all the apostles except Paul – he suspected them to have falsified the original Gospel. Marcion already knew a collection of four Gospels. Rejecting Matthew, Mark and John, he retained Luke and combined it with the ten letters of Paul (Galatians, Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, 1–2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon) into his New Testament.[53] It is not quite clear why he selected Luke. It is possible that he was acquainted with the tradition that claimed Luke to have been a disciple of Paul. But why did he then omit the name of Luke, presenting a Gospel that was anonymous? Perhaps Marcion recognised certain affinities between the letters of Paul and the Gospel of Luke, such as the institution of the Eucharist.[54] However, in Marcion's view, the text of both the Gospel and the ten Pauline letters must be subjected to textual criticism.

Modern scholarship has often assumed that Marcion's edition of the New Testament simply continued the hermeneutics of the *Antitheses* in a different, philological key, eliminating most references to the Old Testament and the dispensation of the creator God. However, here again, more recent research has challenged these assumptions. In the case of the Marcionite text of the Pauline letters, the careful analysis of Ulrich Schmid has yielded a surprising result: Marcion was apparently a very conservative textual critic; he did not add anything to the text, but only eliminated a limited number of verses: Gal. 3:6–9, 14–18, 29 (references to Abraham), Rom. 2:3–11 (judgement), perhaps Rom. 4:1ff. (Abraham), 9:1ff. 10:5ff., 11:1–32 (promises concerning Israel), Col. 1:15b–16 (Christ as mediator in creation), perhaps the reference to the 'sarx' of Christ in Eph. 2:14 and Col. 1:22.[55]

Manichaean exegesis and hermeneutics

The Persian prophet Mani (226–77 CE) spent his youth as member of a Jewish Christian Baptist sect, the so-called Elchasaites. It is therefore unsurprising

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52 See Harnack, *Marcion*, pp. 35–6.
53 Kinzig, 'The Title of the New Testament'. See, however, H. Y. Gamble, 'The New Testament Canon. Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis', in McDonald and Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate*, pp. 267–94, at pp. 291–2.
54 Schmid, 'Marcions Evangelium', pp. 74–7.   55 Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos*, p. 310.

that the universal missionary religion constructed by Mani, Manichaeism, its treatises, hymns and prayers are suffused with Jewish and Christian elements (this is true particularly for western Manichaeism). Mani saw himself as the last in a series of apostles that included Jesus, Zoroaster and Buddha among his predecessors. Mani claimed to be the prophet for the last age, the recipient of a message that – in contrast to earlier revelations whose geographical scope was limited – was for the first time truly universal.[56] His message both fulfils and supersedes the proclamations of his predecessors. Christianity was obsolete from a Manichaean perspective – Manichaeans saw themselves as the true and only Christians.

Mani's self-styling as a prophet drew on the Bible and apocryphal writings: he claimed that the Spirit, the Paraclete, had descended on him and spoken to him.[57] In conscious imitation of the apostle Paul, he saw himself as the 'apostle of Jesus Christ' or as the 'apostle of Jesus the friend'. Like Jesus, Mani was crucified, and the crucifixions of both Mani and Jesus were a focus of Manichaean theology and spirituality. For Manichaeans, the crucifixion and subsequent ascent to heaven of Mani signalled a spectacular defeat of, and liberation from, the evil powers. This event was celebrated in the liturgy of the so-called Bêma feast.[58]

Mani saw himself not only as the first and last prophet with a truly universal message, but also as the first prophet who had written down his message and in this way assured its authentic and unbroken communication.[59] In loose imitation of the Christian Bible, Manichaeans referred to a canon of the writings of Mani. It is, however, unclear whether the canon had been established by Mani himself.[60] The canon contained the following writings: (i) the Living Gospel, (ii) the Treasure, (iii) the Pragmateia, (iv) the book of Mysteries, (v) the book of Giants, (vi) Letters, (vii) Psalms and Prayers. One could perhaps say that the Gospel, the Letters and the Psalms are somehow modelled on the corresponding parts of the Christian Bible. Since only fragments from Mani's canonical writings have survived, it is difficult to determine the precise contents of each of these writings.

56 See Lieu, *Manichaeism*, pp. 86–7.
57 Kephalaia II, p. 16, lines 19ff; Polotsky, *Manichäische Handschriften*, p. 16.
58 See G. Wurst, *Das Bemafest der ägyptischen Manichäer* (Altenberge: Oros-Verlag, 1995).
59 See J. Tubach, 'Mani, der bibliophile Religionsstifter', in R. E. Emmerick, W. Sundermann and P. Zieme (eds.), *Studia Manichaica* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), pp. 622–38.
60 Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, pp. 153–6; G. Wurst, 'L'état de la recherche sur le canon manichéen', in Aragione, Junod and Norelli (eds.), *Le canon du Nouveau Testament*, pp. 237–67, at p. 244.

Mani and his disciples extensively drew on earlier Jewish and Christian tradition: in their interpretation of these scriptures one can distinguish more or less the same types as in Gnostic exegesis.[61] As in Gnostic exegesis, narrative exegesis of biblical material generated new narratives (myths): in the *Sâbuhragân*, an extra-canonical writing in which Mani explained his system to the Sassanian King Sabuhr, he subjects the biblical story of the creation of man, particularly Gen. 1:25–8 and 2:7f., 15, to a critical narrative exegesis: Implicitly correcting the biblical story, Mani claims that the first man was created by demons, and that, in ruling the world, he and his female associate carried out their will: instead of taking care of the world, the first human couple destroyed it in their fight against the divine light particles imprisoned in it.[62]

The canonical New Testament remained a focus of Manichaean missionary interest, particularly in the West. The Manichaeans subjected it to a vigorous criticism that highlighted its contradictions and inconsistencies. As with Valentinians and Marcionites, the role of Jesus Christ who had abrogated the Old Testament Law was emphasised. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, was seen as belonging to a series of predecessors of Mani (comprising Adam, Seth, Enos, Sem, Enoch) who could claim visions and revelations. But, whereas the apostle Paul had to admit that his knowledge had only been partial (1 Cor. 13:9), the apostle Mani – whose letters emulated Paul's epistles – could claim perfect knowledge. He was therefore the supremely competent interpreter of the New Testament writings, ready to critique the Gospels and Paul's letters, and able to point out contradictions and possible interpolations.[63] The Manichaean Faustus of Mileve observed that the Gospel proper only begins with the preaching of Jesus – as is shown by Mark 1:1. Thus, he argued, Matt. 1:1–4,11 forms no part of the Gospel, but belongs to the genealogy of Christ.[64] Manichaean exegesis also used Luke and perhaps the *Diatessaron*.[65] Augustine – writing against Mani's disciple Addas – informs us that the Manichaeans rejected Acts because it contained the advent of the Paraclete (whom the Manichaeans believed to have manifested itself in Mani).[66]

For all their criticism of the New Testament, Manichaean theology did not hesitate to refer to it and to use it as an authoritative, if not canonical, writing.

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61 Hutter, 'Deutung', p. 134.   62 Hutter, 'Deutung', pp. 136–46.
63 Kephalaia I, p.12, lines 9ff; Polotsky, *Manichäische Handschriften*, 12. See Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, p. 263; Tardieu, 'Principes', pp. 132–3.
64 Augustine, *Faust*. 2.1 (*Contra Faustum. Libri* XXXIII, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 25:1 (Prague: Tempsky, 1891), p. 254).
65 Tardieu, 'Principes', pp. 126–7 and 140–5, contests Mani's use of the *Diatessaron*.
66 Augustine, *Adim*. 17 (ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 25.1, p. 169.27–9).

For example, in the *Sâbuhragân*, Mani quotes and paraphrases Matt. 25:31–46 in order to envisage the final judgement separating the pious from the sinners.[67] The fragments of a Manichaean Latin codex found near Tebessa (Algeria) in 1918 contained a *Liber de duobus gradibus* (Book about the Two Classes).[68] The writing apparently discussed the respective duties and privileges of the two classes of the *electi* (elect) and the *auditores* (hearers) within the Manichaean church. The argument enlists the authority of the New Testament and quotes – among other biblical passages: Phil. 2:16; Tit. 3:8; Eph. 5:8–11; 1 Thess. 5:12f.; Luke 10:38–42.

In debates with the Catholics, the Manichaeans liked to deconstruct the Christian Bible: taking their cue from the *praeceptio contrariorum* of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:21ff.), they insisted on the contradictions between the two Testaments. Thus they continued and developed Marcionite exegesis.

One of the disciples of Mani, Addas, wrote – like Marcion – a book of *antitheses*. Here Addas systematically confronts verses from the 'Law and the Prophets' with verses from the 'Gospel' and the 'Apostle' (the terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament are apparently never used).[69] For example, whereas in Gen. 1:1 it is said that in the beginning God created heaven and earth, in John 1:10 it is emphasised that the world is made through our Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the twenty-eight antitheses or *disputationes*[70] that Augustine has preserved in his *Contra Adimantum* cluster around three themes:[71] the nature of God, the nature of the world and the blessed and righteous way of life. For example, whereas Amos 3:3–6 and Isa. 45:7 seem to reveal a god who is capable of both good and bad, Matt. 7:17 and Matt. 5:9 insist on the distinction between the good and the bad and accordingly reveal a god who is totally good. Or: the Law and the Prophets encourage vengeance, and espouse a morality that affirms marriage and family values and takes earthly prosperity as a sign of divine favour (Gen. 2:18, 21–2, 24, 20:12; Deut. 28:1, 3–4, 6; Ps. 127:2–4; Prov. 6:6–8). The Gospel and the apostle, however, proclaim an ascetic morality that spurns marriage and family, renounces all earthly riches and wants us to love our enemies (Matt. 19:12, 29; Luke 9:59–60; Matt. 6:34;

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67 Mani, *Sâbuhragân*, fragment A–C. Edition and translation: MacKenzie, 'Mani's *Sâbuhragân* I'; Hutter, *Mani's kosmogonische Sabuhragân-Texte*, pp. 118–19; Hutter, 'Mt 25,31–46 in der Deutung Manis'.
68 M. Stein, *Manichaica Latina. Vol. III.1: Codes Thevestinus. Text, Übersetzung, Erläuterungen.* Vol. III.2: *Photographien* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schönigh, 2004).
69 Baker-Brian, 'Reading the Manichaean Biblical Discordance,' pp. 176–7.
70 For this term, see Augustine, *Retract*.I.22.1.
71 Van den Berg, *Biblical Argument in Manichaean Missionary Practice*, p. 153.

Matt. 5:44). Addas seems to argue that the Catholics who wish to combine both bodies of scripture are inconsistent.[72]

A certain climax of Manichaean Bible exegesis in the West is constituted by the thirty-two *capitula* of the African Manichaean Faustus of Mileve which Augustine quotes and refutes in his great treatise *Contra Faustum*. According to Gregor Wurst, the *capitula* of Faustus (whose original sequence has probably been preserved in Augustine's refutation) belong to the literary genre of *erotapokrisis*, of questions and answers. They invariably begin with a question which is discussed and answered in the following. Their length varies – some of them take up only a few lines, others many pages. Several themes are dealt with, for example, the Manichaean rejection of the Old Testament, the human genealogy of Jesus or the Manichaean attitude towards the law and the prophets.[73]

Discussing these themes Faustus follows a Manichaean hermeneutics which deconstructs the Christian Bible by invariably focusing on its inner contradictions.[74] Faustus suggests that the Manichaean attitude to the New Testament is no different from the Catholic attitude to the Old Testament. Building on the precedent of Marcionite and Valentinian hermeneutics, Faustus outlines his own hermeneutical principles.[75]

According to Faustus, the authors of the Gospels are neither Jesus nor his disciples, but anonymous 'half-Jews' (*semiiudaei*) who – long after the 'reception' (*adsumptio*) of Jesus and his apostles into the heavens – wrote down what they had learned from the oral tradition.[76] The resulting work is a mixture of correctly transmitted information and material that is wrong and contradictory. Faustus rejects those sections of the Gospel that deal with the Virgin birth, the circumcision and baptism of Jesus, his stay in the desert, his temptation by the devil.[77] These stories, he contends, reflect either the teaching of the apostles when they were still ignorant[78] or the malicious slander of the enemies of Jesus. Faustus also claims that the authors of the Gospels interpolated the teaching of Jesus with Old Testament material. However, Faustus explicitly acknowledges as authentic the 'mystical' crucifixion of Jesus ('which

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72 Van den Berg, *Biblical Argument in Manichean Missionary Practice*, p. 160.
73 Wurst, 'Bemerkungen'.
74 Augustine, *Faust.* 33.3 (CSEL 25.1 p. 788.10–14), see Tardieu, 'Principes'.
75 For the following see Hoffmann, 'Verfälschung'.
76 Augustine, *Faust.* 32.2, 33.3 (CSEL 25.1, pp. 761.9–762.1, 788.10–23); Hoffmann, 'Verfälschung', pp. 154–61.
77 For the following, see Augustine, *Faust.* 32.7 (CSEL 25.1, p. 766.9–24); Hoffmann, 'Verfälschung', pp. 163–4.
78 For a similar Valentinian argument, see above p. 598.

shows the wounds of the suffering of our soul'), the commandments and parables of Jesus and all those sayings that refer to the Manichaean dualism of two natures. As regards the Pauline letters (including the Pastoral Epistles), Faustus does not question their Pauline authorship. However, the *capitula* find fault with the Pauline text in at least three instances: Rom. 1:3 wrongly refers to the human birth of Jesus Christ, and 1 Tim. 4:1ff. and Tit. 1:15 are to be rejected because they confirm the Catholics in their wrongheaded and inconsistent opposition to Manichaean asceticism.[79] In all three cases, Pauline authorship is denied.

Conclusion

Various Gnostic (particularly Valentinian) theologians, Marcion and his followers and later the Manichaeans play a crucial role in the history of Christian Bible exegesis. Applying the techniques of contemporary philological exegesis to the Jewish and Christian scriptures, they developed a perspective on the text and a hermeneutics that allowed them to ask pertinent questions: are these scriptures talking about God in a way that is *theoprepês*? What kind of God is revealing itself, is speaking in these texts? What is his character, his *ethos*? What are we to make of the contradictions and discrepancies – apparent or real – within scripture, between the Old Testament and the New Testament, between different parts of the New Testament, between different passages within certain New Testament writings? If the solutions offered by these early exegetes strike us sometimes as crude or inadequate, they are still to be taken seriously because they are a precious record of how intelligent readers in Antiquity might respond to the complex strangeness of Christian scripture. And, no doubt, it was precisely some of these early exegetes that prepared the way for the thoroughly scholarly exegesis of someone like Origen of Alexandria.

79 Augustine, *Faust*. 11.1, 30.1–4, 31.1–2 (CSEL 25.1, pp. 313, 747–8, 756–8); Hoffmann, 'Verfälschung', p. 169.

Origen

GILLES DORIVAL

When Maurice Wiles wrote his paper 'Origen as Biblical Scholar', published in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, it was somewhat new to assert that Origen should be considered an exegete. Before the publication of Wiles's piece, written in 1970, scholars had principally thought of Origen as a systematic thinker and concerned themselves with his treatise *On Principles*. But, just before and after the Second World War, thanks to J. Daniélou, H. de Lubac and some others, things began to change. After them, Marguerite Harl in France, Manlio Simonetti in Italy, Herman Josef Vogt in Germany and R. P. C. Hanson in Britain began to promote the idea that Origen was above all a biblical theologian.[1] Nowadays, that idea has become commonplace, and the evidence is clear. For instance, volume III of *Biblia patristica* is devoted to Origen and lists some 60,000 biblical references, that is to say more than the number of quotations listed in volumes I and II, which are concerned with the works of the first three centuries, excluding Origen. In his treatise *On Principles*, the title of which seems to indicate a dogmatic and rather abstract writing, there are about 1,100 biblical quotations. In truth, as text critic, expositor and philosophical theologian, Origen devoted his life to the scriptures.

The Bible in Origen's life

Born in 185, Origen was educated by his father, who taught him the *enkyklios paideia* but also the sacred studies (*hiera paideumata*). Each day the young Origen learned some biblical passages by heart and recited them; even at an early age, he refused to confine himself to the obvious sense, and in the process asked his father some awkward questions. In 201, when his father was martyred, Origen was helped by a rich Christian lady, who was the patron of a Gnostic called Paul with whom Origen probably conversed. Origen

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1 Hanson, *Allegory*.

founded a grammatical school. Eusebius of Caesarea states that there was no more catechetical learning, because all the catechists had been dispersed by the persecution. Some pagans attended Origen's classes. At that time, he was seventeen years old and he became the head of the catechetical school, the so-called *didaskaleion*. During the persecution of the years 206–10, Bishop Demetrios appointed him officially as the school's head. Many disciples came to him, but he closed his grammatical school and decided to consecrate himself exclusively to the sacred sciences. From that point on, he led an ascetic life. All of the above comes from Eusebius' (*Hist. eccl.* 6.2.8–15), although it may be that, in order to exalt Origen, Eusebius brought forward the dates and placed the accession to the head of the school in 201 instead of 206. After the execution of six of his pupils, Origen decided, according to his own *Letter to Alexander*, to train as a philosopher in order to be able to answer his disciples' questions; he became the pupil of 'the master of philosophical knowledge', whom some think was Ammonios Saccas and whose teaching Plotinus had heard. The point is still under discussion. Origen went to Rome in 215. When he returned, he divided the *didaskaleion* into two levels. Heraclas was responsible for elementary training and Origen taught the experienced students. Eusebius adds that Origen taught philosophy, geometry, arithmetic and other preparatory sciences. But, as P. Nautin has shown, it is doubtful that the *didaskaleion* was a mix of catechetical formation and philosophical education.[2] In fact, it was devoted to training and advanced studies in the Bible, although it is clear that Origen, as a teacher, did use philosophical tools in order to throw light on the scriptures.

During this Alexandrian period, Origen asked a Christian Jew for information about the Bible. To this man, whom he called his 'Hebrew master', Origen is indebted for his knowledge of some Jewish and Christian Jewish traditions and interpretations. For instance, the Jew (assuming the 'Hebrew master' was a Jew) told him that the two seraphs in Isa. 6.3 referred to the Son and the Holy Spirit (*On Principles* 1.3.4 and 4.3.14). Thanks to Ambrosius, a rich man Origen had brought back to the true faith and who put copyists and money at his disposal, Origen began to write commentaries on biblical books, such as Ps. 1–25, Lamentations, the first chapters of Genesis, the Song of Solomon and the Gospel of John. He also began work on the *Hexapla*, which in six columns presented respectively the Hebrew text of the Bible, its Greek transcription, Aquila's version, Symmachus' version, the Septuagint and Theodotion's version. Origen's other writings from that time were often commentaries on

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2 Nautin, *Origène*, pp. 49–53.

biblical passages, such as the fragmentarily preserved *Stromateis*, or sought to throw light on theological problems thanks to the scriptures, as in the case of *On Principles*.

Between 229 and 234, Origen travelled outside Alexandria. Although Origen was a layman, Alexander, the bishop of Jeusalem, invited him to preach in churches. At the end of 231, he went to Antioch in order to discuss Christianity with Julia Mammaea, the mother of the emperor. In 232 he was in Caesarea, in Palestine, and there the bishop Theoctistus ordained him as a priest. Demetrios, the bishop of Alexandria, protested. When Demetrios died, in 233, Heraclas was chosen to succeed him.

For reasons which remain disputed, Origen settled in Caesarea in Palestine in 234 and remained there until his death around 251. There, contrary to Eusebius' assertions, he had just two disciples, Theodorus and his brother Athenodorus. He was their teacher for five or eight years. Between 234 and 250, he wrote also to a young correspondent, Gregory, giving him some advice about education. He argued that Christianity and the Bible must have the first place, and that philosophy, which he compared to the Egyptian articles spoiled by the Hebrews according to Exod. 11–12, is only a handmaiden to Christianity. During these Palestinian years, Origen did not seek to recreate the Alexandrian *didaskaleion*.[3] Most of his time was devoted to the Bible. He continued with the *Commentaries on Genesis* and *John* and undertook to comment on other books: the Prophets, including the Twelve Minor Prophets, the Song of Songs, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Matthew, Luke and Paul. He wrote *Scholia* on the Pentateuch, that is, remarks on selected verses. In 239–42, he became the official preacher in Caesarea; each morning, he expounded the Old Testament and, on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, the New Testament. He also pronounced some homilies in Jerusalem. During the same period he wrote *Contra Celsum*, a refutation of the pagan Celsus' attack on Christianity, the *Alêthês Logos*.

In Caesarea, Origen met some rabbis who shared their understanding of the Bible. For instance, in the *Letter to Africanus* 10–12, Origen states that a Jew, 'son of a wise man', thought that Susanna was authentic; according to him, the names of the two elders were Sedekhias and Akhiab, about whom Jeremiah 36:22–3 (29:22–3 MT) speaks. Another Jew explained to him that each elder seduced Jewish women by telling them that God granted him to be the father of the Messiah. Origen also met the patriarch Ioullos and 'one of those

3 G. Dorival, 'Origène et ses disciples', in G. Filoramo (ed.), *Maestro e discepolo. Temi e problemi della direzione spirituale tra VI secolo a.C. et VII secolo d.C.* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2002), pp. 159–79.

who are called wise men among the Jews', who gave him information about Moses' Psalms (*Commentary on Psalms*, prologue). Regarding Ezek. 9:3–4, a Jew told him that the letter *taw* symbolises perfection, because it is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet; another Jew told him that the letter *taw* symbolises the Law and the Life according to the Law, because it is the first letter of the word Torah (*Commentary on Ezekiel* or *Homilies on Ezekiel*). Origen also met Christian Jews: one of them explained to him that the letter *taw* looked like the cross.

Sometimes, Origen travelled. Somewhere in Arabia, in the presence of the bishops, he questioned Heracleidus on his faith and elucidated the true meaning of Lev. 17:11 ('the soul of all flesh is its blood'). In Nicopolis, near Actium, he discovered a new anonymous version of the Bible, the *quinta*. Thanks to it and to the *sexta*, which was also anonymous and had been discovered near Jericho during the reign of Caracalla, he could complete the *Hexapla*, at least for some books. In Nicomedia, he finished his *Commentary on John*. There, he received a letter from the Christian historian Julius Africanus arguing against the authenticity of the history of Susanna to which he replied in his *Letter to Africanus*.

Origen does not appear to have known either the Hebrew language or Hebrew characters. In *Hom. Num.* 14.1–3, commenting on Balaam and his ass, he states that, 'as it is said', there are several Hebrew names for God: one is the Tetragrammaton, which indicates the true God who has created the world; the other names can refer to the true God or to supposed gods. 'Those who can read the Hebrew characters assert that, in this passage, the word "God" is not written by means of the Tetragrammaton'. In others words, Origen is so unaware of Hebrew that he was not able to read even the Tetragrammaton!

The *Hexapla*

Very early in his life, Origen became interested in the text of the Old Testament. The making of the *Hexapla* occupied him for about thirty years. He probably began this work when he came back from Rome, towards 215–17. By the time he wrote the *Commentary on Psalms 1–25* in Alexandria before 230, he had four Greek translations at his disposal: Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion and the Septuagint (LXX). As noted, he discovered the *quinta* when he was in Nicopolis in 245 and probably added the *sexta* after that date. The title of the *Hexapla* is known from Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.16.1–4) and Epiphanius (*Panarion* 64.3.5). It indicates a six-column synopsis dedicated to the Old Testament. From left to right the parallel columns presented: the Hebrew text written

in Hebrew characters, the Greek transcription, Aquila's Greek translation, made around 130, Symmachus' Greek translation (end of the second century), the Greek Bible of the Septuagint (LXX) and Theodotion's Greek version, which was translated during the years 30–50, and not at the end of the second century. For the Psalms, there were two supplementary columns, one giving the *quinta* and the other the *sexta*. It seems that the *quinta* also gave a version of the Twelve, Minor Prophets, Job and the Song of Songs, perhaps 1 and 2 Kingdoms (MT 1 and 2 Samuel). This enormous work was kept in the library of Caesarea, where it was read by Jerome, among others. It seems that it had disappeared at the time of the Arab conquest, around 638–40.[4]

Only four fragments of the *Hexapla* remain: in Codex Ambrosianus o 39 sup., there are 149 verses pertaining to Pss. 17 (18 MT)–88 (89 MT); in a manuscript of the Cairo Genizah, there are thirteen verses of Ps. 22 (23 MT); in Codex Ambrosianus B 106 sup., there are some verses of the Psalms; and in Codex Vaticanus Barberinianus gr. 549, some verses of Hosea. These manuscripts are later than the end of the ninth century, except the Genizah one, which is prior to 500. For much of our knowledge of the *Hexapla*, we are dependent upon quotations of the translations. These appear in the margins of several Greek manuscripts of the LXX, of the catenae (for instance, Codex Vaticanus Ottobonianus gr. 398, Ps. 24–32) and of the Syriac manuscripts of the Syro-Hexaplaric version. On the other hand, the Greek commentators of the LXX, such as Origen, Eusebius, John Chrysostom and Theodoret, quote Hexaplaric fragments.

The main questions about the *Hexapla* are the following:

1. Did the first column exist? Its existence has been denied because it does not appear in the four extant fragments. But these documents are much later than the *Hexapla*. Moreover, why would Christian copyists have kept Hebrew characters that they were not able to read? On the contrary, the manuscripts and the *Letter to Africanus* give some clues that the first column existed. And it seems clear that Jerome read that column.[5]
2. Why did the second column give a Greek transcription of the Hebrew text? Several explanations have been suggested: it allowed the Christians to learn Hebrew; it facilitated the reading of the Hebrew text, as the first column was not vocalised; or it was useful to Greek-speaking Jews. Origen kept it because he discovered it in an old Jewish synopsis, made for the Alexandrian Jews. Thanks to it, the Alexandrian Jews, who were unaware

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4 Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 86–132.   5 Jay, *L'exégèse de saint Jérôme*, pp. 411–17.

of Hebrew, could read the Bible in that language. Be that as it may, the second column is the only witness to the pronunciation of the Hebrew language in ancient times.

3. Did the fifth column give the common LXX or Origen's own edited version of the Greek text? As critical signs (obeli, indicating additions to the LXX, and asterisk, indicating omissions) are missing in the extant Hexaplaric fragments, it has been argued that the fifth column gave the common and unrevised LXX. But that is not true, since the word order is the Hebrew one and the readings agree with the Hebraising readings which are asterisked in some manuscripts. Moreover, the text which is in the margin of Codex Athos, Pantocrator 24, is the fifth column text and it gives obeli in accordance with the Hebrew as well as the critical signs. Therefore, one must not distinguish between the fifth column and the Origenian recension: they are the same and the Origenian recension can be described as the Hexaplaric one.[6]

4. Did the sixth column give only Theodotion's translation? It perhaps offered several translations which have in common the fact of being products of the *kaige* group, that is a group of several anonymous translators who worked during the first half of the first century, probably in Palestine, and used to translate the Hebrew *gam* (also) by the Greek *kaige*. Theodotion belongs to this group.

5. Before the *Hexapla*, was there a Jewish synopsis giving the Hebrew text, its Greek transcription, Aquila and Symmachus? Pierre Nautin presents two arguments in favour of this view: first, it is unthinkable that Origen could have relegated the LXX, which was the Bible of the church, to the fifth position, after two Jewish translations; second, the transcription was useful only for Jews.[7] Therefore, Origen's work would have consisted in suppressing the Hebrew column and adding the LXX, Theodotion, the *quinta* and the *sexta*. But this Jewish synopsis is attested in no texts and in no testimonies.

6. If the Jewish synopsis did not exist, how can one explain the order of the translations? It has been argued that Aquila and Symmachus are given just after the Hebrew text because they are translations of it, and Theodotion appears after the LXX because, as Origen says, it is a revision of that text. But one could also suggest that Aquila is in the third column because it is

6 O. Munnich, 'Les Hexaples d'Origène à la lumière de la tradition manuscrite de la Bible grecque', in Dorival and Le Boulluec (eds.), *Origène et la Bible*, pp. 167–85.
7 Nautin, *Origène*, pp. 303–61.

a literal translation of the Hebrew text, Symmachus comes after it because it improves Aquila's Greek, and Theodotion follows the LXX because the fifth column makes use of it in order to indicate the lack of the Hebrew text.[8]

7. What is the meaning of τέτραπλα, τέτρασσα and ἑξαπᾶ? According to P. Nautin, the *Tetrapla* was the Alexandrian synopsis, with Aquila, Symmachus, the LXX and Theodotion; the *Hexapla* was the Caesarean work, with six translations. A more widespread view is that the *Tetrapla* is a simplifying edition of the *Hexapla*, without the Hebrew columns. Moreover, the *Tetrassa* could be the Origenian recension either in four volumes or in four written columns. Be that as it may, the documentation probably does not allow to distinguish between the *Tetrapla* and the *Tetrassa*.

8. Why did Origen write the *Hexapla*? He himself gives two explanations: in the *Letter to Africanus* 9, he asserts its usefulness in polemical discussion with Jews who claim the priority of the Hebrew Bible over the LXX. In the *Comm. Matt.* 15.14, Origen puts forward a philological motive: he underlines the bad textual state of the LXX manuscripts in particular as these relate to variants between different manuscripts. He accepts the reading which fits the translations. In modern times, other explanations have been presented. For instance, Origen could have created the *Hexapla* to maximise his exegetical possibilities. In this view the more versions he had, the richer the interpretation he could supply.

9. Were there several editions of the *Hexapla*? It seems possible that Origen made use of a first edition in Alexandria and established a second one in Caesarea, which added the *quinta* and the *sexta*. Have these editions been diffused? The documentation speaks about manuscripts of the *Hexapla* or of the *Tetrapla*. Are they copies of the manuscript which was in the library of Caesarea? It seems that they were copies of the fifth column with obeli and asterisks. Manuscripts with Hexaplaric material in their margins also existed. For instance, Theodoret, who quotes many of Aquila's, Symmachus' and Theodotion's texts, did not see the *Hexapla*, but a manuscript of that kind.

The text and the corpus of the Bible

What is Origen's attitude when manuscripts offer variants of the same text? With regard to the Old Testament, it has been stated that Origen was in

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8 R. Clements, 'Origen's Hexapla and Christian–Jewish Encounter in the Second and Third Centuries', in Donaldson (ed.), *Religious Rivalries*, pp. 303–29.

favour of readings that fit the other translations. Nevertheless, he indicates the additions to the LXX with obeli and the omissions with asterisks, implying that everyone is free to choose the text they want (*Comm. Matt.* 15.14). In *Comm. Joh.* 6:41, Origen argues that those Greek versions, which are more recent than the LXX, have not yet deteriorated. By contrast, Origen asserts that he has thought it impossible to approach the New Testament in the same way (*Comm. Matt.* 15.14). So what must one do when there are variants in the Gospels? Origen comments on the episode of the rich young man, and notes that the words 'and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Matt. 19:19) are lacking in Mark 10:19 and Luke 18:20. According to Mark and Luke, the rich young man practises the commandments of the Law, except the commandment of love, which demands the renunciation of riches. According to Matthew, however, the rich young man practises all the commandments, but Jesus speaks to him as if he was not practising the commandment of love. So there is a contradiction in Matthew, which can be solved in three ways: the words in Matthew are an interpolation added by an unintelligent copyist from the non-canonical Gospel of the Hebrews, where they are in the right place, whereas, in Matthew, they are in the wrong place; or the rich young man is not the same in Matthew as the one in Mark and Luke, as might be inferred from the Gospel of the Hebrews, which speaks about 'another one among the rich men'; or Jesus wanted the rich young man to become aware that he was not actually practising the commandment of love. Origen does not choose between these three solutions, but, as elsewhere, leaves the matter open.[9]

Let us return to the Old Testament. As a rule, Origen is supposed to champion the LXX against the Hebrew Bible. In fact, that is only partially true. In his response to Origen, Julius Africanus championed the *hebraica veritas* almost two centuries before Jerome, challenging the validity of the supplementary books of the LXX as well as that of the supplementary passages in the books common to Jews and Christians. In Origen's opinion, the Greek Bible is the Old Testament of the churches, to which it has been given by 'Providence' (*Letter to Africanus* 8). One must not substitute the Hebrew Bible for the LXX, because, according to the scriptures, 'thou shalt not remove the eternal landmarks, which thy predecessors placed' (Prov. 22:28, contaminated by Prov. 23:10 and Deut. 19:14). But, in the prologue to the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, the same verse is employed against the ecclesiastical acceptance of 'the

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9 G. Dorival, 'Un seul ou deux jeunes hommes riches?', in B. Lourié, A. Orlov and M. Petit (eds.), *L'église des deux alliances* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009), pp. 103–33.

apocryphal books': Apocryphon of Zachariah, *Joseph and Aseneth*, *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, *Prayer of Joseph* and perhaps some other books. Here, Origen is heir to the Jews. The apocryphal books are not impious, dangerous or heretical: they merit attention, but they are not authoritative, either for theology or for liturgy, and they can be read only by the wise. In fact, Origen is fighting against two enemies: those who want to align the LXX with the Hebrew Bible, and those who want to broaden the corpus that comes from ecclesiastical tradition. In both cases, he is the champion of the LXX. In his view, the fact that the supplementary passages are missing is the result of Jewish censorship. For instance, according to *Letter to Africanus* 9–11, Susanna's history was known in the Hebrew tradition, but was deleted because the Jews suppressed all the passages of the Old Testament that condemned the elders, the chiefs and the judges. As it happens, Susanna is exposed to the desire of two elders and she is sentenced to death unjustly. In Origen's opinion, other canonical additions to Daniel are the Song of the Three Children and the story of Bel and the Dragon. Supplements to Esther are the prayer of Mardochaeus, the prayer of Esther, the letter of Aman and the letter of Mardochaeus. The Greek ending of the book of Job also constitutes an addition.

With regard to the supplementary books, Origen explains that they are neither apocryphal books nor canonical (ἐνδιάθηκοι) ones. The canonical books are common to Jews and Christians. The supplementary ones are 1–2 Maccabees, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus and Tobit. According to *Hom. Num.* 27.1, Esther is a supplementary book, even if, nowadays, it belongs to the Hebrew canon. How does Origen refer to the apocryphal books? In the *Commentary on Psalm 1* quoted by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25.1–2), Origen describes the canon of the Hebrews. These are not the Jews, as is generally stated, but a group of Christian Jews, to whom Origen's Hebrew master belonged. Origen explains that, 'outside [ἔξω]' the testamentary books are the 'Maccabean' ones, calling to mind the *hitsonim* books, 'the outside books', which, in rabbinic texts (for instance, b. Sanhedrin 100b), refers to the heretical books as well as to Ecclesiasticus. Therefore one can suppose that, in Origen's time, there was such a phrase as αἱ ἔξω βίβλοι or αἱ ἔξωθεν βίβλοι, 'the outside books'. But there was perhaps another word. In *Hom. Num.* 27.1, Origen states that, as with Judith and Tobit, Esther is a book whose reading is recommended to catechumens. This calls to mind a saying of Origen's contemporary Mar Samuel, according to whom Esther was said not to be written, but to be read (b. Megillah 7a). In other words, he made a distinction between books which were written for reading and study, and books which were written for reading only. During the fourth or fifth century, in his

Synopsis 2, Pseudo-Athanasius explains that the so-called deuterocanonical books are 'the only read books [τὰ ἀναγινωσκόμενα μόνον]'. Therefore, in Origen's time or a little before, maybe there was such an expression as τὰ ἀναγινωσκόμενα μόνον βιβλία or αἱ ἀναγινωσκόμεναι μόνον βίβλοι.

Nevertheless, some facts prove that Origen did not always prioritise the LXX. His attitude towards the Hebrew Bible is more balanced than generally stated. First, even if he refuses to substitute Hebrew texts for Greek ones, he agrees that the Hebrew text is to be favoured when these are discussions with Jews. According to *Letter to Africanus* 9, Christians must not quote the verses which Jews do not have in their Bible. Furthermore, Christians must use the Hebrew verses, even if they are not in the Christian Bible. Second, the Hebrew text is valuable in Origen's opinion outside the context of disputation with Jews, and sometimes even more valuable than the Greek one. For instance, in *Hom. Jer.* 14:3, he reports that there are two different texts of Jeremiah 15:10: 'the most numerous manuscripts have "I have not been useful [ὠφήλησα] and nobody has been useful to me [ὠφήλησε]"'. But 'a few manuscripts have: "I have not been in debt [ὠφείλησα] and nobody has been indebted to me [ὠφείλησε]"'. Origen explains that the latter manuscripts are absolutely accurate and identical to Hebrew manuscripts. He chooses this reading and explains that the former one is 'a fault of copying [γραφικὸν ἁμάρτημα]'. Here, Origen seems to champion the *hebraica veritas*. But this conclusion must be qualified. When Origen comments on a verse, he explains the false reading first, then the correct one. Even if the Greek text is inaccurate, the LXX has to be commented on because it is the traditional Bible of the churches. Third, Origen sometimes prefers the other Greek translations to the LXX. For instance, when he explains Ezek. 9:3–4, he does not comment on the LXX ('and set a mark on the foreheads'), but on Aquila's and Symmachus' text ('Mark of the taw on the foreheads'). On occasion, Origen understands the text of the Bible as the rabbis did. For instance, in the prologue to the *Commentary on Psalms 1–150*, he explains that the patriarch Ioullos and 'one of those who are called wise among the Jews' told him that the psalms without an author's name belonged to the last mentioned author. For instance, Pss. 90 (91 MT)–99 (100 MT) have no titles. But, as Ps. 89 (90 MT) is titled 'Prayer of Moses the man of God', their author is Moses. It seems that Origen agrees with this explanation.

In relation to the New Testament, one should note that Origen asserts the canonicity of Revelation (*On Principles* 1.2.10 and 4.2.3). In his time, and well after his death, this was a very controversial point. For instance, Gregory of Nazianzus did not accept Revelation. It is quite possible that the opinion of

Origen, who influenced so many Greek and Latin fathers, may have been influential in the decision to include this text in the Christian canon.

Origen's attitude towards the text of the Bible is unusual. In his opinion, attribution of originality should not be given to either the Greek or the Hebrew. In the *Letter to Africanus* 13, he asserts that the original text of Isaiah had a passage about the death of the prophet by sawing. Heb. 11:37 refers to that passage. But it is lacking in the LXX as well as in the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, in Origen's view, it is authentic. On the other hand, at least when he was in Alexandria, Origen thought that the canonical books were not the only inspired ones. In his treatise *On Principles*, he states that the *Revelation of Baruch* and the *Ascension of Moses* and *Enoch* are on a level with scripture, as are the Epistle of Barnabas, 1 Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas and the Acts of Paul.

Origen's hermeneutics: inspiration and coherence

According to 2 Tim. 3:16, a verse often quoted by Origen, 'all scripture is inspired by God and useful'. The beginning of the hermeneutical treatise in *On Principles* demonstrates that the scriptures are divine, that is to say, they are inspired by the Spirit of God. Only the divine character of Moses' and Jesus' words can explain the success of Christianity. The words of the Old and New Testaments have a divine power (δύναμις) and the ability to convert crowds (*On Principles* 4.1.1–7).

How is this inspired Bible to be interpreted? Origen shares the patristic opinion that the Bible explains the Bible. This idea is pagan in origin. In the third century BC, the great Alexandrian grammarian Aristarchus of Samothrace said : 'One must throw light on Homer by means of Homer.' This rule has a parallel in the rabbinic tradition, which asserts that the Torah explains the Torah. This basic exegetical principle is supposed to go back as far as Noah. In Philo's and Josephus' writings, the scriptures explain the scriptures. The presence of this presupposition is everywhere present for Origen. For instance, the 'beginning' of Gen. 1:1 is referred to in Prov. 8:22: 'The Lord made me (that is wisdom) the beginning of his ways for his works'; Ps. 32:6: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were established'; and John 1:1: 'In the beginning was the word.' So Gen. 1:1 means: in the beginning, that is in the wisdom, which is God's word, which is Jesus Christ (*On Principles* 1.2.1–3, 1.3.3, 7). The pagan tradition also considered that the writings of Homer or Plato were coherent, that the elements which make up these writings constitute a logical continuity and, as a whole, form a harmonious and significant totality. That

is the principle of *akolouthia*, which is also an interpretative technique: the exegete has to find out and to make explicit the logical continuity of the text that he explains on the one hand; and, on the other, he has to clarify the overall coherence. In his commentaries, Origen puts this principle into practice in the following way. First, he gives the global interpretation of the biblical passage, then he explains the passage unit by unit, word by word. *Comm. Matt.* 17.15 and 17.17 are good examples. That kind of presentation seems odd nowadays. We are used to beginning with a detailed explanation and ending with a more general one. But all the ancient commentaries, Christian as well as pagan, are organised as Origen organises them.

To bring out this *akolouthia*, Origen uses techniques which he explains in the prologue of the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. First, the exegete has to elucidate the aim (σκοπός) of the text. For instance, the aim of the Song of Songs is to guide the human soul or the 'inner man' (Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 7:22) to the beauty of the Logos and to true love, which is spiritual and not carnal (2.1–48). Second, the exegete must take into account the order of the biblical books, because it is significant. Origen reminds his reader that there are three Solomonic books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song. That biblical order signifies philosophical and spiritual progress: first, Proverbs, an ethical book, which purifies the soul and teaches the virtuous life; then Ecclesiastes, which belongs to physics, and allows the reader to discern the reasons and the nature of things, to discover the vanity of the world of the senses and to hurry to the eternal. Finally, the Song belongs to epoptics (*epoptice* in Rufinus' Latin version, which is ἐποπτική in Greek, 'belonging to vision'): thanks to a pure and spiritual love, one can contemplate the divinity by means of one's spirit alone (3.1–23). A third rule consists in thinking about the title, because the title of a writing is coherent with the whole writing: the latter can be seen as the development of the former. First, Origen comments on 'the Song of Songs'. He enumerates the other biblical songs and explains that they were sung to a young bride while the Song of Solomon is sung to a perfect bride, who is able to receive the perfect words. Then, Origen comments on 'which is Solomon's'. This contrasts with the beginning of Proverbs ('Proverbs of Solomon son of David, who reigned in Israel') and Ecclesiastes ('The words of the Ecclesiastes son of David, king of Israel in Jerusalem'). The title of Proverbs, which mentions Israel, refers to moral training. Ecclesiastes, which mentions Jerusalem, belongs to heavenly reality. But the Song, which refers only to Solomon, whose name means 'pacific', reaches the perfect place, where all is pacified (4:1–35).

Origen announces a fourth matter relating to the dramatic composition of the Song (1.8), but this point is not present in the prologue, at least in Rufinus' version (written perhaps around 410). Nonetheless, some indications are given at the beginning of the prologue (1.1–3), and it is easy to understand what is at stake. Biblical texts offer apparent discontinuities. Some of these result from a change in the characters speaking and listening. The exegete has to identify who is speaking and to whom each speaker is speaking: the bride, the beloved, the maidens, the companions of the beloved. The obscurities of the Prophets are due to this diversity of speakers (*Philocalia* 7.1 = short *Commentary on the Song*), and so biblical texts have to be considered as plays. For instance, the prophet David plays the part of the ancient people (Israel) or of young people (*Philocalia* 7.2 = *Homily 4 on Acts*). Elsewhere, he plays the part of the Lord, of the man who converts, of the nations, of the Christians and so on (*Fragments on Psalm 118*). To express this, Origen uses a technical verb, *prosopein*, which means 'to play the part of a character, to personify'. Some other obscurities are due to quick changes of subject matter (*Philocalia* 7.2). The exegete must identify not only those who are speaking and listening, but also the matters they are dealing with.

Origen's hermeneutics: the senses of the Bible

Nevertheless, according to Origen and other fathers, the Bible cannot be considered simply as a coherent whole. In fact, there are two different levels of coherence, which correspond to the double aim of God (σκοπός) and to the double meaning of the scriptures. The main purpose of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the mysteries of salvation (*On Principles* 4.2.2). At the same time, the Spirit knows that most people are not able to participate in such a quest and so has concealed theological teaching in the guise of an easier text, consisting of histories (ἱστορίαι) and legislation (νομοθεσία), which at least give a moral teaching (*On Principles* 4.1.14–15). Therefore, scripture consists of a double discourse: the first one, which is written and apparent, is historical and legal; the second one, which is hidden and deep, is the true and spiritual one. The former is the body through which one can guess the latter, which is the soul or the spirit. Origen uses biblical metaphors in order to be understood, for instance, the front and the back, the outside and the inside, the opened and the closed (Rev. 5:1–2). Origen often comes back to that pedagogic explanation of the secret of the Bible: the parables, the dark words and the riddles of Prov. 1:6 stimulate the reader to exercise his or her intelligence (*Philocalia* 2.2, 18.16).

But Origen gives another explanation in the *Commentary on Romans* (*Philocalia* 9.3): the Holy Spirit wanted to prevent unworthy persons from discovering the hidden things for themselves. In other words, the historical and legal discourses of the Bible were written in order to hide the deep meaning as well as to reveal it.

Between these two biblical meanings, there is a connection. The Holy Spirit has arranged the different elements so that the historical and legal garment reveals the hidden mysteries. The visible parts of the Law and the Prophets have a kinship (συγγένεια) with the invisible parts of these books (*Philocalia* 1.30 = *Homily 5 on Leviticus*). Like Paul, Origen asserts that the biblical histories and laws are the types (τύποι) or the foreshadowings (σκιαί) of spiritual truths. Under the covering (ἀκολουθία) of superficial text, there is the sequence or chain of spiritual things (εἰρμὸς τῶν πνευματικῶν) (*On Principles* 4.2.9).

Is the connection between these two levels a linear one, so that the spiritual one covers perfectly the corporeal one? In fact, in Origen's opinion, the superficial text offers inconsistencies which he calls 'impossible' points (ἀδύνατα). For instance, it is impossible that there were evenings and mornings during the first three days, since the sun and the moon were not created yet. It is impossible also that the devil has shown to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world from a high mountain (Matt. 4:8), since the kingdoms are not located all at the bottom of the same mountain. On the other hand, some commandments are absurd in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. It is absurd to forbid the eating of the goat-stag (Deut. 14:5), since that animal does not exist. It is absurd also to have neither two tunics nor sandals (Matt. 10:10), especially in cold countries (*On Principles* 4.3.1–3). By introducing these *adunata*, the Holy Spirit wants us to seek the deep truths as well as a meaning worthy of God. This can be realised as follows: some words of these impossible and absurd texts are also present in passages where there is no inconsistency. Thanks to these common words, one can discover the common and global meaning, which 'is scattered' (διασπείρεσθαι) everywhere in scripture (*On Principles* 4.3.5). Therefore, the exegete has to look for the meaning of each text by using all the other parallel texts, and the meaning of each word by using all the similar words (*Fragment on 1 Corinthians 2.13*). As Paul states, the exegete has to 'compare spiritual things with spiritual things' (1 Cor. 2:13), for, as has already been claimed, the Bible explains the Bible. One can notice that this search for parallel texts acts as a kind of control over arbitrary and false interpretations.

Strictly speaking, in Origen's opinion, there is only one sense of the Bible, namely, the divine will which is hidden in the Bible, and which Origen calls the total meaning. But, from a human point of view, this single sense is

plural. As a rule, Origen is supposed to be in favour of three senses, and this is true to some extent. Nonetheless, in his opinion, the scriptures above all offer a double level, the superficial and literal one, the hidden and deep one. Therefore, there are two basic kinds of interpretation: the first one is somatic, that is corporeal or literal; the second, pneumatic or spiritual. The words that Origen uses for this deep level are type (τύπος), symbol (σύμβολον), image (εἰκών) and riddle (αἴνιγμα). They are synonymous and mean any biblical reality that has a hidden sense. This spiritual meaning is called 'high sense' (ἀναγωγή) or 'intellectual sense' (νόησις). And the techniques which allow the interpreter to throw light on that hidden sense are 'allegory' (ἀλληγορία) and 'tropology' (τροπολογία).

So why three biblical senses? Besides the somatic and literal meaning, the hidden sense can be applied either to the soul (ψυχή) or to the spirit (πνεῦμα). It is divided into a psychic, or moral, sense, and a pneumatic, or spiritual, sense. In the hermeneutical section of *On Principles* (4.2.4–5), this threefold approach is simply connected with Prov. 22:20–1: 'And do thou thrice note them for thyself.' Everyone has to note three times in his soul the meaning of the scriptures. This threefold sense is connected with the three human parts, body, soul and spirit, according to Wisd. 15:11 and 1 Thess. 5:2, as well as with the three kinds of Christians: beginners, those who are making progress and the perfect ones. Origen also quotes the Shepherd of Hermas (*Vis.* 2.4.3): Grapte, who is ordered to warn the orphans and the widows, represents the literal meaning; Clement, who has to inform all the outside cities, denotes the moral sense, since the outside cities are the souls who are outside the carnal desires; and finally the elders of Christ's churches, to whom Hermas is ordered to announce what he has learned from the Holy Spirit, are the perfect ones.

But each biblical text does not present these three senses, as is clear from the reference in John 2:6 to 'two or three measures'. It can be the case that the literal meaning does not exist. The two measures are the senses applied to the soul and to the spirit. The three measures add the corporeal sense to those two meanings. The last of these does not require much exposition and is suited to the crowd of the believers: Origen asserts that the historically true passages of the Old Testament outnumber those which are not; and, as a rule, the commandments of both Testaments have to be observed literally (*On Principles* 4.3.4). As for the moral meaning, the apostle Paul gives many examples of it, as in 1 Cor. 9:9–10. Finally, the spiritual sense is concerned with Christ's mysteries, which are veiled in the Old Testament as well as the 'future good things', such as God's kingdom or the heavenly Jerusalem. At

his coming, Jesus reveals the good things which were announced in shadow before his appearance (Heb. 10:1); from then on, people can understand the prophetical meaning of the Old Testament. On the other hand, the spiritual sense possesses an esoteric meaning, which is about the proto-history of mankind, the creation, the fall and the dispersal of the souls on the earth, as well as about the reasons why the world and things are the way they are. The prophecies about Israel, Jerusalem, the cities of Judaea and the Jewish wars contain some divine mysteries, as well as prophecies about Egypt, Babylon and so on. These mysteries deal with the proto-history of the souls and their various residences (*On Principles* 4.3.6–12). In other words, the spiritual sense deals with the secret past of mankind and its hidden future.

There are other places in Origen's work where we read about the three biblical senses. For instance, according to *Hom. Num.* 9.7, the bark of the walnut is the corporeal meaning which is suited to the Jews; the shell corresponds to moral truth which protects men as long as they have a body; the inside represents the divine mysteries, which are revealed to the saints in this world, to all in the beyond. According to a *Homily on Leviticus* quoted in *Philocalia* 1.21, the three senses correspond to historical progress: the corporeal meaning is the Jewish understanding, before there were Christians; the moral meaning is the understanding of the believers; and, finally, the spiritual meaning is the understanding of the perfect ones. But this division is not rigid since, in Origen's opinion, the Jews, the believers and the perfect ones are symbolic of spiritual states: the Christians can have a Judaic understanding of the scriptures as well as a perfect one.

This threefold division goes further. According to *Comm. Matt.* 17.7, it is closely related to the three parts of philosophy, which, here, are not the same as in the *Commentary on the Song*. Origen explains the parable of the vineyard and the tenants: the vineyard planted by the house owner is the highest teaching about the world and God, in other words physics; the grape is the virtuous life in harmony with that teaching, that is to say, ethics; and the fence is the letter of scripture, which prevents the people outside from seeing the grape, in other words logic. A very close comparison is given by Philo, who spoke about the trees, which represent physics, the fruit, which are ethics, and the fence, which is logic (*Agr.* 14–16). In this context Origen refers to some elders – the Stoics – who said that philosophy was an orchard full of fruits and surrounded with walls (Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 7). So, for Origen, the Bible is equal to philosophy, and even the equivalent of the Greek philosophical teaching and a substitute for it. From this viewpoint, philosophy merely assists biblical theology; it is in the service of it.

According to the hermeneutical section of *On Principles*, the order of the meanings seems to be first the corporeal sense, then the moral one, and finally the spiritual one. But Henri de Lubac has compared the hermeneutical treatise with Origen's commentaries and homilies. Does Origen's practice agree with his theory? De Lubac argues that Origen, first, distinguishes merely the literal sense and the spiritual one. Second, he partially reverses the order of the meanings, ending with the moral one. He concludes that there are two moral senses: 'a moral sense which, coming straight after the letter of Scriptures, corresponds to the soul and precedes the spiritual sense; on the other hand, the moral sense which extends and presupposes the allegorical or mystic sense and is spiritual strictly speaking'.[10] In the first case Origen, like Philo, obtains moral lessons that are not specifically Christian. In the other case, the Origenian exegesis is completely Christian, since it deals with the salvation of the soul. De Lubac's idea is interesting, but is it true? *Homily 2 on Genesis* is about Noah's ark. First (sections 1–2), Origen explains that Marcion and Apelles are wrong when they assert that the passage offers some impossible and irrational details. In Apelles' opinion, the ark was too small to receive so many animals. For him, 'it is a fictional story', the author of which cannot be God. On the contrary, Origen tells us that the biblical numbers have to be squared: the ark was large enough and the story is a historical one. Then (sections 3–5) Origen deals with the spiritual sense: the flood announces the end of the world; the ark is the church; Noah is Christ; the three stories of the ark are heaven, earth and hell; the length of the ark, its breadth and its height are Christ's mysteries; the square timber represents those who teach in the churches; the pitch used within and without is the holiness of the body and the purity of the heart; the cattle of all kinds announces the unity in Jesus' kingdom. At last (section 6), Origen develops the moral sense: the length, the breadth and the height of the ark are faith, charity and hope; the square timber means the prophetic and apostolic books; the pitch is science as well as the works; the clean cattle represent memory, science, intelligence and other virtues; the unclean cattle, concupiscence and anger. Saying that, Origen notes 'these points do not seem to have been examined from a moral point of view anymore, but from a natural one [*haec iam non morali sed naturali ratione discussa videantur*]'. Maybe these words are only about the clean and the unclean cattle. But they prove that Origen is aware that the moral meaning need not be typically Christian but rather philosophical and pagan. And yet, the whole of *Homily 2 on Genesis* analyses the moral sense after the spiritual

10 De Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, pp. 200–7.

one. Conversely, in the hermeneutical treatise of *On Principles*, the examples of moral meaning are borrowed from Paul and their Christian characteristic is difficult to deny. And yet Origen gives them before the examples of spiritual sense. De Lubac's idea needs to be further discussed.

Origen's hermeneutics: the role of the controversies

The names of Marcion and Apelles have just been mentioned. Controversies played an important part in Origen's hermeneutical reflections.[11] In his opinion, the opponents of good interpretation are the Jews, the pagans, the heretics and those whom he calls the simple ones (ἁπλούστεροι). The controversy with the Jews is as old as Christianity: the fathers add the New Testament to the Old and assert that the Jewish histories, laws, prophecies, institutions and rites announce Jesus and the Christian realities: the former are the types (τύποι) of the latter. Origen has kept this method. But the same controversy has played another role: it has legitimated the distinction between the literal sense and the deep sense, since it has shown that Christians might go further than the literal meaning. Jews interpret these texts literally and understand them to speak about captives' release, the construction of God's city, military victory, reconciliation between men and wild animals. But, as Origen states, nothing of that kind has happened in the case of Jesus. Therefore, one must read prophecies spiritually. To keep the letter is to keep the Jewish biblical reading. Christian biblical sense implies the typological and allegorical method. Origen makes much use of this method because he connects the figures of the Old and New Testaments with Christian spiritual life and also because, in his opinion, events and institutions of the Old Testament are understood as signs, the reality of which will be accomplished in the future world.

The polemic against the pagans allowed Origen to determine how the Bible and philosophy are connected. As has been stated, the Bible is the substitute for philosophy. This means that there is nothing significant to be discovered outside the Bible. Philosophy should not be accorded too much importance, for it is nothing but a combination of techniques and concepts in the service of Christian thought. Second, the debate with Celsus gave Origen the opportunity to discuss the validity of the allegorical method. The basic argument of Celsus seems to have been the following: allegory is valid only in

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11 G. Dorival, 'Sens de l'Écriture chez les pères grecs', *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 12:67 (1992), cols. 426–42.

the case of myths, which are written with verses as a rule. As the Bible offers histories and legislation written usually in prose, allegory is not suited to it – only the literal reading is. Origen retorted that, if pagan allegory is legitimate, then Christian allegory is legitimate too: there are relationships and similarities between Eve created from Adam's rib and Hesiod's account of Pandora's birth, and between the paradise planted with trees and some Greek myths. But Origen goes further. He notes that the pagan myths literally understood are stupid, impious or immoral, and not susceptible to allegory. On the contrary, the literal reading of the Bible is neither harmful nor vain. Christian hermeneutics is better than its pagan equivalent, in the sense that Christian allegory need not preclude literal meaning. So the difference between biblical history and Greek mythology is that only the former offers an acceptable literal meaning. The polemic against the pagans has allowed Origen to show how valuable the literal sense is, as it is suited to the Christian majority. In that way, Origen is less of an allegorist than is usually said!

The polemic against the so-called heretics was directed first at Marcion and his disciples. In his *Antitheses*, Marcion rejected the whole Old Testament, which he interpreted literally and in which he saw the action of an inferior god. Second, Origen attacks the Christian Gnostics, who shared with Marcion his literal analysis of the Old Testament and gave value to some figures, such as the snake or Seth. But, unlike Marcion, the Gnostics used allegory in order to understand the New Testament in the light of their philosophic and religious system. Origen retorted that the Old Testament and the New form a unity, inspired by the one and only God, the Father of Jesus. They are a whole and no one is allowed to suppress the awkward passages.

The polemic against the so-called 'simple ones' has played an important part in the spiritualised reading of the Bible. These individuals, who were Christians, had a material and anthropomorphic idea of God. For instance, the church fathers of the first two centuries, such as Justin or Irenaeus, quoted verses from Isaiah, Matthew, Luke and Revelation in order to demonstrate that a first resurrection of the fair ones would happen, and asserted that, at Christ's return, they would reign with him for a thousand years in Jerusalem. After that, the devil will attack for the last time; this is followed by the last judgement. Origen described such a millenarian reading as Judaic. In his opinion, it is not right to imagine God's promises in accordance with human life. This refutation of millenarianism was accompanied by a spiritualisation of the ideas about future judgement. The 'eternal fire' (Matt. 25:41) is the fire of remorse; the 'exterior darkness' (Matt. 8:12) and the 'prison' (1 Pet. 3:19) are the ignorance and the separation from God. Eternal life is not sensual delight,

but knowledge of the divine truth and wisdom (*On Principles* 2.10.1–8). The resurrection of the flesh is not the renewal of human life. Origen thinks that the raised body will be a spiritual one, and, as Paul states (1 Cor. 15), the same body, but in a better form (*On Principles* 3.6.1–9). Origen has imagined the idea of 'somatic form' (εἶδος σωματικόν) in order to speak about that raised body. This concept is not simple to understand, but it is certain that, in his opinion, the resurrection cannot be imagined in accordance with earthly happiness.

Origen's works on the Bible

Origen is famous for his commentaries and homilies. The Christian homily has a Jewish origin. In the second century and perhaps before, it seems that a section of the Torah was read, then a section of the Prophets connected with the passage of the Torah. Then followed the homily, which consisted in actualising both biblical lectures.[12] Two Jewish homilies about Jonah and Samson are preserved, and both date back to the time of Philo, to whom they are wrongly attributed.[13] Only a few Christian homilies are known from before the time of Origen including Peter's homily in Acts 2:14–36. It is possible that the letters of James, Peter, Jude and John in the New Testament are reworked homilies changed into letters, as well as 2 Clement falsely attributed to Clement of Rome. The most ancient homilies that we know of are Melito of Sardes' *Paschal Homily* (second half of the second century), Clement of Alexandria's *Quis dives salvetur?* and Hippolytus of Rome's *Homily on Psalms* (beginning of the third century). When he was preaching in Caesarea or in Jerusalem, Origen explained the Old Testament each morning and the New Testament on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. In relation to the Old Testament, Origen preached at least three hundred homilies. As for the New Testament, there were more than one hundred homilies. Some of these are preserved in Greek, including the homily *On the Witch of Endor* (1 Sam. 28) and twenty *Homilies on Jeremiah*. There are also Greek fragments of homilies in Eusebius of Caesarea, the *Philocalia* and the catenae. In the main, however, most homilies are preserved Latin translations of Rufinus (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 Kingdoms, Pss. 36–8) and Jerome (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Song, Luke). More than half of the homilies on the Old Testament have disappeared, including the *Homilies on Deuteronomy*, the *Homilies on Passover*, the *Homilies*

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12 Ch. Perrot, 'La lecture de la Bible dans la diaspora hellénistique', in ACFEB (ed.), *Études sur le judaïsme hellénistique* (Paris: Cerf, 1984), pp. 109–32.
13 F. Siegert and J. de Roulet, *Pseudo-Philon. Prédications synagogales* (Paris: Cerf, 1999).

on Job, the *Homilies on Proverbs*, the *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* and the *Homilies on Psalms* (except three of them). The *Homilies on Matthew*, on *Acts*, on *1–2 Corinthians*, on *Galatians*, on *1–2 Thessalonians*, on *Titus* and on *Hebrews* have also disappeared: only the thirty-nine *Homilies on Luke* have remained. The length of these homilies is variable. For instance, one can calculate that *Homily 8 on Numbers* lasted around ten minutes and *Homily 27 on Numbers* almost one hour.

The commentaries have a pagan origin. Many of these seek to explain Homer, Plato, Aristotle and other authors. Their texts are divided into significant units, and each unit is examined. Christian Gnostics, such as Basilides and Heracleon, were among the first Christians to write in such a genre. The most ancient Christian commentary that we know of is Hippolytus' *Commentary on Daniel*, from the beginning of the third century. Origen wrote commentaries on Genesis up to 5:1, Isaiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Prophets (except Obadiah), Pss. 1–25 (when he was in Alexandria), Pss. 1–150 (when he was in Caesarea, but he did not comment on all the psalms), Proverbs, Song (a first time in Alexandria, a second one in Caesarea), Lamentations, Matthew, Luke, John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews. These commentaries were divided into volumes called *tomoi*. For instance, there were thirteen *tomoi* on Genesis and thirty-two on John. A *tomos* is a mere material division corresponding to the length of the rolls on which the text was written. Origen wrote at least one hundred and sixty *tomoi* on the Old Testament and around one hundred on the New Testament. The length of a *tomos* seems to be variable, between 70,000 and 120,000 letters. One can calculate that Origen wrote between 13,000 and 20,000 pages of commentaries! Only a few of these pages remain thanks to Eusebius, the *Philocalia* and the catenae: some fragments of the commentaries on Genesis, Isaiah, the Twelve, Ezekiel, Psalms, Song and Lamentations. There is also an abridged Latin translation of the *Commentary on Song*, by Rufinus. The *Commentaries on Matthew* and *John* are better known: *tomoi* 10–17 and a partial Latin translation in the first case; nine *tomoi* in the second case. In both cases, there are also Greek fragments in the catenae. We have some Greek fragments of the *Commentary on Luke*. There is also a Latin translation of the *Commentary on Romans* in ten *tomoi* thanks to Rufinus, as well as some Greek fragments, one of which is a long passage discovered in the Tura papyri. The other commentaries on Paul are known through Greek fragments or Latin translations of Rufinus or Jerome. Some discoveries can be expected: the treatise *On Passover*, which is a commentary on Exod. 12, was discovered in Tura and first published in 1979.

It seems that in Caesarea Origen became aware of the impossibility of completing the *Commentary on Genesis*, and he only succeeded in commenting on a tenth of that book. He replaced the full commentary with a commentary on some chosen passages. This kind of explanation existed in pagan tradition in the form of scholia (σχόλια) on classic authors. These consist of glosses, which comment on important or difficult passages. Jerome called them 'remarks' (σημειώσεις). The Latin name for these scholia is *excerpta*; and scholia by Origen exist on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes and John. Only some fragments are known, thanks to the *Philocalia* and the catenae. Almost all the *Scholia on the Psalms* remain unpublished.

There are other kinds of commentary. Like Clement of Alexandria, Origen wrote *Stromateis*, that is *Tapestries*. Here, he dealt with difficult points of Christianity, such as resurrection, and with biblical passages. Only a few fragments of that work are known. The treatise *On Prayer* is a kind of *Stromateis* focused on the question of prayer: the first part of the treatise (1–17) is devoted to prayer as a philosophical question: are we to pray, and how and when? The answer is philosophical as well as Christian. The second part (18–34) comments on the *Pater noster*.

In Origen's other works, which do not belong to the Greek commentary, there are a lot of biblical quotations. These biblical passages are explained and they are used as arguments. *On Principles* is a Christian treatise of physics, focused on the question of the connection between God, the world and mankind and it quotes the Bible more than a thousand times. The *Exhortation to Martyrdom* belongs to parenetic literature and gives more than three hundred quotations. The *Contra Celsum* is an apology of Christianity in which Origen cites more than twelve hundred biblical passages.

Origen's legacy

Origen's theological ideas were discussed in his lifetime, but increasingly after his death. In 553, the Council of Constantinople condemned him, a decision that was upheld until the time of Vatican I. But Origen was not condemned because of his exegesis, even if his method became suspect as his ideas were considered more and more debatable.

In fact, Origen's exegesis had considerable influence until the end of the Middle Ages in the West, as well as in Byzantium. Translations of his work were readily available in Latin, and the western Christian world of the fourth and fifth centuries admired Origen as an exegete. His threefold biblical sense

can be seen as the ancestor of the four medieval senses.[14] *Historia* continues the literal meaning and *tropologia* the moral one; *allegoria* and *anagogia* can be described as a division of the spiritual sense. With regard to Byzantium, around 1100, Nicetas organised the patristic quotations of his catenae in accordance with Origenian categories.

Nonetheless, it was precisely in this area that Origen faced opposition to his hermeneutics in his lifetime. It seems that Bishop Demetrios thought Origen's remarks about the simple ones were veiled criticisms of himself. Later on, criticisms against Origen's exegesis seem to multiply. During the fourth century, Alexandrian allegory was much discussed by the Antiochians. Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodorus of Mopsuestia criticised it as denying the literal and historical meaning and as depending on the subtlety and the imagination of the exegete. Allegory is seen as a pernicious legacy from paganism. The Antiochians intended to substitute 'theory' or 'epitheory' for allegory: theory consists in identifying the true 'types', that is the figures and the events of the Old Testament which announce Jesus Christ and Christian realities. These theories are much less numerous than Alexandrian types. The Antiochians thought that the Old Testament spoke about Christ only a few times. For instance, in their opinion, there are only four messianic psalms: Pss. 2, 8, 44 (45 MT) and 109 (110 MT). At the end of the fourth century, the *Philocalia of Origen*, a collection of quotations from his works likely authored by Gregory Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea, was written probably in order to champion his exegesis against some anonymous enemies.

The Antiochians partially realised their aim: allegory became suspect, and as a result allegorical exegetes, like Cyril of Alexandria or Nicetas, avoided the vocabulary of allegory. Some might argue that allegory met its final defeat with the advent of historical criticism in the Enlightenment period and beyond.

Does that mean that there is no legacy of Origen's exegesis in the modern world? In fact, his spiritual approach has had a deep influence, which is not always recognised. He has contributed decisively to discredit millenarianism, even if these ideas resurface from time to time. Another example: in Alexandria, there were Christians who believed in reincarnation; they quoted Lev. 20:16 ('whatever woman shall approach any beast so as to have connection with it, ye shall kill the woman and the beast'), Num. 22:28 (Balaam's ass speaks to his master) and 2 Pet. 2:16. Origen refuted this interpretation and

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14 These four senses appear first in John Cassian, see M. Dulaey, 'Sens de l'Écriture chez les pères latins', *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 12:67 (1992), cols. 442–53.

used the quotations for his doctrine of spiritual bestialisation. Finally, for a long time, Adam's and Eve's story was understood as a historical event. Nowadays, however, the spiritual and mythic interpretation generally prevails. One can see here the hidden influence of Origen's thought.

Is it possible to go further and to rehabilitate Origen? In 1950, Jean Daniélou tried to rehabilitate typology. According to him, this hermeneutical method is in line with ecclesiastical tradition, but he still holds allegory to be no more than a Hellenistic infiltration into Christianity. But Henri de Lubac has replied that there was no distinction between type and allegory before the Antiochians, and both have a Pauline origin: according to Rom. 5:14, Adam is the 'type' of Jesus; and according to Gal. 4:24, what scripture says about Agar and Sara 'is said allegorically [ἀλληγορούμενα] about both Testaments'. The conflict against Origen was artificially created. It is not true to assert that, in Origen's opinion, allegory consists in denying the historical meaning of the Bible. This reply can be completed by the following remark, which is borrowed from Manlio Simonetti: type is a matter of content; allegory, a matter of method; each interpretation is allegorical as well, since it gives to those data a non-literal meaning. Therefore, when one denies allegory, one has to deny typology. But this is not enough to justify Origen's allegory. In fact, as H. Crouzel has shown, scripture refers to a superior world, where the Logos is near God, from which he came and will come again and where he prepares places for his disciples. In order to speak about that superior world, there are only two methods: the negative one, which asserts what that world is not, and the allegorical one: thanks to analogy and symbol, allegory intends to suggest the transcendental realities. In other words, the modern denying of allegory is due to the fact that modern thought is less and less concerned with transcendence, and, when it is, only in a negative manner. Will things change? If so, Origen's work will be topical again.

Eusebius

MICHAEL J. HOLLERICH

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260/4–339) is best known for his work as a historian: his *Chronicle* of world history, his *Church History* and his *Life of Constantine*. As a historian he was a true pioneer. He was also a prolific apologist, though long works like *The Proof of the Gospel* and *The Preparation for the Gospel* are not much read today, despite their innovative use of documentary citation.

Eusebius was also an accomplished biblical scholar. Even though he left substantial writings on scripture, this part of his scholarly oeuvre is the one modern readers are least likely to know about. The first edition of *The Cambridge History of the Bible* ignored him entirely, despite dedicating individual chapters to Origen, Jerome, Augustine and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

Eusebius admittedly could not match Origen's theological brilliance or Jerome's linguistic virtuosity. Nevertheless, his overall contribution to the study of the Bible and to its place in the life of the church is remarkably diversified and qualifies him as a true founder of Christian biblical scholarship. The past generation of scholarship, conducted by specialists in several different disciplines (biblical studies, patristics, church history and history of Late Antiquity), has shed much light on that contribution. The present survey draws on that research to illuminate, first, Eusebius' role in the very production of the Christian Bible; and, second, his performance as an exegete. The angle of vision taken here regards the historical, literal and literary aspects of his approach to the Bible as the most characteristic and most enduringly important features of his work. Less is therefore said about the more strictly theological element in his biblical interpretation.

Eusebius seems to have been a Christian from birth.[1] His life straddled Christianity's rapid transition from persecution to patronage, a momentous change for which he himself, in his hugely diverse literary output, is our primary witness. He represents the wing of Christianity that was most invested

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1 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, is the authoritative study of Eusebius' life, works and times.

in proving not merely Christianity's equality, but its superiority to the cultural, intellectual and political attainments of classical civilisation – note in the *Church History* the pride with which he reports how the pagan emperors recognised Christianity already at the end of the third century (*Hist. eccl.* 8.1 – on the very eve of the Great Persecution!), and his confident appropriation of Greek learning in his scholarship and his apologetics. So far as we know, he lived for his entire life in Caesarea in Palestine. The locale was determinative in two respects: first, in disposing him towards a keen awareness of the historical character of Christianity, the evidence of which was all around him, and to the role that historical demonstration played in proving Christian claims about the Bible; and, second, in acquainting him with the reality of a still living and flourishing Jewish community, which he could hardly avoid in Caesarea. Finally, we should remember that he was well into his fifties before becoming the bishop of Caesarea. His fundamental formation was as a scholar, albeit in the service of the Christian church. Eusebius virtually created the type of the learned cleric, which has played such an influential role in the history of the Christian Bible.

The production of the Christian Bible

In the scriptorium at Caesarea: Eusebius as scribe

Eusebius' biblical education began when he was a youth living in the house-hold of the wealthy presbyter Pamphilus, whose name he took (Eusebius Pamphili, '[adopted] son of Pamphilus'). Pamphilus had dedicated his wealth to preserving the legacy of Origen of Alexandria (*c.* 185–*c.* 253), who had spent the last approximately twenty years of his life in Caesarea after falling out with his bishop in Alexandria. Central to Pamphilus' enterprise was the protection of Origen's library and his own corpus of writings, including the *Hexapla*, his mammoth synopsis of Greek translations of the Old Testament. Starting from Origen's nucleus Pamphilus built a library of Christian, Jewish and pagan books. Recent research has emphasised Eusebius' initiative, after Pamphilus' death as a martyr in 310, as the primary agent in the expansion of the Caesarean library and scriptorium.[2] After Eusebius' consecration as bishop of Caesarea (*c.* 313), he no doubt had a ready pool of talent available to him in the persons of his clergy, who provided trained staff for his research centre.

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2 Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius*, seeks to reconstitute the contents of the library. Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, is an innovative study that shows how technical innovation at Caesarea constantly pushed Christian scholarship forward (pp. 200–15 on the library).

A key part of the scholarly work at Caesarea was the copying and correcting of manuscripts. The painstaking labour of copying, collating and correcting made him intimately familiar with the text of the *Hexapla*. Numerous biblical manuscripts preserve subscriptions that document his collaboration with Pamphilus.[3] This one, found in the sixth century Septuagint manuscript known as the Codex Marchalianus, shows Eusebius working in tandem with Pamphilus and involved in preserving marginal comments (on the book of Ezekiel) made by Origen himself: 'Transcribed from the editions of the Hexapla and corrected according to the Tetrapla of Origen, which he also corrected with his own hand and marked with marginal scholia, from which I, Eusebius, have copied the scholia. Pamphilus and Eusebius corrected this.'[4] Equally interesting is a longer and more complex notice from the same manuscript, this time regarding the book of Isaiah:

> All the editions [i.e. versions] are accurately corrected, for they have been collated with a tetrapla of Isaiah, and furthermore with a hexapla. In addition, the portion from the beginning [of the book] up to the vision of Tyre [Isa. 23] has been corrected more carefully; for we took advantage of Origen's books of commentary on Isaiah, which go up to the end of the vision of Tyre, and, grasping to the best of our ability his understanding of the meaning of each word, we corrected every doubtful place according to Origen's understanding. In addition, the edition of the Seventy was compared also with what is said in Eusebius' commentary on Isaiah, and wherever they differed, we sought out his interpretive understanding and used it as a standard by which to make corrections.[5]

It has been suggested that the 'we' in this annotation refers to Pamphilus and Eusebius. The third person reference to Eusebius' commentary on Isaiah makes that unlikely, but a Caesarean connection is plausible. Joseph Ziegler has proposed that it reflects the ongoing editorial work of the team which Eusebius assembled for his scriptorium, and thus constitutes valuable evidence of his legacy as text scholar and exegete. We will speak later about Eusebius' use of the *Hexapla*. Here we note his vital role in ensuring the work's survival, no small task given its size – according to a recent estimate, it might have filled almost forty codices of 800 pages each, 'a veritable library in itself'.[6] Modern biblical scholars have criticised the effect that the Hexaplaric recension of the

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3 Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 182–92, 340–2.   4 Cited in Nautin, *Origène*, p. 323.
5 Citation and discussion in Ziegler, *Isaias*, pp. 50–2.
6 On the *Hexapla*'s composition, structure and purpose, cf. Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 86–132 (at p. 105).

Septuagint had in obscuring the transmission history of the biblical text.[7] That was certainly not Origen's intention. The dual purpose of his synopsis had been to correct errors in the text of the church's Greek Bible, and to provide Christians with a version of the Bible that was closer to the one that the Jews themselves were using. The creation of the *Hexapla* demonstrated that Christian scholarship was thoroughly conversant with the editing methods developed by pagan scholars at Alexandria and elsewhere. At Caesarea it was available for consultation by visiting Christian scholars, the most prominent of whom would be Jerome.[8] As late as 616 the Septuagint column, with the Aristarchian diacritical signs, was translated into Syriac by Paul of Tella, the so-called Syro-*Hexapla* version that is an important source for modern knowledge of Origen's synopsis. The ultimate fate of the *Hexapla* is unknown. Presumably it perished during Caesarea's seventh century vicissitudes caused by Persian occupation and eventual Arab takeover.

Bibles for a Christian empire

Despite his many other enterprises as scholar, bishop and apologist, Eusebius never ceased to be involved in the actual production of the Bible. In a letter preserved in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, we read of the emperor's 'urgent' order for new Bibles for the rapidly expanding Christian population in Constantinople:[9] fifty new volumes (*sômatia*), 'with ornamental leather bindings, easily legible and convenient for portable use, to be copied by skilled calligraphists well trained in the art', with the Roman government to pay for materials, preparation 'with utmost speed' and delivery on the public transport (*Vita Const.* 4.36, trans. Cameron and Hall). Eusebius' terse description of how he complied with the order is far from clear: 'We sent him threes and fours [*trissa kai tetrassa*] in richly wrought binding' (*Vita Const.* 4.37). The imperial request reflects both Eusebius' reputation as a biblical scholar and the technical capabilities of his scriptorium. It also represents a very substantial investment – according to a recent estimate, even a single large parchment codex would consume the skins of a hundred or more cattle! This is assuming that Constantine was requesting fifty complete Bibles rather than just fifty New Testaments. The puzzling reference to 'threes and fours' (other

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7 Among many critical assessments, see Ulrich, 'The Old Testament text of Eusebius', pp. 556–7. Norton, 'Fragments of the Hexapla', is more sanguine.
8 On the patristic reception of the *Hexapla*, see Bammel, 'Die *Hexapla* des Origenes'.
9 Most recent discussion in Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 215–21.

translations have been proposed) has been variously interpreted.[10] According to one theory, it meant a varying page layout of three or four columns to a page. The prevailing view is that the books were to be sent 'three and four [volumes] at a time', though copies of the Bible in three- or in four-volume *sets* (a single codex of the entire Bible being unsuitable for use in church) would also be consistent with this reading. Similar uncertainty exists as to whether the two fourth-century biblical codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are surviving products of that great project.[11] Barnes used the multiplication of Caesarean Bibles as a basis for suggesting that Eusebius was the source of the number and chapter headings to be found in many Greek manuscripts of the Gospels, partly on the grounds that Eusebius customarily provided indexes and chapter headings for other works of his.[12]

Eusebius and canonisation

A final aspect of Eusebius' work in the creation of the Christian Bible is his keen interest in the canon of scripture, particularly the New Testament, as we can see from the prominence the canon receives in the *Church History*.[13] His achievement here reflects both his individual scholarly skills and his particular moment in the history of the church and of the Bible. The word 'canon' as a name for the church's list of scriptures does not seem to have come into linguistic usage until the second half of the fourth century, when bishops and church councils began speaking of 'canonical' books and 'the canon'. Eusebius' well-known discussion of the emerging New Testament canon in his *Church History* (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25) marks a transition in canonical development, from a period in which lists were still being compiled by individual figures to a time when the institutional church exerted far more effective control over the process. It is no accident that this transition coincided with the conversion of the Roman empire to Christianity and the state's involvement in the promotion of religious uniformity. Eusebius himself of course famously

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10 Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, p. 206, n. 41; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. Cameron and Hall p. 327; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 124–5, p. 345, n. 139; and Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, p. 217.
11 Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, p. 207, doubts this, on the grounds that both codices possess an Alexandrine type of text. Grafton and Williams, *Christianity* pp. 217–21, believe that they did originate as a result of Constantine's order.
12 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, p. 124. These chapter numbers in the manuscripts are not to be confused with the numbered sections of Eusebius' *Canon Tables* discussed below. Both sets of numbers are printed in the inner margin of the Nestle–Aland editions of the New Testament; see Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum*, pp. 78*–9*.
13 *Hist. eccl.* 3.3.3, 3.24–5, etc. See Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, pp. 126–41; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 201–7; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 138–40.

promoted the idea that God intended the partnering of church and empire. But his list of recognised and disputed books was compiled not on the basis of political authority, whether of the church or of the state, but on the criteria of prior recognition, liturgical use and compatibility with orthodoxy. It is fashionable today to criticise the canon's formation as an exercise in the arbitrary, but this, too, may be a judgement not free of partiality. While conceding that Eusebius was blind to the developmental and pluralistic realities of early Christian belief, there is still much to admire in the way he, and predecessors like Clement and Origen, tried inductively to establish the books that had in fact emerged as the Christian scriptures.

Where the Old Testament canon was concerned, Eusebius simply borrowed Origen's list of the 'twenty-two books' in Hebrew recognised by the Jews themselves.[14] By implication this reduces the 'apocryphal' portion of the Septuagint to a secondary status. Eusebius typically cites the non-Hebrew books as scripture, but recognises that their authority is not the same as those in the Hebrew canon. The scarcity of explicit references to the non-Hebrew books in *The Proof of the Gospel* presumably reflects the fact that it was aimed principally at the Jews.

Eusebius devotes greater care and attention to the limits of the incipient New Testament canon. He seems to have used the following criteria: (i) apostolic composition, understood broadly as attribution to a member of the apostolic generation; (ii) use in worship; (iii) recognition by previous 'ecclesiastical' (i.e. orthodox) writers; and (iv) orthodox content.[15] This at any rate is what we can infer from the discussion in *Hist. eccl.* 3.25, where the reader is left unsure whether he means to distinguish three or four separate categories. The first group of those that are 'recognised' (*homologoumena*) includes the four Gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul (including Hebrews), 1 John and 1 Peter, along with, 'if it seem right', the Revelation of John. About the largest part of our canon, then, there is no doubt in his mind, apart from Revelation. The letters of James, Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John, on the other

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14 *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.1–2. Eusebius also lists twenty-two books according to Josephus (*Hist. eccl.* 3.9.5–3.10.6) and Melito of Sardis (*Hist. eccl.* 4.26.14).

15 Cf. Eusebius' criteria in passages such as *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25 (James and Jude), 3.3.3 (Petrine literature and Hermas), 3.16 (1 Clement), and this summary statement: 'In these pages I have set down all the facts that have come to my knowledge regarding the apostles and apostolic period; the sacred writings they have left us; the books which though disputed are nevertheless constantly used in very many churches; those that are unmistakably spurious [*nothôn*, which here does bear its normally harsh connotation of 'false, illegitimate, bastard'] and foreign to apostolic orthodoxy' (*Hist. eccl.* 3.31.6, trans. Williamson).

hand, are 'disputed' (*antilegomena*) but 'known to many', and therefore must be listed separately.

There follows a third category of 'spurious' books (*notha*), a term which in this context seems to mean nothing more than 'not genuine', as measured by the criteria of attestation, use and authorship. As examples he mentions the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd (of Hermas), the Revelation of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas, the 'so-called' Teaching of the Apostles (our Didache), the Gospel of the Hebrews ('which has a special appeal for those Hebrews who have accepted Christ') and, 'if this seems the right place for it', the Revelation of John. Eusebius was aware that these books had considerable recognition in various quarters, including with writers whom he admired, like Clement of Alexandria and Origen. They pass the use, attestation and, it seems, orthodoxy criteria. Why are they spurious? Perhaps because Eusebius doubts whether they can convincingly be grouped with the apostolic generation, either because of their late date or because of their authorship. An interesting test case would be 1 Clement, to him of undoubted authorship, which was read in churches 'even in our own day' (*Hist. eccl.* 3.16, also 4.23.11), and which was eventually tacked onto the New Testament books of the Codex Alexandrinus. But Clement belongs with those who are in 'the first succession from the apostles' (3.37.1), and it is probably the distance in time that disqualifies him.

These 'spurious' books are themselves clearly distinguished from books that are actually heretical, among which Eusebius names the Gospels of Peter,[16] Thomas and Matthias, and the Acts of Andrew and John, and of other apostles. They are beyond the pale because they are not mentioned in the books of 'ecclesiastical' writers, their style shows they are not apostolic, and their content is not orthodox (3.25.6–7).

Eusebius is not consistent in his application of his criteria, as commentators have noted. The most glaring instance is his scepticism about the book of Revelation. Despite both Clement's and Origen's acceptance of the book, Eusebius did what he could to subvert its credentials, no doubt motivated by the unpalatable implications of the book's millenarian eschatology. We can at least be grateful that his reservations led him to preserve Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria's literary critique of the Johannine corpus (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25). Eusebius is to be credited for the wealth of documentation that he preserved in his

16 Cf. *Hist. eccl.* 6.12 for Eusebius' citation of the late second-century Bishop Serapion of Antioch's condemnation of the Gospel of Peter.

researches on the New Testament canon – one more reason for recognising him among the fathers of the Christian Bible.

Eusebius as interpreter

In assessing Eusebius' actual performance as an interpreter of the Bible, it is helpful to distinguish technical aids to exegesis, biblical commentaries in the strict sense of the term, and the use of the Bible in his apologetics.

Instrumenta studiorum

Eusebius' most original contributions to biblical studies were technical instruments like the *Onomasticon* and the *Canon Tables*. The *Onomasticon*, or, to use its proper name, *On the Place Names in the Divine Scripture*, is a biblical gazetteer, an alphabetical catalogue of place names.[17] According to Eusebius' dedication to Paulinus of Tyre (the same Paulinus for whose new church in Tyre he gave the address preserved in *Hist. eccl.* 10.4), it was only one part of a four part work that also included a biblical ethnology of the world's nations, with the Hebrew names rendered in Greek; a list or map (*katagraphê*) of ancient Judaea, along with the boundaries of the twelve tribes; and a representation of the city of Jerusalem and its temple along with annotations. Only the last part, the alphabetical catalogue of biblical place names, has survived. Nevertheless, it is 'still the main literary source for the historical geography and territorial history of Palestine both in biblical times and under the Roman Empire'.[18] It arranged the place names in the Bible in alphabetical order, and under each letter, the names in the order in which they occurred in the books of scripture, beginning with Genesis. Along with the names themselves, Eusebius often included locations and other contextual information.

Much about the *Onomasticon* remains uncertain, including date and manner of composition. Estimates range from before the end of the third century, to some time after 325 but prior to Constantine's building programme in Palestine. Not all biblical books are surveyed, and the New Testament in particular is limited to place names in the Gospels. The catalogue is geared primarily to the Hebrew scriptures, leading some to hold that Eusebius just appropriated existing Jewish sources. But Eusebius' preface seems to claim

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17 Freeman-Grenville et al., *Onomasticon*, with a translation of Jerome's Latin version of Eusebius' work, an annotated index and maps; and Notely and Safrai, *Onomasticon*, with Klostermann's Greek text, an English translation, Jerome's Latin text, and annotation.
18 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, p. 106. I draw here on his summary, on Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 221–3, and on the editions mentioned in the previous note.

personal credit for the labour, and the citations from the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, as well as from the LXX, would represent a natural exploitation of the resources of the *Hexapla*. Certainly he consulted Josephus, who is cited several times. Some of his information, for example on distances and municipal boundaries, may have come from Roman administrative offices in Caesarea, as well his own investigations and reports from others. Eusebius seems to have designed the book mainly for study of the Bible – much like the etymological handbook of Hebrew names that he used in his commentaries – though it was also used by pilgrims to the Holy Land after pilgrimage became popular, a result he perhaps also intended. The *Onomasticon* is an altogether remarkable monument to Eusebius' keen interest in historical and spatial realities: its tabular organisation of information did for geographical space what his *Chronicle* did for historical time.[19]

The work known as the *Canon Tables* also represents an original contribution and one that served biblical scholars for centuries. The *Canons*, as it is usually called, is a numerical index on which a gospel synopsis can be constructed. To build his synopsis Eusebius divided the Gospels into numbered pericopes – 355 for Matthew, 233 for Mark, 342 for Luke and 232 for John – and then listed the numbers for parallel passages in a set of ten tables or canons.[20] The first canon contained the numbers of passages with parallels in all four Gospels, the second, third and fourth the numbers of passages which occurred in three Gospels, the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth those numbered passages which only appeared in two Gospels, and the tenth, consisting of four separate tables, listed passages which only appeared in one Gospel. In the Gospel texts themselves each pericope had two numbers in the margin: the first was its proper number, and below it, in red ink, was a number from one to ten, representing in which canon the number, with its appropriate parallels, could be found.

In an explanatory letter to one Carpianus, Eusebius notes that an Alexandrian predecessor named Ammonius had made a preliminary effort to enable study and comparison of the four Gospels. Eusebius judged it inadequate because the approach – carving up the other three Gospels and aligning them next to Matthew as parallel glosses – destroyed their literary integrity. His instrument was not just an improvement on Ammonius but something

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19 Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, p. 223, crediting Groh, 'The *Onomasticon* of Eusebius', 29.
20 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 120–2; Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 194–200. See Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum*, pp. 84*–9*, along with the Greek text of the Epistle to Carpianus. English translation of the letter in Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 121–2, and Oliver, 'The Epistle of Eusebius to Carpianus', 138–45.

genuinely new and without demonstrated pagan precedent. But the basic scheme almost suggested itself from the tabular arrangement Eusebius had already used in his world-historical *Chronicle*. As an efficient form of information retrieval, it represented, to borrow James O'Donnell's metaphor, the world's first set of hot links.[21] Its success was demonstrated in its speedy and universal adoption, not only in Greek manuscripts but in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic and Slavonic as well.

Exegetical works

Eusebius' interpretive scholarship consisted of works devoted to particular topics, and full scale, line by line commentaries. His major apologetic treatises, *The Preparation for the Gospel* and *The Proof of the Gospel*, particularly the latter, also contain substantial exegetical material. Eusebius took for granted that interpretation could serve apologetic ends. Conversely, good apologetics necessarily incorporated exegesis. The apologetic works are therefore also relevant to this survey.

Questions and solutions

The twin works *Questions and Solutions Addressed to Stephanus* and *Questions and Solutions Addressed to Marinus* belong to the genre of 'questions and solutions' (*zêtêmata kai luseis*), the examination of disputed questions in classical texts.[22] Pagan authors from Aristotle to Porphyry of Tyre, Eusebius' older contemporary, produced studies of this sort on selected problems in Homer. Jewish scholars did the same with the Bible: Philo of Alexandria's *Questions and Solutions on Genesis and Exodus*, with which Eusebius was acquainted (*Hist. eccl.* 2.18.1, 5), considered problematic topics such as Abraham's presentation of Sarah as his sister (Gen. 20:2).[23] Christian versions appeared as early as Marcion's *Antitheses*, which questioned the compatibility of the God of the Old and New Testaments. Orthodox examples included Ambrosiaster's *Questions on the Old and New Testaments* and Jerome's *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*. Here as elsewhere, it was probably Origen who gave the most significant impetus to Christian contributions to the genre.

Eusebius' twin treatises, known to Jerome as *On Disagreement in the Gospels*, deal with the beginning and the end of the Gospels. They have survived only

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21 Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, p. 199, citing O'Donnell's website. They note how the *Chronicle* itself owed a debt to the tabular structuration of the *Hexapla* (pp. 169–70).

22 Dörrie and Dörries, 'Erotapokriseis', cols. 342–70, and Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 69–74.

23 Philo, *Qu. Gen.* 4.60.

in the form of later epitomes in Greek and Syriac, and in fragments from cate-nae on the Gospels.[24] Adolf Harnack called it "a mine of patristic scholarship, as well as an especially instructive example of both the strengths and the limits of Eusebius' scholarship".[25] Cross-references in the *Questions to Stephanus* and *The Proof of the Gospel* show that Eusebius must have been working on them simultaneously, sometime around 320. Contradictions in the Gospels were a sensitive subject. The pagan scholar Porphyry of Tyre (*c.* 234–*c.* 305) had recently targeted them – including contradictions in Matthew's and Luke's infancy narratives – in his polemical treatise *Against the Christians*.[26] Eusebius was aware of the difficulties with the genealogies. In the *Church History* he quoted at length from a letter on the subject by the third-century Christian writer Julius Africanus (*Hist. eccl.* 1.7.2–16) and repeated the quotation in *Quest. Steph.* 4 (*PG*, 22.900a–901a). Perhaps because he was aware of Porphyry's scorn for Christians who resorted to allegory when faced with problematic biblical texts (see below), Eusebius in the main kept to what he would have regarded as literal and historical solutions: solving contradictions in the Gospels' resur-rection accounts by multiplying episodes and individuals, raising translation issues and recognising textual variants.[27]

But he was not consistent about this. An example is his explanation for Matthew's inclusion of the morally compromised Tamar (Gen. 38:1–30) in the genealogy of Jesus, rather than some other woman renowned for her good character (*Quest. Steph.* 7; *PG*, 22.905–912). Some years ago Allan Johnson suggested that we look to rhetorical manuals to illuminate what he called

24 *CPG*, no. 3470. Greek remains: *PG*, 22.879–1016. See now the edition of Zamagni, *Questions évangéliques*. Besides Bardy, 'Littérature', 228–36, cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 122–4, and Johnson, 'Rhetorical Criticism'. Eusebius' lost work *On the Many Offspring of the Ancients* tried to reconcile the patriarchs' polygamy with the Christian veneration of celibacy (see *D. E.* 1.9.20 and *P. E.* 7.8.29). On Eusebius' fragmentary treatise *On the Feast of Easter* (*PG*, 24.693–706), see DelCogliano, 'Promotion'.

25 Harnack, *Chronologie*, vol. II, p. 124.

26 The latest effort to organise, classify and interpret the remains is Berchman, *Porphyry against the Christians*, from which citations of Porphyry are taken. See Wilken, *Christians*, pp. 126–63; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 175–8; Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism*, pp. 17–36, 71–3, 241–75 and *passim*; and Schott, *Christianity*, pp. 52–78.

27 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 122–4. Two examples: in *Quest. Mar.* 1.1, which addresses conflicts in the Marcan and Matthean accounts of the time of the resurrection, Eusebius observes that variations in the Marcan manuscripts are one way to resolve the contradiction, by rejecting the longer ending of Mark on the grounds that it is 'rarely' (*spaniôs*) found in copies of Mark (*PG*, 22.937b), whereas 'accurate copies' end with Mark 16:8 (*PG*, 23.937a–b). As a less drastic solution, however, he proposes a harmonising interpretation which retains both manuscript versions (*PG*, 23.937b–940c). In his historical defence of Matthew's triadic 'fourteen generations' genealogical formulation (Matt. 1:17), Eusebius appears to be responding directly to a factual challenge made by Porphyry: compare *Quest. Steph.* 13.2–3 (*PG*, 22.925b–928b) with frag. 73 in Berchman, *Porphyry against the Christians*, pp. 157–8.

Eusebius' 'secular critical method'. The lengthy attention which Eusebius gives to Tamar may reflect his awareness that such manuals advised attacking the credibility of documents by accusing them of dealing with subjects that were 'unsuitable for public discussion'.[28] Relying strictly on evidence in the narrative (*historia*) of Genesis, Eusebius first provided a scrupulously literal defence of how Tamar tricked her father-in-law Judah into impregnating her. Then he appended an allegorical coda inspired by the story which Genesis tells about the twins whom Tamar bore. Theirs was 'no ordinary birth' but represented 'a secret work of providence' in which Matthew wished to alert readers to a hidden message (*ainigma*): the twins represent two ways of life (*duo biôn tropous*) – that according to the Law of Moses and that according to the Gospel. Here Eusebius introduced one of his favourite anti-Jewish apologetic themes, the thesis that the Gospel way of life was anticipated by the pre-Mosaic patriarchs, 'the friends of God' (*theophileis*), whose *philosophia* was superior to the cultic and dietary obligations of the Mosaic law, which human beings could not observe if they did not live in proximity to Jerusalem, and which represented a decline from patriarchal morality, until a genuinely universal ethic was restored by the Gospel.[29] It is this historical dialectic which Eusebius claims was foreshadowed in the Genesis account of the birth order of Tamar's twins: when one twin extended his hand only to withdraw it and yield priority to his brother, he represented the provisional appearance of the Gospel way of life, which was actually superior to – and temporally prior to – the one that it only seemed to follow. Matthew's tracing of Jesus' ancestry through Perez (Matt. 1:3 – Eusebius interprets his name to mean 'division' and cites Paul's description of the Law as a dividing wall in Eph. 2:14) rather than through Zerah, the brother whom he superseded, was meant to represent Jesus' birth under the Law.

Commentaries: the Psalter and Isaiah

Following the example of Origen, Eusebius composed line by line commentaries on individual biblical books. Scholia preserved in the catenae have led some to conclude that Eusebius commented on most of the books of both Testaments.[30] This is unlikely. It is probably not a coincidence that the only

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28 Johnson, 'Rhetorical Criticism', 33.
29 A prominent theme in Eusebius' apologetics: *Hist. eccl.* 1.4; *D. E.* 1.2–10; *P. E.* 7.1–9.
30 *CPG*, no. 3469. The substantial scholia on Luke (*PG*, 24.529–605) do not appear to have come from a commentary per se. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Eusebius', argued that they originated as the lost tenth book of the *General Elementary Introduction*, of which only books 6–9 survive. The extant books are known collectively as the *Prophetic Selections*, as Eusebius himself calls them (*E. P.* 1.1,

true commentaries explicitly mentioned by ancient authorities – one on the psalter and another on the book of Isaiah – are also the only ones of which large portions still exist. Each was known largely from remains in the catenae, until a nearly complete edition of the Isaiah commentary was discovered in the margin of a Septuagint manuscript in the 1920s and edited in a critical edition by Joseph Ziegler in 1975.[31] Both come from late in his career, the Isaiah commentary very soon after the Council of Nicaea in 325, the Psalms commentary sometime in the 330s. They represent Eusebius' biblical exegesis in its most developed form. They are also the oldest extant Christian commentaries on their respective biblical books.

Why, we may ask, did Eusebius, at this late juncture in his career, when he was embroiled in intense ecclesiastical infighting in the aftermath of the Council of Nicaea, choose to write commentaries on two very long Old Testament books?

Porphyry's challenge

One factor may have been his continuing sensitivity to Porphyry's critical assault on the Bible. The Christian appropriation of the Bible of the Jews was an especially vulnerable target. As a young man Porphyry had studied in Caesarea, where he claimed to have known Origen. In a fragment quoted by Eusebius in his *Church History*, Porphyry ridiculed the Christian resort to allegory as a way of saving the text of the Old Testament (*Hist. eccl.* 6.19.4–5, 8, trans. Williamson):

> 'Enigmas' is the pompous name they give to the perfectly plain statements of Moses, glorifying them as oracles full of hidden mysteries, and bewitching the critical faculty by their extravagant nonsense . . . This absurd method must be attributed to a man whom I met while I was still quite young, who enjoyed a great reputation and thanks to the works he has left behind him, enjoys it still. I refer to Origen, whose fame among teachers of these theories is quite widespread . . . In his life he behaved like a Christian, defying the law: in his metaphysical and theological ideas he played the Greek, giving a Greek twist to foreign tales. He associated himself at all times with Plato, and was at home

p. 2.17), because they consist of proof texts drawn from the Old Testament. They were meant to be an introduction to new converts of how Christians could claim the Jewish scriptures as 'their own, though not their alien ways' (*D. E.* 3.Proem.1; cf. *P. E.* 1.1.12). Cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 167–74.

31 Eusebius, *Der Jesajakommentar*, ed. Ziegler. See Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*. On the authenticity of the remains of the massive Psalms commentary published in Migne (*PG*, 23.71–1396, 24.9–76), see *CPG*, no. 3467; Curti, *Eusebiana I*; and Curti, 'Psalms', pp. 618–26.

among the writings of Numenius and Cronius, Apollophanes, Longinus, and Moderatus, Nicomachus, and the more eminent followers of Pythagoras. He made use, too, of the books of Chaeremon the Stoic and Cornutus, which taught him the allegorical method of interpreting the Greek mysteries, a method he applied to the Jewish Scriptures.

Besides the standard criticisms which pagans, Jews and Gnostics made of the Christianising of the Old Testament, Porphyry was uniquely equipped to attack the most deeply held Christian conviction of all, the one that apologists as far back as Justin (1 *Apol.* 30) had considered the strongest proof of the Gospel: the belief that the Old Testament writers possessed exact knowledge of the person and work of Jesus, and of the spread of the Christian church to the Gentiles. Porphyry was apparently willing to concede that Hebrew prophecy could be genuine, so long as prophecy was not understood to be the exclusive prerogative of the Jews: the supreme God spoke to each people in ways peculiar to them.[32] In the case of the book of Daniel, however, his deep knowledge of ancient chronology convinced him that Daniel was not prophecy but disguised contemporary history of Judaism's great struggle with the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 BC).[33] This struck a devastating blow against Christian readings of Daniel. Beginning with the Gospel writers themselves, Christians had been accustomed to interpret Dan. 7:13 as christo-logical prophecy, and the 'desolating sacrilege' of Dan. 9:27 (also 11:31, 12:11) as the profanation of the temple predicted in Jesus' apocalyptic discourse (Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14) and fulfilled historically in AD 70. Even though Eusebius does not mention him by name, Porphyry's critique was certainly the occasion for the lengthy defence of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks of years (Dan. 9:24–7) which Eusebius mounted in his *Proof of the Gospel* (D. E. 8.2).

Porphyry also may have denied the prophetic character of the psalter. Elsewhere in the *Proof* (D. E. 10.1.3, trans. Ferrar), Eusebius defends the psalter against unnamed critics, commonly identified as Porphyry: 'As it has been proposed by some that the Book of Psalms merely consists of hymns to God and sacred songs, and that we shall look in vain in it for predictions and prophecies of the future, let us realize distinctly that it contains many prophecies, far too many to be quoted now.' Eusebius says this as he is clearing the ground for an exposition of Ps. 40, one of the psalms of Asaph, whom, Eusebius notes, the book of Chronicles credited with divine inspiration

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32 Based on a passage preserved in Eusebius' *Proof of the Gospel* (D. E. 5.Proem.3–5 = frag. 18) and which is usually attributed to Porphyry.
33 Frags. 70–91 deal with the book of Daniel.

(1 Chron. 16:4). To Asaph scripture also attributed Ps. 73, which Eusebius construes as prophesying the destruction of both the first and the second temples (*D. E.* 10.1.6–10), and Ps. 78, which he understands as predicting the temple desecration and the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. In the same way, Eusebius proceeds to read Ps. 40 as a highly specific prophecy of Judas' betrayal of Jesus. He thus construes the psalter as a whole as an interconnected skein of biblical prophecy that embraces historical fulfilment in both the Old and the New Testament, and post-biblical Christian history as well.[34]

Christian claims on the Jewish scriptures

But the primary motive behind Eusebius' commentaries was the centrality of Isaiah and the Psalms in Christianity's ongoing competition with Judaism. They represented the most contested ground in the battle for interpretive hegemony over the Old Testament / Hebrew scriptures. Eusebius had already paid tribute to their importance in several of his previous books. Perhaps the ascendancy of Constantine made it seem prudent to revisit that scriptural territory in order to underscore the boundaries between the Christian and the Jewish *politeiai*, their respective communal ways of life (see *D.E.* 1.2.2). The Constantinian documents preserved in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, another work from very late in his career, graphically demonstrated the emperor's desire for his new co-religionists to keep their distance from the Jews: 'Let there be nothing in common between you and the detestable mob of Jews . . . it was proper that the matter [the dispute over the dating of Easter] should be adjusted in such a way that nothing be held in common with that nation of parricides and Lord-killers.'[35] Like Origen before him, Eusebius was well acquainted with Jewish exegesis because of the proximity of a large, prosperous and learned Jewish community in Caesarea.[36] Also like Origen, and later Jerome, the need to prove Christian claims did not keep him from consulting Jewish authorities on perplexing texts. The *Commentary on Isaiah* contains several examples, such as his crediting 'a teacher of the Jews' with the interpretation that Hezekiah's illness (Isa. 38:1) was a punishment for his failure to sing a song of thanksgiving after the defeat of the Assyrians (Isa.

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34 Most flamboyantly in his portrayal of Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge as a typological fulfilment of the defeat of Pharaoh and his troops – providing perhaps the first of what would become many later political extrapolations from the book of Exodus. Cf. Hollerich, 'Myth and History'.

35 *Vita Const.* 3.18.2, 3.19.1. Ulrich, *Euseb*, pp. 239–54, summarises recent scholarship on imperial legislation regarding the Jews and downplays the degree to which Constantine's conversion tended to harden boundaries between Jews and Christians.

36 See Levine, *Caesarea*, and Donaldson, *Religious Rivalries*.

36–7), a haggadic interpretation which shows up in Song of Songs Rabbah (4.8.3), and in later Christian sources.[37]

We have already indicated that Eusebius understood exegesis and apologetics to be intrinsically related enterprises. His Christian theological convictions are everywhere on display. At the same time, we can see how his scholarly training and his natural inclination to historical study shape his apologetics through and through. Space allows only for a sketch of Eusebius' distinctive historical approach to Judaism, and to his equally distinctive approach to prophetic interpretation.

Reference was made above to Eusebius' backdating of the Christian revelation to the period before Abraham. Basic to this strategy was the distinction between 'Hebrews' and 'Jews':[38] the Hebrews were the pre-Mosaic 'friends of God' (*theophileis*) who observed a pure ethical monotheism – including of course the Logos as the God of the universe's agent in creation and revelation – while the Jews were the people for whom Moses established a 'secondary grade of piety' (*D. E.* 1.8.4) based on the sacrificial cult and ceremonial and dietary laws. With the coming of the Logos in the flesh, Christianity has superseded the latter by restoring the original religion of the pre-Mosaic saints, which had, as it were, 'gone to sleep' (*D. E.* 1.6.31) in the interval: 'Nothing keeps us from recognizing that the religious way of life that comes to us from Christ is one and the same as the one practiced of old by the friends of God: it is neither new nor strange' (*Hist. eccl.* 1.4.15). In this way Eusebius answered the fundamental challenge posed by Christianity's selective adherence to the Jewish scriptures. While skirting Moses by going back to Abraham (and even further) has antecedents in Paul and in some form or other is common to the apologists, Eusebius goes far beyond his predecessors in tracing a continuous prophetic history that links the original revelation to its republication in Christ. This is the heart of his interpretation of the Old Testament: the seamless interweaving of the Christian dispensation with Israel's history as recorded in the Bible. Running throughout that history he saw a tension between two orders (*tagmata*), those who represent the (often repressed and submerged) tradition of the 'Hebrews' – what in the Isaiah and Psalms commentaries he calls 'the godly polity' (*to theosebes politeuma*) – and those who represent the relatively speaking debased religion of the 'Jews', confined as it is to the city of Jerusalem and the temple observances (*D. E.* 1.2.16, 1.3.1, etc.). And yet even this relatively devalued religion of 'the Jews', with its merely

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37 *Comm. Isa.* 245.29–34; cf. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*, p. 152.
38 See Ulrich, *Euseb*, pp. 57–131.

'secondary' grade of piety, is subsumed into Christianity, for Eusebius sees in it the biblical justification for the permanent existence of two classes of membership in the Christian version of the godly polity as well.[39]

Eusebius' conviction of the historical continuity that connected the godly polity of the Old and New Testaments provided a theological rationale for his intensive involvement with literal and historical exegesis. This is evident in his concern to fix the text of the Old Testament in order to determine the meaning *pros lexin* and *pros historian*, and in his conception of biblical prophecy.

Fixing the text: Eusebius' use of the Hexapla

In general Origen was Eusebius' model for evaluating the authority of the Septuagint: as the traditional text of the church, the Septuagint has a prima facie priority, though he supplements it freely with the evidence of the versions. To all intents and purposes he regards the whole textual ensemble as scripture – a virtual 'diatessaron' (Aquila, Symmachus, LXX and Theodotion) in the Isaiah commentary, plus the 'fifth edition' as well in the Psalms commentary.[40] The following passage from *The Proof of the Gospel* is an accurate if somewhat conservative expression of his point of view:

> We must recognize that the sacred oracles include in the Hebrew much that is obscure both in the literal sense (*pros lexin*) of the words and in their deeper interpretation (*pros dianoian*), and are capable of various translations into Greek because of their difficulty. The Seventy Hebrews in concert have translated them together, and I shall pay the greatest attention to them, because it is the custom of the Christian Church to use their work. But wherever necessary, I shall call in the help of the editions of the later translators, which the Jews are accustomed to use today, so that my proof may have stronger support from all sources.[41]

Eusebius accepts the story of the Septuagint's origin as told in the Letter of Aristeas, according to which the translation was commissioned by the Egyptian King Ptolemy II Philadelphus. God himself, Eusebius says, inspired Ptolemy's proposal in order that the Gentile world would have the predictions about Christ available to them, 'accurately translated and set up in public libraries', in preparation for the day when the saviour of the world would actually appear (*P. E.* 8.1). But he avoids later elaborations of the legend,

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39 Hollerich, 'Eusebius of Caesarea'.
40 Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*, pp. 74–86; Barthélemy, 'Eusèbe, la septante, et "les autres"', pp. 53–5.
41 *D. E.* 5.Proem.35–6 (trans. Ferrar, slightly revised).

such as the story of how seventy separate translators produced miraculously identical translations.[42]

Eusebius is not entirely consistent in the way he regards the discrepancies between the Septuagint and the Hebrew. In a passage preserved in the Armenian version of his *Chronicle*, he asserts the superiority of the Septuagint to the current Hebrew version of the Jews. On the grounds that the Septuagint's chronology of the patriarchs more often agreed with the Hebrew version preserved by the Samaritans (in his opinion the oldest extant Hebrew) rather than with the current Hebrew version of the Jews, Eusebius argues that the Septuagint 'was translated from an ancient and uncorrupted text of the Hebrews'.[43] The erroneous chronology of the current Jewish scriptures, he speculates, may have arisen from the Jews' bias in favour of procreation, which led them to reduce the ages at which the patriarchs begot children in order to promote earlier marriages![44]

Rather than accuse the Jews of having tampered with the Hebrew text, he is more likely to lay responsibility for discrepancies at the door of the seventy themselves, either because they experienced genuine difficulty in rendering Hebrew into Greek, as he says in the passage quoted above, or because they were exercising a certain discretion (*oikonomia*) in concealing the true meaning. An example of the latter strategy is the way he treats textual anomalies in the Septuagint version of Ps. 86:5–7, which differs markedly from the other Greek versions (and for Eusebius that means it must differ from the Hebrew as well). Recalling the Septuagint's origins in Ptolemaic Egypt, he argues that the seventy had intentionally made their text 'dark and enigmatic' because they knew their work would be preserved under foreign rulers (the LXX of Ps. 86:6 introduced an anomalous reference to *archontes*). Predictions about Christ could not be too overt lest they threaten those who were not yet ready to receive them. But when the time came, the verse that spoke of the Most High's registering of the peoples would then be seen fulfilled in the census that attended the birth of Jesus (*PG*, 23.1049b–c).

In practice Eusebius is willing to set the Septuagint aside in favour of one or another of the Greek versions. Sometimes he will do so simply because the versions are more intelligible than the Septuagint. His commentary on

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42 As had Origen (Bammel, 'Die *Hexapla* des Origenes', pp. 129–30). Irenaeus, however, had accepted it, in a passage that Eusebius quoted in the *Church History* (*Hist. eccl.* 5.8.10–15). On the whole tradition see Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint*, (pp. 109–12 on Eusebius), and Rajak, *Translation and Survival*.

43 Eusebius, *Eusebi Chronicorum*, ed. Schoene, vol. 1, p. 96.3–5.

44 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 84.22–35 and 94.5–28.

Isa. 16:5–14 is based entirely on the version of Symmachus, because he found the Septuagint intractably obscure. Occasionally a copyist's error is invoked to explain an inferior Septuagint reading.[45] Quite often a version or versions is/are preferred over others on overtly theological grounds. An example of this is his gloss on Ps. 90, in which he pivots back and forth between four different versions (the Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus and the 'fifth edition') in order to justify an elaborate theological exegesis which treats the psalm as a prophecy, inspired by the Holy Spirit, of how the incarnate Christ would find refuge in God his Father. Aquila and Symmachus are rejected for having rendered Ps. 90:9 'more Jewishly': their translations failed to express how Christ will make the Most High his refuge, unlike the 'fifth edition' and the Septuagint, which both read Ps. 90:9 as 'Because you, O Lord, my hope, have made the Most High your refuge'.[46] On occasion he will comment on several versions seriatim and just present them equally for the reader's consideration.[47] More often he will work towards a harmonising exegesis that tries, however superficially, to reconcile the different versions.[48] Like other Christian scholars, he valued Aquila's reputation for literal fidelity (*akribeia*) to the Hebrew. Symmachus is often cited because his version is more transparent (*saphesteron*). In the Isaiah commentary Symmachus is quoted twice as often as Aquila and three times as often as Theodotion.

A point of special consideration is Eusebius' use of the Hebrew columns of the *Hexapla*. It seems likely that Eusebius' *Hexapla* did have an actual Hebrew text in Hebrew script, as well as the Hebrew in Greek transliteration.[49] How much use he could make of it is another matter.[50] In the commentary on Isaiah there are numerous references to 'the Hebrew', but these are invariably accompanied by a citation of Aquila or by a reference to 'the others' (Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion) as an ensemble. The unanimity of the Greek versions, or less frequently Aquila alone, was thus his normal guide. When he invokes 'the Hebrew' and speaks in terms of specific Hebrew *letters* (*stoicheia*),

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45 *Comm. Pss.* 61.5 (*PG*, 23.592c–d).   46 *Comm. Pss.* 90.9 (*PG*, 23.1149b–1152b).

47 Cf. the alternative interpretations of the title of Ps. 61, one based on the LXX and the other on Symmachus (*PG*, 23.589c–d).

48 E.g. Ps. 58:7 (*PG*, 23.540c), Ps. 67:28 (*PG*, 23.712b–d) and the title of Ps. 71 (*PG*, 23.792d–793a). From the Isaiah commentary, see, e.g., his gloss on Isa. 21:2 (*Comm. Isa.* 138.27–139.13).

49 In the late 1970s, Pierre Nautin argued that Origen's *Hexapla* never *had* the Hebrew text in Hebrew letters, but only a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew (Nautin, *Origène*, pp. 303–61). His case has met considerable resistance; cf. Ulrich, 'The Old Testament Text of Eusebius', pp. 553–8.

50 For what follows, see Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*, pp. 81–5. For a more optimistic assessment of Eusebius' capability with Hebrew, see Ulrich, *Euseb*, pp. 192–201, especially his analysis of *D. E.* 4.15.57–61.

we get the impression that he has had to slow down to make a painstaking letter-by-letter inspection.[51] Possession of a rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew language and grammar cannot therefore be excluded. Of course, he also drew liberally on information obtained from *The Interpretation of Hebrew Words*, an etymological handbook in his possession, and from Jewish expertise in Caesarea.

The precise extent of Eusebius' grasp of Hebrew is less important than his de facto recognition that the Hebrew text was a constitutive and not merely contingent component of the Christian Bible. Reading scripture as a polyglot synopsis of texts relativised the church's traditional Bible. Perhaps the most telling illustration of this is Eusebius' habit of commenting on passages that Origen in the *Hexapla* had marked with an asterisk, meaning that they were absent in the received text of the Septuagint but present in the Hebrew or the other Greek versions.[52] Certainly he did not intend to dethrone the Septuagint. To call his work 'a turning point in the de-canonization of the Greek Torah',[53] as does a recent study, may be an overstatement. But he does appear to be groping towards the position that Jerome would embrace unambiguously several decades later.

The redaction of prophecy

Despite the attacks of Porphyry, Eusebius insisted on the authentic inspiration of biblical prophecy. He hailed Isaiah as 'an evangelist' (Isa. 52:7) in every sense of the word, performing the same service (*diakonia*) as the writers of the Gospels in describing the generation of the Son of God, his incarnation and birth of the Virgin, and his resurrection. Not only an evangelist but an apostle as well (Isa. 6:8). The rediscovered portion of Eusebius' Isaiah commentary begins with a statement about the interpretation of prophecy (*Comm. Isa.* 3.1–9, trans. Hollerich):

> At times the Spirit showed the prophet his revelations plainly, so that there is no need for the techniques of allegory (*tropôn allêgorias*) to interpret the words, but it is enough to use the bare meanings alone (*psilais tais lexesin*). At other times, however, he showed his revelations through symbols of other realities, which suggest another meaning (*dianoian*) by expressive (*emphantikois*) words

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51 Especially interesting examples are his commentaries on Isa. 19:18, Ps. 52 (which he notes has 'the same words and same letters' (!) as Ps. 13; *PG*, 23.456b), and Ps. 71:10 (*PG*, 23.808b). The interpretation of the Septuagintal and Symmachan reading 'Areopolis' in Isa. 19:18 may depend on Eusebius' acquaintance with Aramaic rather than Hebrew.
52 E.g. for Isa. 2:22, 6:13 and 34:4 (*Comm. Isa.* 21.15–19, 43.15–44, 221.11–13).
53 Veltri, *Libraries*, p. 56.

and names, as in the case of dreams [here Eusebius quotes Joseph's dreams in Gen. 37:5–10 and 41:1–36] . . . It is similar with the present prophet. Many of the things which he prophesied were seen through symbols, and many things were said in complex fashion, with those meant literally (*pros lexin*) woven together in the same passage with those meant spiritually (*pros dianoian*).

In this programmatic statement Eusebius makes clear that he intends to avoid 'allegory' – not precisely defined here – in favour of an approach that sticks with the literal meaning of the text, except where 'expressive' language indicates that what we would call a metaphorical interpretation is appropriate, but which Eusebius identifies as the *dianoia* or 'deeper meaning'. Examination of Eusebius' usage in the commentary shows that for him the fulfilment of a prophetic utterance, the *ekbasis tôn pragmatôn*, can be a matter of either literal or spiritual interpretation, or sometimes of both. The distinction between the two functions is rather like the distinction between event and meaning, though to be sure for Eusebius supernatural realities can have the character of 'event' just as much as realities of the natural order. Spiritual interpretation is primarily devoted to disclosing the inner meaning of historical events, their true significance in God's plan, a history that began with Israel and continues seamlessly into the Christian era.[54]

Prophetic foresight anticipated events within Israel's history as well as the Christian dispensation. A striking example is Eusebius' exegesis of Isa. 7:14, which he interprets in terms of Isaiah's consolation to the people of his own time as well as to future generations. He carefully observes that Matthew's misquotation (Matt. 1:23) of the Septuagint version as 'they will call' rather than 'you will call' – which he attributes to a scribal error – would have rendered the prophecy irrelevant to Ahaz and his people, whereas it was meant to have a fulfilment 'even now' (*enteuthen êdê*).[55]

Prophecy's subject matter was notably political as well as religious. Put more properly, it did not recognise a distinction between secular and religious history, the totality of which was within the prophet's purview – a historically conscious outlook that of course had marked Eusebius since the beginning of

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54 See, e.g., Eusebius' gloss on Isa. 14:3–21: most of the text is devoted to a strictly literal and historical interpretation of the king of Babylon; but at 14:20 the Hebrew version of the passage presents what looked to Eusebius like a historical fallacy, thus leading him to apply the text not to the actual king but to the spiritual power that stood behind him (*Comm. Isa.* 102.11–104.36). In general, cf. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*, pp. 87–102, 134–42.

55 *Comm. Isa.* 48.22–49.50. Here Eusebius recognises the linguistic crux of Isa. 7:14, for which the LXX famously rendered Hebrew *'almah* as *parthenos*. In his gloss on the passage he tacitly drops Origen's appeal to the Hebrew text of Deut. 22:23–7 (cf. *Contra Celsum* 1.34), perhaps having learned from his Jewish contacts in Caesarea that Origen was mistaken.

his career as an author, as shown by his *Chronicle*,[56] and also, no doubt, why he was so sensitive to the challenges of a Porphyry. At the beginning of his *Proof of the Gospel*, Eusebius wrote of prophecy's proper subject matter (*D. E.* I. Proem. 3, trans. Ferrar):

> What sort of [prophetic] fulfillment, do you ask? They are fulfilled in countless and all kinds of ways, and amid all circumstances, both generally and in minute detail, in the lives of individual men, and in their corporate life, now nationally in the course of Hebrew history, and now in that of foreign nations. Such things as civic revolutions, changes of times, national vicissitudes, the coming of foretold prosperity, the assaults of adversity, the enslaving of races, the besieging of cities, the downfall and restoration of whole states, and countless other things that were to take place a long time after, were foretold by these writers.

The commentary on Isaiah contains a similar overture (*Comm. Isa.* 3.18–23):

> A 'vision' [Isa. 1:1] he says, not ordinary or perceptible with physical eyes, but a prophetic vision of things to come in far distant times; for just as one sees in a great painting the invasion of enemies, ravagings of countryside, sieges of cities and enslavements of men, represented with the brilliance of color, the same way he seems to see a dream, but a vision in sleep, when the divine spirit enlightens the soul.

Eusebius' conviction of the accuracy of prophetic foresight did not keep him from a realisation of what we might call the human component in inspiration. By his reckoning Isaiah's ministry extended for over half a century during a period of great political turbulence. Insight into the meaning of those complex events did not come all at once – time and perspective were needed (*Comm. Isa.* 4.15–23):

> It needs to be noted that the whole book, which only seems to be a single composition, was actually spoken over long periods of time, since there was need of extensive and precise understanding to discern the future, to determine the meaning (*dianoian*) of the events of the time, and to suit (*epharmozein*) the prophecy for the events that occurred in each reign. For the age of these kings [Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah – cf. Isa. 1:1] covered fifty years in all, during which the things contained in this whole book were spoken.

A remarkable statement of Eusebius' awareness of the composite character of the prophetic books is found in the Psalms commentary. There he explains

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56 Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, pp. 133–77.

that the 'probable' explanation (*eikos*) for the unhistorical sequence of events in the books of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel is due to the fact that the unknown persons ('perhaps Ezra, perhaps someone else') who collected the prophetic oracles simply added them as they came to their attention.[57] A similar process of haphazard collection may be the best explanation for the gradual creation of the psalter – unless, he says dryly, someone wishes to propose 'a deeper interpretation' that has escaped him. In another place he discovers greater intentionality in the editorial process, which he says was actually under the guidance of the Spirit: 'The things that were uttered [referring to the original utterance of the words of the psalm, whether by David or by someone else] were rightly no longer regarded as ordinary prayers but as prophetic words, and the ones who had received the *charisma* of the discernment of spirits inserted them into the divine books.'[58]

The lengthiest such commentary on biblical redaction is found in Eusebius' gloss on Ps. 62, the title of which reads, 'A psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judaea'.[59] That reminds Eusebius of how the actual history of David, as recounted in 1 Samuel (he calls it '1 Kings'), is 'confused' in the ordering of the psalms as we have them in the psalter. He patiently reorders several Davidic psalms in what he believes is the correct sequence and then reflects on possible reasons for the confused order. First he proposes an allegorical interpretation that would see a symbolic meaning in the respective number of each psalm. Ps. 50, for instance, which deals with repentance and pardon for sin, might be thought of as a symbolic reflection of the fifty year jubilee cycle, during which debts were forgiven and slaves released. Such an approach, he says, is an idle exercise: first, because the numbers themselves are far from certain (some psalms have no numbers, and there is disagreement in the versions of where to divide certain psalms), and second, because no amount of ingenuity will discover an allegorical meaning in each number from 1 to 150 – what, he asks, can someone make out of the number 62?[60]

Recognising that opinions may differ, Eusebius proposes two explanations of his own. One is that the ordering is thematic: the psalms are grouped according to the affinity of their content, the sequence of Ps. 41–50 being in his view an excellent example. This approach is in fact one he favours whenever he can. But then he offers a second explanation, this one more historical

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57 *Comm. Pss.* 86.2–4 (*PG*, 23.1040b–1041d).   58 *Comm. Pss.* 60.6 (*PG*, 23.580c).

59 *Comm. Pss.* 62:2–3 (*PG*, 23.601a–604b).

60 The allegorical interpretation of the psalm numbers which Eusebius rejects here would seem to be Origen's, though Origen too recognised the possible role played by contingency. Cf. Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* (*PG*, 12.1073d–1076b).

in character. During the chaos that ensued after the Assyrian captivity (*sic*), the continuity of tradition was ruptured and the biblical books disordered. Afterwards, the psalms may simply have been inserted in the order in which they were rediscovered:

> It would be no wonder that in such disturbed times the contents of the book of the Psalms had fallen into oblivion . . . Then either Ezra or some other prophet set about restoring the book, although they may only have collected the psalms over the course of quite a long time, not all at once. As a result they put at the beginning those psalms they found first. That is why not all of those that belong to David are placed in order. Those having to do with the sons of Kore, Asaph, Solomon, Moses, Aithan, and Aiman, and David too, are gathered in the book not according to the order in which they were first pronounced but as they happened to be discovered. And so it happened that those which were later in time but were found first were therefore placed first, and vice versa.[61]

And yet, he admits, such an explanation is only 'a matter of probability [*ex eikotôn*]'.

This restrained assessment demonstrates Eusebius' scholarly mentality at its best. The present survey has emphasised those aspects of his work which are the literary product of that mentality: a lifelong devotion to the text of the Bible; an exegetical approach that emphasised the Bible's literal and historical meaning; and a belief that history – all of history in so far as it can be recovered, both within the Bible and outside of it – is the medium of God's self-revelation (he would have said 'under the providential direction of the Logos') and therefore an appropriate subject of study. All of these naturally reflected and served Eusebius' Christian faith. His working assumption that scholarship and faith were friends and not enemies may be his most important legacy to the history of the Christian Bible.

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61 *Comm. Pss.* 62 (*PG*, 23.604a–b).

Jerome

ADAM KAMESAR

Life and works

The sources for the life of Jerome (*c*. 347–420) are most plentiful. They consist primarily of his own writings, and in particular his letters. On the basis of these, one can reconstruct the chronology of his life and follow him on his journeys and migrations across the breadth of the Roman empire. The correspondence also provides great detail about his social network and, employing the prosopographical method, scholars have reached important results about the nature of his career as a man of letters and as a monk in the Late Antique Roman setting.[1] In the present context, however, we are interested in examining his contributions to biblical scholarship, and the following biographical sketch will focus on the educational aspects of his development. Jerome certainly saw himself as a lifelong student, ever acquiring new approaches (*Ep*. 53.10, 84.3). Accordingly, it is important to gain some sense of the traditions of learning on which he drew.

Jerome was born around 347 in the town of Stridon, which, according to his own testimony, was in the border region between the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia, and perhaps in present day Croatia. He is called a Dalmatian by his contemporary Palladius (*Hist. Laus*. 41.2). He came from a well-to-do Christian family, and was sent to Rome for his secondary and advanced education. The former consisted of *grammatikē*, which includes formal 'grammar' but indicates more broadly the systematic study of literary texts. Jerome went to the school of one of the most celebrated teachers of the age, Aelius Donatus. Donatus wrote commentaries on Terence and Virgil,

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1 See especially Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis*, the main lines of which are available in English in his short biography, *Jerome*. Another excellent and recent work is Fürst, *Hieronymus*, which has a 'Prosopographia Hieronymiana' (pp. 150–220), and a full list of editions and translations of Jerome's works (pp. 283–304). The fullest biography in English remains Kelly, *Jerome*.

remnants of which have come down to us. From these remnants, we can get some idea of exegetical method as it was applied to the Latin classics and as Jerome must have learned it. Jerome will also have gained an appreciation of the introductory topics and technical questions that needed to be confronted when one studied a literary work: the life of the author, the title of the work, its authenticity, its genre and style, its intention, and the number and order of books.[2] Such issues, and ones closely related to them, were also of key importance in biblical studies, and especially for Jerome, who was to distinguish himself as an editor and translator, and not only as a commentator. Following his years with Donatus, Jerome went on to more advanced studies in rhetoric. He will have taken the standard curriculum in composition and in speaking, perhaps in preparation for a career in the imperial bureaucracy. His Latin education was no doubt very intense, and he himself would later claim that almost from the cradle he had spent his time among 'grammarians, rhetors, and philosophers'.[3]

When he was around twenty, Jerome left Rome for Augusta Treverorum in north-east Gaul, today Trier. The city was at that time an administrative centre, and Jerome may have gone there with the hope of entering government service. He never took such a step, however, because in Trier he seems to have experienced some kind of conversion to a monastic ideal. He would not seek a worldly career. At Trier he also came into contact with advanced Christian biblical scholarship, in the form of Hilary of Poitiers' *Tractates on the Psalms*. This commentary is based on the work of Origen and exposes the reader to some of the complex literary problems connected with the psalter: the titles of the psalms, their authorship, their genre, their numbers and divisions. Many of these issues are similar to those that Jerome will have confronted in relation to the Latin classics, as indicated in the previous paragraph. In addition, Hilary deals with questions concerning the translation of the psalms, from Hebrew to Greek and from Greek to Latin. Finally, if Jerome had access to the introduction to Hilary's commentary, a fact of which we cannot be certain, he will also have learned of the practice of consulting Jewish teachers in dealing with scholarly problems. Consequently, the reading of Hilary's commentary

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2 For these topics, see Donatus, *Vita Vergilii* 47, with the following explanations (text available in the *Enciclopedia virgiliana* 5.2 (1991), pp. 439–40), and the closely related Servius, *Ad Aeneidem*, preface (ed. G.Thilo and H. Hagen, vol. I (Leipzig: Teubner, 1881) p. I). For discussion, see D. van Berchem, 'Poètes et grammairiens', *MH* 9 (1952), 79–87.

3 *Praef. Iob* 40–1 (references to line numbers of the prefaces of Jerome's revisions and translations of the Bible follow R. Weber and R. Gryson (eds.), *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, 4th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994)). It is unlikely, however, that Jerome studied philosophy formally in Rome. See Kelly, *Jerome*, pp. 16–17.

may have led Jerome to understand that his previous training with Donatus was anything but irrelevant to the Christian life. He will also have discovered that biblical literature presented some of its own unique problems, yet not ones that would be beyond the range of a person with his talents and background.

We do not know how long Jerome was in Trier. He returned to Italy, however, and seems to have spent a number of years at Aquileia near the head of the Adriatic, not far from his own home. He was connected with a circle of people who also desired to live the ascetic life, among them Rufinus, from nearby Concordia. After a few years, the group appears to have broken up, and Jerome decided, as many like-minded Christians at the time, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Probably around the year 373, he reached Antioch, but went no further. He became a guest in the house of his friend Evagrius, a wealthy Christian who had been in the imperial service. Jerome stayed in Antioch until approximately 380. At some point during this period, he also ventured into the desert of Chalcis, to the east of Antioch, perhaps for a period of two or three years, to live a more authentic form of ascetic life. It was previously thought that he was a true hermit and lived in near isolation. However, S. Rebenich has shown that it makes more sense to envision Jerome practising a coenobitic form of monasticism, perhaps at Evagrius' estate at Maronia, in the vicinity of Chalcis. His contacts with the outside world and his ongoing interaction with copyists and books make this conclusion almost inevitable.[4]

The period at Antioch and in the 'desert' was extremely important for Jerome's development. Antioch had always been one of the great cultural centres of the East, and it was there that he was able to gain proficiency in Greek, although he probably already had an elementary knowledge of the language. A basic course of readings in Greek philosophy, which included the *Isagoge* of Porphyry and probably some of Aristotle's *Organon* with the commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias, may be datable to these years. We know that at Antioch he had gained enough confidence in Greek to study the scriptures with Apollinarius of Laodicea.[5] During his years in the desert he began the study of Hebrew, with the ostensible purpose of warding off sexual thoughts. His teacher was a convert from Judaism (*Ep.* 125.12).

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4 Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis*, pp. 85–98; *Jerome*, pp. 13–20.
5 For Jerome's course in philosophy and his study with Apollinarius, see *Ep.* 50.1, 84.3; and P. Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore*, 2nd edn (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1948), pp. 37–8.

Around 380, Jerome left Antioch for Constantinople. It is possible that he wished to continue his studies under Greek teachers, or further his career in ecclesiastical circles.[6] In any case, while there he produced his first translations of Greek works, the *Chronicle* of Eusebius and a selection of Origen's homilies on the Major Prophets. The prefaces to these works give us some important information about his progress in biblical studies. In the preface to his translation and adaptation of the *Chronicle*, he discusses the problem of translation in general. He stresses the difficulty of the task and the translator's predicament of having to choose between a word-for-word and a sense-for-sense method, neither of which is completely satisfactory. Although he begins his discussion with Cicero and translation from Greek to Latin, he comes to comment on the translations of the Bible as well. To this discussion we shall return below.

The preface to the translation of Origen's homilies is also of great significance. Here Jerome responds to the request of Vincentius to 'make Origen Latin', referring to him as 'the second [sc. most important] teacher of the churches after the Apostle(s)'. He attributes the latter commendation to Didymus the Blind and, writing about ten years later, he says that only an incompetent person would deny that it was merited.[7] Jerome had been exposed to Origen's scholarship already in Trier, perhaps without knowing it, when he read Hilary's *Tractates on the Psalms*. During his residence in Antioch and Constantinople he must have read more deeply in Origen's works. At Constantinople he had become a pupil of Gregory of Nazianzus, an enthusiast of Origen. He no doubt reached the conclusion that Christian biblical scholarship could progress only along the lines that Origen had marked out.[8]

Jerome was in Constantinople during the second ecumenical council, which concluded in the summer of 381. The following year he returned to Italy, accompanying Paulinus of Antioch and Epiphanius of Salamis, who were going to Rome on ecclesiastical business. He quickly made friends in high places, becoming an assistant to Pope Damasus, and a spiritual advisor to several upper-class Roman women. Among other things, Damasus asked Jerome to revise and correct the Latin text of the Gospels, which, due to

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6 On Jerome's stay in Constantinople and its background, see S. Rebenich, 'Asceticism, Orthodoxy, and Patronage. Jerome in Constantinople', *Studia Patristica* 33 (1997), 358–77.
7 *Nom. hebr.*, preface. On the phrase itself, later applied to Augustine by the ninth-century heretic Gottschalk, see G. Bardy, 'Post apostolos ecclesiarum magister', *Revue du Moyen Âge Latin* 6 (1950), 313–16.
8 Cf. *Ep*. 33; *Praef. Hom. Orig. in Cant.* (both written slightly later).

continuous revision and copying, had come to exist in a variety of forms. Damasus requested an edition that would be in greater accord with the Greek original. It is unclear whether this commission extended to the rest of the New Testament or to the Old Testament. We do know that while still at Rome, Jerome undertook to revise the Latin text of the psalter, and correct it in accord with the Greek text of the Septuagint.

Jerome also formed relationships with a number of Roman matrons such as Marcella and Paula, who were interested in pursuing an ascetic life. He read the scriptures with these women, and guided them in a kind of *lectio divina*, as it would later be called by St Benedict, or regular reading of the Bible for spiritual edification. Of course, he was now no longer pupil but master, yet in providing instruction and answering queries he also advanced his own scholarship. This is clear from his correspondence of that period. However surprising it may seem, he apparently made his most significant strides in Hebrew while at Rome. Of particular significance is a passage where he says that he was engaged in 'checking' the version of Aquila against the Hebrew text, in a book-by-book sequence (*Ep*. 32.1). Even if he is really saying that he was perfecting his Hebrew with the aid of Aquila's literal version, this would be most impressive, since the books he says he has gone through amount to more than half of the entire Hebrew Bible. He also indicates that he borrowed Hebrew volumes from the local synagogue (*Ep*. 36.1), and this may point to more intensive reading sessions with Jewish consultants.

While Jerome made friends at Rome, he also made enemies. This is most likely connected with his zeal and propaganda for asceticism, which offended the more moderate Christians. After the death of Damasus in late 384, he thought it best to leave the city. Nevertheless, Jerome's Roman sojourn, although brief, was a turning point in his career as a scholar. The commission from Damasus concerning the Gospels and the advanced Hebrew study proved to be the basis of his achievements as an editor and translator of biblical texts.

In the summer of 385, Jerome set out again for the East. After travels in Palestine and a short period of study in Egypt with Didymus the Blind, he settled in Bethlehem with Paula. They established a monastery for men and a convent for women, and it was here that Jerome worked and lived until his death in 419 or 420. He continued to study Hebrew and read the Bible with Jewish teachers. And at Bethlehem he produced the vast majority of his literary works. Even though he resided in the Greek East, many of these works had a prompt circulation throughout the Latin-speaking part of the Roman empire. This is because Jerome continued to be in touch by letter with a vast

network of patrons and correspondents. As a scholar and as a writer, he came to be much in demand.

In the field of biblical scholarship, his works can be divided into a number of categories: (i) revisions and translations of biblical books; (ii) translations and adaptations of Greek exegetical works and handbooks; (iii) commentaries; (iv) homilies. However, Jerome seems to have juggled different projects at the same time, often changing his attention from one project to another as a request came in from a patron or correspondents. Consequently, there is not always a systematic order or chronological continuity when a project involves multiple biblical books. His various works are spread across the years of his sojourn in Bethlehem, and not necessarily in biblical sequence.[9] The following represents a brief summary. For the order and chronology of the revisions and translations of the Bible, we may refer to the summary that appears in a previous chapter of this volume.[10] Regarding the translation of Greek works, we have already mentioned that Jerome translated a number of Origen's homilies on the Major Prophets when at Constantinople. He also translated two of his homilies on the Song of Songs while at Rome, and, in his early years at Bethlehem, thirty-nine homilies on Luke. Also in his first years at Bethlehem, perhaps between 389 and 391, he translated and adapted two Greek reference books of a technical nature: *On Hebrew Names*, a list of biblical proper names with their Greek translations, and Eusebius' *Book of Places*, a list of biblical place names with a brief description of their location. As a commentator, Jerome focused his primary attention on the Old Testament, and in particular the Prophets. He did produce, in his first years in Bethlehem, commentaries on four Pauline letters: Philemon, Galatians, Ephesians and Titus. Later on he wrote a *Commentary on Matthew* in the space of a few weeks at the request of Eusebius of Cremona who wanted reading material for a sea voyage. In the period 389–92, he also wrote brief works on three books of the Old Testament: the *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, the *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* and the *Commentarioli* or *Notes on the Psalms*. He began his work on the Prophets with commentaries on Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Haggai, probably around 392. The commentaries on Jonah and Obadiah, however, were not written until 396, and those on Zechariah, Malachi, Hosea, Joel and Amos were only completed ten years later, in 406. Jerome dedicated

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9 For a bird's-eye view of the chronological order of Jerome's works, see the excellent chart in the inside front cover of Fürst, *Hieronymus*. Greater detail is provided in the 'Werkverzeichnis', pp. 283–304.

10 See Bogaert in this volume, pp. 514–16.

the final years of his life to his commentaries on the Major Prophets, taking up in succession Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The commentary on Isaiah occupied him from 408 to 410, that on Ezekiel from 410 to 414, and the one on Jeremiah, begun in 414, was still unfinished when he died. Many of Jerome's homilies also survive, especially on the Psalms and the Gospel of Mark. These cannot be dated with certainty, but were probably composed across the span of his years in Bethlehem. In his *Against Rufinus* 2.24, he says that he preached daily to the monks.

Editions and views on canon

Jerome's place in the history of the Bible is based primarily on his role in the creation of the Vulgate, the standard edition of the Bible in its Latin form. The actual formation of this edition, one should emphasise, took place well after his time. But Jerome is the father of the Vulgate in the sense that he was the creator of most of its component parts. In the New Testament, he revised the text of the Gospels and corrected it from the original Greek, and he at least inspired the revision of Acts, the Epistles and Revelation. In the Old Testament his work was of a much more radical nature, for it culminated in his substitution of the Hebrew text for the Greek Septuagint as the basis for a new Latin version. This change is more profound than we might think, because the Hebrew text and the Septuagint had been evolving separately for five or six hundred years, and represented quite different textual traditions by 400 CE. Even variations that might appear to us to be minor were felt quite acutely by ancient interpreters of the Bible, because they read the text very closely, attributing significance to the smallest details in wording. Corresponding to Jerome's use of the Hebrew as the base text of the Latin Old Testament was his advocacy of the Hebrew canon. In this initiative he was perhaps carrying certain tendencies in the eastern church to their logical conclusion, although, as far as the final form of the Vulgate is concerned, he did not completely succeed in imposing his position.

The origins of the project that was to become the Vulgate go back to the years 382–4, when Jerome was serving as an assistant to Pope Damasus. As we have indicated above, it was Damasus that officially commissioned the revision of the Gospels. The source we have for this commission is Jerome's own preface. Here he explains that the revision was a matter of practical necessity, in that there were in circulation 'practically as many text forms (*exemplaria*) as manuscripts'. His primary objective was to correct errors of

translation and those resulting from the transmission process.[11] Jerome would later call this revision an 'emendation' (*Ep.* 112.20), setting the record straight after Augustine had written and thanked him for 'translating' the Gospels (*Ep.* 71.6). He therefore seems to have viewed his work as falling within the rubric of *emendatio*, one of the 'officia' proper to Greek and Latin grammatical science (*grammatikē*) as defined by Varro.[12] We know from the subscriptions in Latin manuscripts of Livy, Apuleius and other pagan authors that this activity of emendation was in full swing in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. It is difficult to view the work of Jerome, who had been a student of Donatus, as completely divorced from this context, even if biblical literature had its own particular requirements.[13] Although Jerome sometimes gives the impression that he revised the entire New Testament, most scholars do not believe that the versions of Acts, the Epistles and Revelation in the Vulgate are his work. According to the most cogent voices, these revisions should be attributed to Rufinus the Syrian, a disciple of Jerome, and were produced sometime around 400 CE.[14]

Jerome undertook a similar revision of the Latin psalter while at Rome, correcting it from the Greek text of the Septuagint. However, when he arrived in Palestine, he began a more extensive revision of the Latin Old Testament, basing it on Origen's critical edition of the Septuagint. This seems to have been contained in Origen's *Hexapla*, the multi-columned Bible containing the Hebrew text and the other Greek versions, to which Jerome had access in the library at Caesarea (*Comm. Tit.* 3.9; *Comm Pss.* 1.4a). It was also circulating separately in the editions propagated by Pamphilus and Eusebius, and was widely available in Palestine.[15] We know that Jerome completed a Hexaplaric revision of Chronicles, Job, Psalms and the books of Solomon (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs), because we have prefaces for these books. However, only the Hexaplaric revision of the psalter, which came to be called the 'Gallican Psalter', became part of the Vulgate. The rest of the Old Testament is made

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11 *Praef. evang.* 12–16. That *exemplaria* must be rendered as 'text forms' in this passage is acknowledged in W. E. Plater and H. J. White, *A Grammar of the Vulgate* (Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 6.

12 Frag. 236 in G. Funaioli, *Grammaticae Romanae Fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907).

13 Cf. E. Pöhlmann, *Einführung in die Überlieferungsgeschichte und in die Textkritik der antiken Literatur*, vol. 1 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994), pp. 82–4.

14 See esp. B. Fischer, 'Das Neue Testament in lateinischer Sprache', in K. Aland (ed.), *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972), pp. 1–92, at pp. 20–1, 49, 73, 74. For further references, see Brown Tkacz, *'Labor tam utilis'*, 53, 64 n. 128.

15 For more details on the *Hexapla* and the Hexaplaric edition of the Septuagint, see Dorival in this volume, pp. 608–11.

up of the versions made directly from the Hebrew (with the exception of the deuterocanonical books that had no Hebrew parent text). Of the other revisions based on the Hexaplaric edition of the Greek text, only those of Job and the Song of Songs have even survived in their integral form.[16]

It is sometimes thought that Jerome abandoned the Hexaplaric revision when, in the course of working on it, he came to understand that it was necessary to translate directly from the Hebrew. This will have been around 391, the approximate date when he began the translations from the Hebrew. In favour of this idea is the fact that we have definite evidence for the Hexaplaric revision only with regard to the six books mentioned. One can also point to chronology, in that the revision seems to have preceded the version from the Hebrew. This is certain in the case of the revisions that we know were completed.[17] Other circumstances, however, are at variance with the notion of such an abrupt shift in perspective on the part of Jerome. In the first place, we know from his preface to Eusebius' *Chronicle* and from his letters written at Rome that he had discovered the importance and absolute centrality of the *hebraica veritas*, or Hebrew truth, at a much earlier point in his career. Indeed, his advocacy of the Hexaplaric recension, among the others in circulation, was based on the fact that it had been corrected so as to be in greater accord with the Hebrew. Second, Jerome took great pride in the achievement of the Hexaplaric revision throughout his career, always stressing that it was an *emendation* (*Ep.* 71.5 (read: 'emenda*tam*'); *Adv. Ruf.* 2.24, 3.25). He would later write to Augustine not that he had abandoned the revision, but that he had lost much of it (*Ep.* 134.2). In the context of ancient grammatical science, emendation was a different kind of work from translation, and for Jerome it was clearly not a question of 'either/or'. The Hexaplaric revision, even unfinished, was an achievement in its own right. One might say that by producing this revision, Jerome was acting the churchman, yet nevertheless trying to bring Bible readers to what was in his view a more authentic text. For the Hexaplaric recension was 'Hebraised', and this Hebraisation was for Jerome a step in the right direction. The promotion of the Hexaplaric recension was, as it were, his 'bottom-line' position.[18]

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16 On the transmission of these, see J. Ziegler in his edition of the Greek Job, *Septuaginta* XI:4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), pp. 37–40; A. Vaccari, *Scritti di erudizione e di filologia*, vol. II (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1958), pp. 121–46.

17 See L.H. Cottineau, 'Chronologie des versions bibliques de Saint Jérôme', in *Miscellanea Geronimiana* (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1920), pp. 54–5.

18 For more details on the question of the Hexaplaric revision, see my *Jerome*, pp. 49–58.

On the other hand, with his translation *iuxta Hebraeos* ('according to the Hebrew') Jerome was being true to himself and following his own scholarly instincts. A translation directly from the Hebrew was anything but obvious, because the Septuagint was the time-honoured Bible of the church. However, Jerome's new translation, like the revision, had its ultimate roots in Origen's *Hexapla*. The *Hexapla* had brought the textual problem in the Old Testament to the fore, because it provided an opportunity for one to get a sense of the extent to which the Septuagint was different from the then current Hebrew original. One could compare, for the first time, the Hebrew text and the Septuagint on a line-by-line basis. In addition, the *Hexapla* contained and made known other more recent Greek translations, especially those ascribed to Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. All of these three *recentiores* were in much closer accord with the Hebrew text than was the Septuagint. Consequently, Christian scholars became aware in a more concrete fashion that their sacred texts were not originals, but translations, and translations that seemed to be often at variance with their parent text.

This awareness led to different reactions. On the one hand, it elicited some very sophisticated thinking in defence of the traditional Greek version. In Hilary of Poitiers, for example, we find a most interesting theory. In his view, the seventy translators had access to a secret oral tradition that had been handed down from Moses, through the Jewish elders, to themselves. This oral tradition allowed them to translate more accurately any ambiguities in the Hebrew text, which existed in significant measure because the text was written in consonants only, without vocalisation. The later translators such as Aquila did not have access to this oral tradition, and this caused them to err and 'lead the Gentiles astray' on many occasions. Hilary may here also be responding to the rabbinic view that the Jewish Torah is the more authentic form of revelation, because it includes the oral in addition to the written tradition (Tanhuma, Ki Tissa 34). In the view of Hilary it is rather the Septuagint that contains both the written and the oral tradition. In any case, the implication of this view is that the Hebrew text has become superfluous.[19] Epiphanius (*c*. 315–403) and Augustine developed a different notion. Following Eusebius, they believed that God himself instigated the translation of the seventy, so that the Gentiles might come to know the true faith. The reliability of their version is guaranteed by its role in this providential dispensation, and any

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19 For Hilary's theory, see my article, 'Hilary of Poitiers, Judeo-Christianity, and the Origins of the LXX. A Translation of *Tractatus super Psalmos* 2.2–3 with Introduction and Commentary', *VC* 59 (2005), 264–85.

passages that diverged from the Hebrew may have been inspired by God, with a view to the salvation of the Gentiles.[20] In this sense the Septuagint would represent a special and indeed more advanced stage of revelation. The Hebrew text would here again be almost obsolete.

On the other hand, Origen's *Hexapla* also stimulated more critical approaches to the Septuagint version, and led to the recognition, at least in some circles, that it did not have a monopoly on the correct translation. Of special importance is the figure of Eusebius of Emesa (*c*. 300–59), who was one of the early masters of the Antiochene school. Eusebius took an interest in the Hebrew text that is perhaps without parallel in any other Greek father. Although he does not appear to have known Hebrew, he had access to Hebrew informants, and he was probably bilingual in Syriac and Greek. He used an actual Syriac version, and he was able to use his knowledge of Syriac to interpret his information about the Hebrew text. He seems also to have used some Jewish Aramaic or targumic sources. Despite these innovative approaches, however, he continued to rely on the Septuagint as his primary biblical text. Diodore of Tarsus, the student of Eusebius, followed his teacher's textual methods to some degree. However, Diodore's own pupil, Theodore of Mopsuestia, the greatest of the Antiochene exegetes, reacted against them. Theodore acknowledged the priority of the Hebrew in theory, but had no confidence at all in the Syriac version as a means to accessing it. He also felt that the literal character of the Septuagint made it preferable to the version of Symmachus. Theodore's exegesis itself was based on a close and highly sophisticated reading of the traditional version. In general, one could say that Theodore, on 'scientific' grounds, returned to a stricter reliance on the Septuagint. This meant that the insights of Eusebius of Emesa were not developed to the extent that they might have been.[21]

Against this background, we can appreciate that the idea of Jerome to return to the Hebrew source of the Old Testament was truly radical. He was able to justify it, however, because the Old Latin was not on a par with the Greek versions. It stood at two removes from the original because it was the translation of a translation, or, as Jerome puts it, it was in the third position (*Praef. evang*. 16–18). He argued that, if the Latin New Testament was based on the Greek, the Old Testament must be based on the Hebrew (*Ep*. 112.20; cf. *Ep*. 71.5, 106.2). A new Latin translation, which was much closer to the Hebrew original than the old one, could be seen as something like the younger Greek

20 See Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 6; Augustine, *Doct. Chr*. 2.22; cf. Eusebius, *P. E.* 8.1.6.
21 On the Antiochenes and the text of the Old Testament, see my *Jerome*, pp. 38–40.

versions that Origen had assembled in the *Hexapla*. And Jerome did not hesitate to promote his new version as a kind of Latin equivalent to the *Hexapla* (*Praef. Jos*. 6–11). His goal was to put Latin readers in closer proximity to the Hebrew source.

With regard to the canon of the Old Testament, Jerome makes his position clear in his so-called *Prologus galeatus*, the preface to the books of Samuel and Kings, which was to serve as a general introduction to all of the books translated 'according to the Hebrew'. Here he takes the position that only those books which are found in the Hebrew Bible can be considered canonical. He expresses this with the help of a Jewish tradition, which, however, had been taken over by many church fathers before his time. According to the tradition, the number of books in the Bible corresponds to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, namely, twenty-two. In order to reach this number, one needs to combine certain books into one, like Jeremiah and Lamentations. This tradition about the number twenty-two is attested as early as Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 1.38; perhaps also in Jubilees 2:22–3), but its full significance emerges only in the fathers. In *Philocalia* 3, Origen puts it as follows: just as twenty-two letters form the basis for wisdom and divine teachings expressed in written form, so do twenty-two books form the basis for the wisdom of God and the knowledge of that which exists. Jerome expresses a similar notion, and concludes that books outside the Hebrew lists cannot be canonical.[22] This includes those books that were part of the Greek Bible, but not the Hebrew. Two of these, Tobit and Judith, Jerome agreed reluctantly to translate, a circumstance which again reveals his willingness to compromise with his reading public. Both of these versions did ultimately become part of the Vulgate. Most of the other deuterocanonical books also came to be included, but in unrevised Old Latin versions.

Literary appreciation and translation

A distinctive component of the biblical scholarship of Jerome is his ability to appreciate the literary quality of the scriptures. He was a born *philologus* and a master stylist. His sensitivity in matters of literary appreciation emerges in an early discussion of biblical translation, which appears in the preface to his

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22 *Prol. gal*. 1–22, 52–5. For the background to Jerome's views on the canon and fuller details on his own position, see R. Hennings, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Augustinus und Hieronymus und ihr Streit um den Kanon des Alten Testaments und die Auslegung von Gal. 2,11–14* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 131–200.

Latin edition of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, from around 380.[23] He points out that the translation of the seventy does not preserve the same 'flavour' (*sapor*) of the original, and goes on to discuss what is 'lost in translation', not in regards to content, but in regards to style and literary appeal. This approach stands in contrast to what had been handed down about translation in the biblical tradition. The grandson of Ben Sira, who translated his grandfather's work into Greek in the second half of the second century BCE, is concerned more with content than with form when he states that what is said in Hebrew 'does not have the same meaning' when rendered into another language.[24] Jerome, on the other hand, laments the fact that 'literate men', not knowing that the sacred writings are translated from the Hebrew, are put off by their 'sordid dress' before they are even able to discover the beauty of their content. Yet, so he claims, the psalms may be compared with the best of Latin and Greek lyric poetry and so also the songs in Deuteronomy and Isaiah. The books of Solomon, for their part, embody 'gravitas', solemnity.[25] But the artistic quality of these writings simply does not come across in translation. In Greek, they sound different, although they may retain something of their literary effect, but in Latin they are utterly disjointed.[26]

The reference to the 'literate men' allows us to appreciate the context within which Jerome emphasised the aesthetic aspects of the Bible, especially as they might emerge from the original Hebrew. There had developed over time, especially among the more educated classes, the perception that the Bible was lacking in literary quality. This perception is not surprising, because the biblical corpus was a foreign entity in the Graeco-Latin literary context. The genres represented among the biblical writings often did not neatly correspond with those employed by classical authors, and the language of the Bible, in Greek and Latin, was felt to be well below the standards of Sophocles, Plato or Cicero. This problem came to be particularly acute in the fourth century, when Christianity was engaged in a cultural struggle with paganism on near equal footing. The traditional solution to the problem, perhaps formulated

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23 For the text, see Eusebius, *Chronicon*, ed. R. Helm, 2nd edn, GCS 47 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956), especially pp. 1–4.

24 Sirach, prologue 21–6. The word employed is *isodynamein*, which indicates functional equivalence or synonymity in Greek grammatical and exegetical texts, including those that probably reflect the Alexandrian environment. See especially *Schol. in Hom. Il.* 5.194a, 21.363a; *Schol. in Pind. Olymp.* 1.91b; *Schol. in Pind. Isthm.* 8.83. Cf. W. G. Rutherford, *A Chapter in the History of Annotation* (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 315 with n. 17.

25 For 'gravitas' as a quality of style, often attributed to Plato, see Cicero, *Orat.* 62; *De or.* 1.47; cf. *Brut.* 121.

26 This last sentence is my paraphrase of the key sentence, 'haec cum Graece legimus, aliud quiddam sonant, cum Latine, penitus non haerent'.

first with reference to the New Testament, was to acknowledge the absence of art in the Bible, but to claim that this was of minor significance. It was the content, not the form, of the biblical writings that was important. Indeed, the simple style of the scriptures made them accessible to all people. Much less common was the claim that, despite appearances to the contrary, the Bible did indeed possess a literary beauty.[27] But even within the context of this latter claim, as it was made for the Old Testament, only rarely was it pointed out that the original language of the text was Hebrew.[28] Much more common was the approach employed by Augustine in the fourth book of *On Christian Teaching*, namely, to point out the use of rhetorical figures as they can be discerned even in translation.[29]

It may be acknowledged that Jerome's basic attitudes on this issue are in line with those of earlier fathers. In his programmatic letter to Paulinus of Nola about scriptural study, he states that the 'simplicity' or low level of biblical style is due to two causes: faults of the translators and the intention to speak to the common man as well as to the educated person (*Ep.* 53.10). However, he was able to express more forcefully than anyone before him, as we have seen just above, the idea that the scriptures, if read in the original Hebrew, had great literary appeal. And more importantly, he was able to bring practical application to this idea, and understand its implications in order to advance appreciation and criticism of scripture. We know for example that there developed within his circle the custom of singing the psalms in Hebrew (*Ep.* 39.1, 108.26). Perhaps even more impressive is his attempt to reach a stylistic evaluation of the Major Prophets, an attempt that merits a brief discussion.

In his prefaces to the translations of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Jerome gives a brief assessment of the style of each. Isaiah exhibits an 'urbane elegance', the power of which it is impossible to reproduce in translation. In Jeremiah, on the other hand, one finds a certain 'rusticity' and simplicity of speech, appropriate for one who came from a village. The style of Ezekiel, finally, stands somewhere in between the two. It is likely that Jerome is here applying the theory of the three styles, known from classical sources and perhaps going back to Theophrastus, to the three Major Prophets. It was common to ascribe the three styles to different members of a canon of authors, or to single works in a set. Among the Greek orators, for example, Gorgias personifies

27 On the 'literary problem' of the scriptures and the two primary solutions advanced by the fathers, see E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, 5th edn, vol. II (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1958), pp. 516–28.
28 Cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7.59; Eusebius, *P. E.* 11.5.2.
29 See Norden, *Kunstprosa*, pp. 526–8.

the solemn style, Lysias the simple and Isocrates the middle. In one author, Virgil, the elevated style appears in the *Aeneid*, the humble style in the *Eclogues* and middle style in the *Georgics*.

What is noteworthy about Jerome's use of the scheme, however, is his choice of categories. In the Greek and Latin sources, the high style is usually called 'solemn' or 'elevated', the middle 'smooth' and the low style 'simple' or 'unadorned'. The categories of 'urbanity' and 'rusticity' do not come into play. So why did Jerome apply these to the Prophets? The answer to this question may lie in the nature of the sources consulted by him. It is well known that there is little interest in 'literary criticism' of the Bible in rabbinic literature. Nevertheless, in the Babylonian Talmud Hagiga 13b one finds a passage where Ezekiel's description of the divine glory is compared to that of Isaiah. And it is stated by Raba, a teacher who lived in the first half of the fourth century, that the description of Ezekiel is similar to that of a *ben-kefar* (villager), whereas that of Isaiah is similar to that of a *ben-kerakh* (inhabitant of a large city). In another rabbinic text, r. Levi (fl. 300 CE) says that Jeremiah, as a villager, was wont to reprimand Israel in a mild and 'consolatory' manner when he was in Jerusalem. Isaiah, on the other hand, as a Jerusalemite of noble birth, used a much more severe tone (Pesiqta deRav Kahana 14.3). We have seen that in Jerome only Jeremiah and not Ezekiel is called a villager, but this is a minor difference. Jerome may have modified what he learned from a consultant on the basis of his own readings or preferences. One can also look to pagan scholarship in order to explain the use of the categories of 'urbanity' and 'rusticity' in the scheme of the three styles. Servius, in the introduction to his commentary on Virgil's *Eclogues*, after stating that the three styles are found in Virgil's three works, explains why the 'humble' style is found in the *Eclogues*: 'the characters in these poems are rustic [*personae hic rusticae sunt*], taking joy in the simple life'. In this passage the use of the 'humble' style is connected to the 'rusticity' of the literary setting and the characters. But one needs to take only one more step to substitute 'rusticity', as a quality of style, for 'humbleness'. It seems therefore that Jerome relied on his reading partners/consultants to help him get a feel for biblical style. However, he attempted to interpret what he learned on the basis of his systematic training in *grammatikē* and rhetoric. His evaluation of the style of the Prophets is a most creative application of Graeco-Latin scholarship to the biblical corpus.[30]

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30 For more detail on this topic, see my article, 'S. Gerolamo, la valutazione stilistica dei profeti maggiori ed i *genera dicendi*', *Adamantius* 11 (2005), 179–83.

Jerome's achievements as a translator of biblical texts are closely related to his literary education and sensibilities. Indeed, within the Latin tradition, the activity of translation is linked to the study and appreciation of style. This is clear from Quintilian's *Education of the Orator*, where the discussion on translation from Greek to Latin comes under the broader rubric of style. Translation is recommended as an exercise that sharpens one's powers of expression (*Inst.* 10.5.2–3; cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 7.9.2). That Jerome looked first of all to the stylistic qualities of biblical versions emerges from a casual remark in his *Preface to the Gospels*, from around 383. Saying that he is discussing the New Testament, not the Old, he says, 'non quaero quid Aquila quid Symmachus sapiant' (line 18), a phrase often rendered, 'I am not asking what Aquila and Symmachus think.'[31] However, it is more likely that 'quid . . . sapiant' refers not to how Aquila and Symmachus understood the original, but to what their stylistic flavour was, literally 'of what did they taste'. This may be confirmed from the preface to Eusebius' *Chronicle*, cited above at the beginning of this section. There Jerome says that the seventy did not preserve the same 'flavour' (*sapor*) as the original and, for this reason, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion made new versions. Yet each of them followed a different method and therefore produced 'practically a different work in the same work'.

With this last remark Jerome again reveals his adherence to the Latin tradition, for the Latins generally regarded translation to be a creative activity and treated translations as independent and finished works of art.[32] Jerome viewed his own work as a translator of the Bible in this same manner, as may be discerned from his *Preface to the Pentateuch*. Here, on the basis of the testimony of the *Letter of Aristeas*, he objects to the idea that the seventy translators of the Torah, although in separate cells, produced identical translations. That would be prophecy he says, and prophecy is the work of the Spirit. Translation, on the other hand, is based on learning and on verbal resources, unless one would want to say that Cicero produced his translations 'inspired by rhetorical spirit' (lines 25–32). Here Jerome is playfully alluding to the notion of inspiration as it might have been understood by one of his favourite poets, Horace. The 'rhetorical spirit' would be the figurative way of referring to something like *ingenium* (natural talent), as opposed to *ars* (technique). Accordingly, the implication of his words is 'well yes, beyond knowledge and preparation,

31 Jerome, *Letters and Select Works*, trans. W. H. Fremantle (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1893), p. 488; Fürst, *Hieronymus*, p. 266.
32 See E. Stemplinger, *Das Plagiat in der griechischen Literatur* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1912), pp. 210–11; L. Fladerer, 'Übersetzung', *Der Neue Pauly* 12.2 (2002), cols. 1186–7.

translation does involve inspiration, if by that is meant the natural gifts of the translator'. And this would be completely in accord with what he says about his version of Samuel and Kings in his *Prologus galeatus*, namely, that it belongs to him as his own achievement (lines 65–7).

In his *Epistle* 57, entitled *On the Best Method of Translating*, Jerome affirms his allegiance to these Latin ideals of translation. He declares that he translates sense for sense, not word for word, 'except in the case of the Holy Scriptures, where even the word order is a mystery' (*Ep.* 57.5). One cannot take this statement to mean that Jerome committed himself to word-for-word translation when rendering the Bible. For elsewhere he says explicitly that he translated from the Hebrew according to the sense, without always holding to the word order (*Ep.* 112.19). And in his letter to Sunnia and Fretela about the translation of the psalter, time and again he upholds the ideals of maintaining the *sense* of the original but seeing to grace and elegance in the target language (*Ep.* 106.3, 29, 30, 54, 55). Consequently, it seems best to interpret the famous statement in *Ep.* 57.5 in a different sense. Jerome would not be committing himself to but rather acknowledging the legitimacy of another tradition of translation, namely, the one that came to be dominant in Greek and Latin biblical versions before his time. In Greek, the version of Aquila represented the high point of development in literalistic, word-for-word translation. And then there were the Old Latin versions, also literalistic, which Jerome had read from his youth.[33] Despite some disparaging comments about Aquila in *Ep.* 57.11, Jerome had great respect for him (*Ep.* 28.2, 36.12; *Comm. Os.* 2.16–17). As for the Old Latin versions, they were the sacred texts of his own community, and he found it necessary to produce his own versions, even the one from the Hebrew, in continuity with them.

The attempt to maintain continuity with the tradition, however, did not change the basic position of Jerome, that his primary objectives in translation were to attain elegance in Latin and achieve stylistic fidelity.[34] Speaking of his own version of Samuel and Kings, he politely intimates that it has an elegance, even if that elegance be modest, and is in line with the simplicity of the biblical writings (*Ep.* 48.4). As for stylistic fidelity, he makes the ultimate claim in his *Preface to the Books of Solomon*: his version, like a clean jar, has preserved the flavour (*sapor*) of the original (lines 23–5). It is noteworthy that, when

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33 On the literalistic tradition of translation, see S. Brock, 'Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity', *GRBS* 20 (1979), 69–87.

34 See G. J. M. Bartelink in his edition of Jerome's *Liber de optimo genere interpretandi* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 57–8.

Isidore of Seville explains why Jerome's version came to be preferred over others, he appears to allude to what are nearly the same two qualities (*Etym.* 6.4.5).

Commentaries

In the sphere of exegesis proper, Jerome's most numerous and most important works are biblical commentaries. His notions of the form a commentary should take were determined by two principal sources: the Latin secular tradition and the Greek Christian tradition. Jerome had no doubt read many commentaries on classical Latin works in his studies with Donatus. He assumes that Rufinus, who had a similar background, had studied Aemilius Asper on Virgil and Sallust, Volcacius on Cicero's speeches, and Donatus himself on Terence and Virgil (*Adv. Ruf.* 1.16). He, of course, also knew Latin biblical commentaries, but these were few in comparison to what was available in Greek. After the time of Origen, and especially in the fourth century, there was a great increase in the production of commentaries. When Augustine challenged Jerome as to why he had translated the scriptures anew when so many others had translated before him, he turned the question around. He enumerates by name six Greek commentators on the Psalms, and then asks Augustine why he ventured to write on the same book when so many had already written commentaries before him (*Ep.* 112.20).

In fact, it is as a transmitter of Greek exegesis that Jerome began his career as a biblical commentator. His first preserved commentaries are those on four of the Pauline letters: Philemon, Galatians, Ephesians and Titus. These he wrote just after arriving in Bethlehem, around 386. In the preface to the *Commentary on Galatians*, he declares that he followed Origen, but that he also employed other sources such as Didymus the Blind and Eusebius of Emesa, and included material of his own (*PL*, 26².332c–333b). In the preface to the *Commentary on Ephesians*, he says something similar, indicating that he followed Origen 'in part' and also used Didymus and Apollinarius. The work is partly of others, and partly his own (*PL*, 26².472b–c). His friend-turned-enemy Rufinus was somewhat less charitable, saying that Jerome 'translated' some of Origen's commentaries on Paul (*Praef. in Orig. De Princ.* 2). Modern scholars have attempted to ascertain the degree of Jerome's dependence on his principal source by employing catena fragments and various indirect sources for Origen's lost commentaries. The verdict has usually been favourable to Rufinus' assessment, but there have been recent attempts to allow for at least some original contributions on Jerome's part. The appearance of new critical

editions of all of these commentaries will provide opportunities for further study of this and other issues.[35]

In any case, Jerome had a specific objective in making available in Latin Origen's exegesis on the Pauline letters, namely, to show that biblical studies was a discipline in its own right, and that it had reached a very advanced level in the Greek East. This much emerges from his criticisms of Marius Victorinus' commentaries on Paul, which are found in the preface to the *Commentary on Galatians*: Marius was learned in secular literature, but completely ignorant of the scriptures (*PL*, 26².332b). Jerome is no doubt alluding to the fact that Marius is little aware of the Old Testament background of Paul's thinking. Paul thought in biblical terms (*Comm. Tit.* 2.11–14), employed the Hebrew text (*Comm. Gal.* 3.10) and was informed by Jewish oral tradition (*Comm. Gal.* 4.29–31). Knowledge of Greek and Latin secular letters did not qualify one as a biblical exegete, especially after Origen's achievement.

Jerome's early Old Testament commentaries exhibit this same attitude, but also reveal his attempt to build upon and go beyond Origen's efforts. These works, from the years 389–92, are all rather short and represent some variety of the *zētēmata* commentary or *excerpta*, in which the exegete would not attempt a full treatment of a work, but offer a select treatment of the most difficult, 'problematic' and even offensive passages. The *Commentarioli* or *Notes on the Psalms* are, as Jerome himself indicates in the preface, an adaptation of Origen's *Excerpta*. The *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* was originally planned, when Jerome was still in Rome, as a set of notes on difficult passages, but by the time he got around to completing it he was able to comment on the entire text. It remains, however, a relatively short work. In it Jerome often relies on Origen and Alexandrian Christian exegesis, especially when it is necessary to interpret allegorically the Epicurean-like recommendations of Ecclesiastes. Yet the commentary goes beyond traditional Greek interpretation in its close attention to matters Hebraic. Jerome includes many discussions of Hebrew words, which he often gives in transliteration. He refers on numerous occasions to his Hebrew teacher, who read with him (*Comm. Eccl.* 1.14). This reading partner shared with him various Jewish interpretations, on one occasion citing rabbi Akiba, the great exegete from the time of Hadrian (*Comm. Eccl.* 4.13–16; cf. *Ep.* 121.10).

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35 The commentaries on Titus and Philemon have been edited by F. Bucchi (CCSL 77c, Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), and that on Galatians by G. Raspanti (CCSL 77a, Brepols, 2006). Both editions have ample introductions and updated bibliographies on Jerome's Pauline commentaries. A new edition of the *Commentary on Ephesians*, prepared by F. Pieri, is to be published soon.

Jerome's third short commentary on the Old Testament, the *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, is of a purely philological character. He produced this work around 391, that is, just about the same time as he was issuing the first instalments of the new translation 'according to the Hebrew'. It would appear therefore that he was attempting to provide a justification for the new version, as well as an explanation, via concrete examples, of his own philological method. Indeed, in the preface he specifies his intention to refute the errors of those who have ventured various interpretations of the Hebrew text. He probably has in mind Eusebius of Emesa, who is cited and criticised in the text (*Quaest. Hebr. Gen.* 22.13). Moreover, the very fact that Jerome entitled the work *Quaestiones* may indicate that he wished to counterpose his own commentary to works of the Antiochenes, which they entitled *Zētēmata*. As we have seen above, Eusebius of Emesa did recognise the importance of the Hebrew text. However, he attempted to interpret it by reaching beyond Origen's *Hexapla*. He relied on his knowledge of the Syriac language, and also on a Syriac version and probably on Jewish Aramaic versions related to the Targums.[36] Jerome for his part believed that progress was to be achieved by direct use of the Hebrew, but that the best guides to the meaning of that text were still the Greek versions in the *Hexapla*. Those versions in their turn were best understood through Jewish exegetical tradition, or, as he would have put it, the exegetical tradition of 'the Synagogue'. These differences between Eusebius and Jerome may be taken as further evidence of a division between the exegetical 'schools' of Antioch and Alexandria. The division in this case does not refer to literal and allegorical interpretation, but to what might be called 'non-Hexaplaric' and 'Hexaplaric' approaches to the problem of the text of the Old Testament. The Antiochenes, Eusebius and Diodore had endeavoured to go beyond the *Hexapla* by reliance on the Syriac language and texts. Jerome, representing the Alexandrian legacy, tried to respond to them by a fuller and more sophisticated use of the *Hexapla*. It is within this context that the *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* is best understood.

Jerome's major achievement as an expositor of scripture is his set of commentaries on the Old Testament Prophets. He wrote on all sixteen of them, the twelve Minor and the four Major Prophets. The project occupied him for the last thirty years of his life, from around 392 until his death. He would later refer to it as his *opus prophetale* (*Comm. Ezech.*, preface). He clearly had a sense of its tremendous scope, for, in the prefaces to the commentaries on Isaiah,

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36 For a full study of Eusebius of Emesa and his approach, see R. B. ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997).

Ezekiel and Jeremiah, he enumerates the number of books he has completed, as though tracking his own progress. He also knew that it was his last project, and felt a great need to complete it before his death (*Comm. Isa.* 14, preface; *Comm. Ezech.* 14, preface). He fell just short.

In Jerome's view, the purpose of a commentary is to elucidate what is unclear in any given literary work. For this reason, commentaries report the views of many exegetes, indicating how they have understood the text. The reader will be able to choose which interpretation he or she prefers. In explaining this procedure, Jerome appeals to the precedent of commentators on profane literature, and among them his own teacher Donatus (*Adv. Ruf.* 1.16, 22; 3.11). In his role as expositor, he clearly saw himself as a man of tradition, and 'his basic need was to transmit what he had received'.[37]

This ideal may be discerned in the preface to the third book of his *Commentary on Jeremiah*. Here he expresses his wish to be left alone, so as to 'concentrate attention on the elucidation of Holy Scripture and give to [Latin speakers] the learning of the Hebrews and the Greeks'. What he has in mind becomes clearer when we read his preface to the *Commentary on Zechariah*, where he states that he has combined the '*tropologia* of our [exegetes]' with the literal interpretation of the Hebrews. From the time of Philo onwards, Alexandrian exegetes were wont to distinguish, on a systematic basis, a literal from an allegorical exegesis of the biblical text. Jerome follows this practice, and saw the Hebrews as his primary source for the former, and Christian Greek commentators as his primary source for allegorical exegesis or *tropologia*.

This dichotomy in the sphere of exegesis corresponds to a duality in the form of the biblical text. Jerome had championed the *hebraica veritas*, but the Christian tradition of exegesis was based on the Greek Septuagint. In books of great difficulty like those of the Prophets, the Hebrew text, either taken on its own or in the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, could be very different from the traditional Greek text. Accordingly, in basing his commentary on the Hebrew, he needed to rely on Jewish consultants not only to understand the words of the text, but also to get a sense of its broader meaning. The Graeco-Latin tradition was often simply unable to supply him with any assistance. It must be remembered that Jerome, living at the end of the fourth century,

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37 This phrase is used by A. Momigliano, *Quinto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1975), p. 1029, in his description of Eduard Fraenkel. See Fraenkel's discussion of his own procedure in the introduction to his commentary on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. vii–viii. He, like Jerome, cites the precedent of Donatus, and in particular the *Letter to Munatius*. Cf. G. Brugnoli, 'Donato e Girolamo', *Vetera Christianorum* 2 (1965), pp. 139–49, at p. 142.

was looking at an unvocalised Hebrew text. It is therefore not so hard to understand that, for him, that text was in much greater need of the Jewish exegetical tradition than it was for later Christian Hebraists.[38] At the same time, the Christian exegetical tradition, and especially that of Alexandria, had developed on the basis of very close readings of the Septuagint. Inspiration extended to every word and letter.[39] It was with the Alexandrian tradition that Jerome, and probably most of his readers, had the greatest familiarity. He therefore adopted the following procedure. In most of the commentaries on the Prophets, with some exceptions, he gives the biblical text (*lemma*) in two forms, first according to the Hebrew and then according to the Septuagint. To these different biblical texts he then attaches a twofold exegesis, literal and allegorical.[40]

This method did not prove satisfactory to everyone. It is criticised severely by Julian of Eclanum in the preface to his *Commentary on Hosea, Joel and Amos*. Julian claims that Jerome did not take the care to pursue the overall coherence (*consequentia*) of the texts. His exegesis is simply a combination of the allegorical interpretations of Origen and the 'mythical traditions' of the Jews.[41] He seems to be implying that Jerome proceeds through these difficult texts without direction, providing erudition but not insight. On the other hand, some later readers highly valued the *opus prophetale*, including its unique structure. As Cassiodorus puts it, Jerome was so successful in explaining the obscure and difficult speech of the Prophets by means of the diverse translations that he was able to 'disclose to human understanding the great mystery of the heavenly king' (*Inst.* 1.3.1).

In general, it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of Jerome in the history of the Bible. While not a theologian of significance, his achievements as editor, translator and scholar are perhaps unparalleled in Antiquity. As a representative of Latin rather than Greek culture, he had a bilingual (Latin and Greek) as opposed to a monolingual (Greek only) perspective on literary problems. This put him in a better position than most Greek scholars to appreciate the biblical corpus, which in the Old Testament was originally in another language, Hebrew, and in the New Testament was a literary entity in

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38 For more on this, see my article, 'Church Fathers, Rabbinic Midrash and', in Neusner and Avery-Peck (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Midrash*, pp. 20–40, at p. 35.

39 See Hanson, *Allegory*, pp. 187–8.

40 For a recent account of the commentaries on the Prophets, see Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, pp. 109–23. Of fundamental importance is Jay, *L'exégèse de saint Jérôme*.

41 See the edition by L. De Coninck, *CCSL* 88 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), p. 116.

large measure different from that familiar in the Graeco-Roman environment. More than a multilingual *philologus*, however, Jerome was also naturally gifted as a Latin writer. His philological/literary sensitivities and his own ability are what confer distinction on his role in the creation of a new Latin Bible, the Vulgate, as editor and as translator. As a commentator, although perhaps not prolific in original insights, his erudition and appreciation of the Hebrew and Greek traditions allowed him to produce works of lasting importance for the interpretation of the scriptures.

Augustine

CAROL HARRISON

For Augustine the Bible was not a single volume which he could hold in his hands but a set of writings (*scripturae*) which were identified as 'canonical'. In other words, it consisted of works whose divinely instituted authority (*Civ. Dei* 11.3; *Cresc.* 2.31.39, *canonica diuinarum Scripturarum auctoritate*) was recognised by 'the greater number of Catholic churches', or, if there was any disagreement among the churches, by those churches with the weightiest authority (in the sense of being apostolic seats or having received epistles) (*Doct. Chr.* 2.8.12; *Faust.* 11.2). He seems to share the common assumption that the Old Testament canon (*canonicas Legis et Prophetarum*) was the one which had been recognised since apostolic times (*Ep.* 51.19, referring to Acts 17:11–12), to which the New Testament canon was subsequently added,[1] and appears to have no problem in providing a list of the contents of this ecclesiastical canon (*Cresc.* 2.31.39, *canon ecclesiasticus*), which is probably based on the one identified at the Council of Carthage in 397, which Augustine attended: forty-four books for the Old Testament (including those which later came to be known as deuterocanonical: Judith, Tobit, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Greek fragments of Esther and Daniel) and twenty-seven for the New Testament (*Doct. Chr.* 2.8.13). The manuscripts he prefers are likewise those which either exist in the greatest number or have the greater claim to antiquity (*Faust.* 11.2).

Augustine stands in a long, and often distinguished, line of western Christian exegetes.[2] Most especially he is clearly inspired by, and indebted to, the work of Cyprian in North Africa, Hilary in Gaul, Ambrosiaster and Ambrose in Italy and Jerome in the Holy Land. Unlike Jerome, however, Augustine could not read Hebrew, and unlike Ambrose his knowledge of Greek was severely

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1 See Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy*, pp. 206–7.
2 Among whom were Hippolytus (though he wrote in Greek), Novatian, Cyprian, Pseudo-Cyprian, Victorinus of Pettau, Reticius of Autun, Hilary, Marius Victorinus, Ambrosiaster, Ambrose, Jerome, Tyconius, Julian of Eclanum, Rufinus, Gregory of Elvira, Zeno of Verona, Chromatius.

limited. Thus, although Greek was used throughout the Mediterranean and by the Roman church until the third century, the version of the scriptures which Augustine used was most probably what we now refer to as the *Vetus Latina* or Old Latin. These were extremely literal, somewhat careless, early third-century translations of the New Testament and the LXX (Septuagint) into Latin, which had no aspirations to literary style but, to judge from the reaction of the Latin fathers, including Augustine, were somewhat distasteful, not to say offensive and shocking to cultivated, literary sensibilities, in their disregard for correct language and syntax. It is now generally accepted that the African version is the earliest version of these translations: the best early evidence is Cyprian's *Ad Quirinum* 1–3, which contains long quotations from a practically complete Latin Bible. Traces of this version are also found in the *Acts of the Martyrs*, the work of the Donatists, Hilary, Victorinus, Ambrosiaster and Ambrose, but they often also work with the Greek text and correct the Latin in reference to it, so that it is difficult to establish a text. This is being painstakingly attempted by the Institute at Beuron (*Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*), largely on the basis of citations in the aforementioned authors.

There was certainly no single 'authorised' text of scripture for Augustine to refer to, and we find him using various translations at different times. He tells us that, of the translations which were available to him, he prefers what he calls the 'Itala', because, as he puts it, 'it adheres to the words and is at the same time perspicacious regarding meaning' (*Doct. Chr.* 2.15.22). Despite Jerome's work in translating the Hebrew text of scripture into Latin (*hebraica veritas*), culminating in what we now know as the Vulgate, Augustine always considered the LXX (the ancient Alexandrian Greek translation of the Old Testament) to be authoritative, not necessarily because of its accuracy but because he was acutely aware of the weight of authority and tradition which this inspired translation carried, and he was unwilling to countenance anything which might undermine it; he even urged Jerome to use it as the basis for his translation so that the Greek and Latin churches would not differ (*Ep.* 71.4). His further correspondence with Jerome does, however, ultimately demonstrate Augustine's acknowledgement of the usefulness of Jerome's translation, alongside the LXX, even though he felt unable to use it liturgically in Hippo because his congregation would be unfamiliar with the text (*Ep.* 82.5).

Augustine's education, like that of all cultured Romans, had been a predominantly literary one: a training in the liberal arts which was founded upon the ability to read, correct, expound and judge a text. It began with the study of grammar and reached its goal in the art of rhetoric: the ability to teach,

move and persuade an audience by a highly skilled, effective use of the rules of oratory. Through his initiation into this higher culture, which created and defined the influential members of the elite governing class, Augustine not only became acquainted with the great classics of Latin literature – Cicero, Virgil, Sallust and Terence – but also advanced his career. He became a teacher of rhetoric at Carthage and Rome, municipal orator in the imperial capital, Milan, and might have reasonably hoped for promotion to a provincial governorship. Instead, in 386, he converted to Christianity.

It is difficult to overestimate what a dramatic transformation of culture his conversion represented: from the power, influence and prestige of the Roman governing classes to an alien, still marginal, somewhat suspect sect; from the great literary classics to the illiterate, crude vulgarisms and solecisms of second rate translations of the scriptures; from high oratory which aimed to move and delight to simple catechesis intended to instil the truths of the faith. In common with all the fathers,[3] who had all shared the same intellectual formation, the transition was, to say the least, a difficult and ambiguous one. Augustine could not just leave behind his old identity – his education, culture, ways of thinking and expressing himself – but it necessarily underwent a profound sea change following his embracing of Christianity. Augustine describes the beginnings of this transition and transformation for us in his *Confessions*.

He was probably first exposed to the language of scripture through his Christian mother, Monica, who was careful to have him 'signed' for the faith (by the laying on of hands and the placing of salt on his tongue). As far as she was concerned he was a future candidate for baptism. This conviction was not shared by her son. His Christian upbringing is, nevertheless, clear in the manner in which he searches for and sifts through the various versions of truth which the Late Antique world had to offer and judges them by whether they contain the 'name of Christ' or not. Thus he recounts his reading of the book which was to mark the beginning of his path to conversion, Cicero's *Hortensius* or *Exhortation to Philosophy*. He tells us in the third book of the *Confessions* that he was fired by Cicero's teaching that the truth should be sought within, in the mind, but disappointed that he made no mention of Christ. He clearly knew where to find the figure of Christ, however: having put down Cicero, he describes his 'first' encounter with the scriptures. But they were even more of a disappointment: the Old Latin versions which he no doubt consulted 'seemed to be unworthy in comparison to the dignity of Cicero'

[3] For example Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 1.58–9; Lactantius, *Inst.* 3.1.11, 5.1.15–18, 6.21.4–5; Jerome, *Ep.* 22.30.2, 53.10.1 (referred to by Fredouille, 'Les lettrés', p. 29, n. 12).

(*Conf.* 3.5.9). He also felt that, as well as being significantly wanting in literary style, the scriptures were also undermined by their blatant contradictions (especially between the Old and New Testament), their offensive immorality (as evidenced in the lives of the patriarchs), their crude anthropomorphic portrait of God, and their inconsistencies and discordances (especially in the Gospels). These were criticisms which he found he shared with the Manichees (a religious sect founded by the prophet Mani in the third century AD, which, although it claimed to represent a true and purified form of Christianity, was in fact very close to Gnosticism). As a member of this sect for over nine years Augustine became familiar with their rigorously rational, literal and fundamentalist approach to scriptural interpretation, which was the counterpart of their materialist understanding of reality. It was no doubt while he was a Manichee that Augustine became more fully acquainted with the Christian scriptures, albeit as a collection of works purged of Jewish interpolations (and therefore lacking the Old Testament and large parts of the New Testament). Precisely when he began to entertain the doubts which eventually precipitated his departure from the Manichees is not certain, but the *Confessions* do make it clear that their materialist philosophy (albeit one which they shared with most western philosophy in Augustine's day) could not ultimately provide the answers to the questions which were haunting Augustine: the question of evil, of the nature of created reality, of the soul and of God. What the Manichees lacked, he realised in retrospect, was any notion of 'spiritual substance': of a transcendent, spiritual, incorporeal, immutable reality which could be identified with the good; with God, the Creator, of which evil was but a privation or absence. It was this that he was to discover in the 'books of the Platonists', in Plotinus and Porphyry, who were being read and assimilated into Christian theology by the western theologians of Augustine's day who could read and translate Greek. Their heady, revolutionary (to Augustine) use of the Platonists in expounding a theology of the transcendence of God and the spiritual nature of the soul effectively circumvented the objections, difficulties and obstacles which the combined forces of Manichaeism and materialism had placed in Augustine's way. At the same time (mid 380s), attracted by reports of Ambrose's[4] eloquence, Augustine went to hear him preach in Milan. It was

4 Ambrose's work is steeped in scriptural allusions, citations and references and has justly been described as a 'marquetry of Scriptural references' (Fontaine and Pietri (eds.), *Le monde latin antique*, p. 372). Unlike Augustine, Ambrose was well read in the Greek classics, including Philo (who early on provided an example of the practice of allegorical exegesis but whose specific influence Ambrose soon moved away from) and Plotinus (of whom he quotes entire pages), as well as Greek fathers such as Origen, Basil and Didymus. Among the Latin fathers he was clearly

not so much how Ambrose spoke – though accomplished, polished rhetoric on the lips of a Christian preacher could not have failed to have had an effect on him after his earlier disappointment with scripture – but what he had to say, and how he went about interpreting the scriptures, that caught Augustine's attention. His allegorical, figurative exegesis, which moved with ease beyond the literal meaning of the text to investigate its deeper 'spiritual' meaning, truth and inspiration (*Conf.* 5.14.24, 6.4.6), opened Augustine's eyes, in the same way the Platonists had done, to a realm of spiritual reality beyond the material, and provided the disillusioned ex-Manichee with an irresistible and conclusive answer to his quest for truth: God did not possess a body but was transcendent, incorporeal and immutable; human beings were created in the image of God in their soul or reason; evil was a privation of the good; scripture was not a crude, badly written, contradictory or offensive work which had to be read literally but a work of profound spiritual depths and meaning, which only needed to be interpreted in a manner appropriate to its divine inspiration for its truth to be discovered. In the *Confessions* (6.4.6), he observes that, 'I was delighted to hear Ambrose in his sermons to the people saying, as if he were most carefully enunciating a principle of exegesis: 'The letter kills, the spirit gives life' (2 Cor. 3:6). Those texts which, taken literally, seemed to contain perverse teaching he would expound spiritually, removing the mystical veil.' It very much seems that it was the Platonic (we would now say Neo-Platonic) understanding of reality which Augustine needed, to make sense not only of the Christian faith – of God and the world – but also of scripture: allegorical, figurative exegesis had long been practised in the West, but without a corresponding sense of the spiritual source and inspiration of all created reality it presumably meant nothing to him but flowery, overblown prose attempting to make the best of a second-rate text.

Not long after hearing Ambrose preach, Augustine was converted in a garden in Milan, while reading Paul's epistles. Hearing a voice calling 'Tolle lege' ('Take up and read'), he opened the epistles at Rom. 13.13 and took the text as a divine admonition to his own now tortured soul. Convinced of the truth of Christianity, he had lacked the will to embrace a celibate life (Augustine was not a man of half measures and this is what, for him, a wholehearted conversion seemed to require). Rom. 13.13 – 'not in rioting and drunkenness,

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influenced by Hippolytus and, like Augustine, above all, Cyprian. On Ambrose's exegesis see G. Nauroy, 'L'écriture dans la pastorale d'Ambroise de Milan' in Fontaine and Pietri (eds.), *Le monde latin antique*, pp. 371–408; L. F. Pizzolato *La dottrina esegetica di sant' Ambrogio* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1978); H. Savon, *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le Juif*, 2 vols. (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1977).

not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof' – thus precipitated one of the most dramatic conversions in western history.

From this point onwards Augustine believed scripture to have ultimate authority. This was an authority which, he argued in one of his first anti-Manichaean treatises, *De utilitate credendi* (*On the Usefulness of Belief*), must be recognised for various reasons, not least the fact that fallen humanity could now no longer know the truth inwardly but was dependent on faith in outward signs. Pre-eminent among these authoritative 'signs' was the church, whose authority was based 'on the grounds of a report confirmed by its ubiquity, by its antiquity, and by the general consent of mankind' (*Util. cred.* 31); the tradition it communicates, established by Christ's life and work; the providence of God which is revealed in the incarnation and the history and growth of the church, and recounted in its scriptures. Later on, in *Contra Faustum* (a work prompted by the Manichee Faustus' rejection of the Old Testament and parts of the New Testament), Augustine similarly argues for the integrity and authority of the scriptures on the grounds that it was handed down to us by a tradition originating with the apostles and transmitted through a succession of apostolic sees (33.9); that the precepts and practices that Faustus finds so objectionable in the Old Testament are not to be taken literally but as symbolising things to come which have now been fulfilled and are therefore no longer necessary; that the whole of it is to be interpreted, not according to the letter, but spiritually or figuratively as foreshadowing and foretelling Christ, in whom its prophecies are now fulfilled. Likewise, in response to Faustus' mutilation of the New Testament and his rejection of passages which he regarded as Judaising interpolations, Augustine countered that, as Faustus could not produce an 'uncorrupt' version, what he chose to accept or reject was precisely that: a matter of human choice. Faustus was making himself an authority or rule of faith rather than accepting that of scripture (11.2). Faith in the authoritative teaching of scripture, Augustine held, was to be preferred to all other claims to truth based on reason – whether they came from the Manichees or from the philosophers – and was to be embraced with humility and confession, not with presumption and pride. Augustine now believed that scripture was true, because divinely inspired, even if (fallen) human reason was unable to discover or know its truth; and that its difficulties, obscurities and apparent contradictions, its humble, often crude form, were in fact the divinely intended means of humbling, inspiring, provoking, unsettling, exercising and moving fallen human beings, whose

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reason was clouded and obscured by their sin, to search for and long for its truth (*Mor.* 1.2.3, 7.12):

> Because the minds of men are obscured by familiarity with darkness, which covers them in the night of sins and evil habits, and cannot perceive in a way suitable to the clearness and purity of reason, there is a most wholesome provision for bringing the dazzled eye into the light of truth under the congenial shade of authority . . . when we are hasting to retire into darkness it will be well that by the appointment of adorable Wisdom we should be met by the friendly shade of authority, and should be attracted by the wonderful character of its contents, and by the utterances of its pages, which like shadows, typify and attemper the truth.

Faith, and a very particular theology of the human condition, meant that he now viewed the scriptures in a light as new, and as transforming, as the one his encounter with Neo-Platonism had earlier provided. Indeed, one might well observe that as Augustine's understanding and attachment to the Christian faith grew, so likewise did his approach to, and interpretation of, its scriptures. To be seen aright – and not just as second-rate literature – they had to be seen from the standpoint of faith; with a clear understanding of human limitations and human needs and an absolute conviction of God's transcendence and of the work of his providential grace to redeem and save us. The scriptures could only be properly understood as part of this equation: divinely inspired, but descending to a level which would reach fallen human beings and enable them gradually to apprehend their truth and be transformed by it.

It is not surprising then that, having become a Christian, Augustine almost immediately (the works written in the first few months after his conversion are something of an exception) began to reread, rethink, study and comment on the scriptures. They became, as it were, the central axis of his life and thought, the hub from which the many different spokes of his reflection – moral, catechetical, homiletic, philosophical, theological, polemical, devotional – emanated. At least two-thirds of his works are either commentaries upon scripture or sermons on scriptural texts. His other works constantly cite or allude to scripture. Indeed, it often seems that the language and thought of the biblical author becomes Augustine's own. This is particularly evident in his *Confessions*, where almost every line seems to contain an allusion to, or citation from, the Psalms and the language and imagery are imbued with their poetry. It is also demonstrated in his characteristic theology of the fall, original sin, the vitiated free will and grace, which is deeply Pauline in structure and content. (It is therefore not surprising to find that some of the very first

scriptural works which engaged Augustine's attention were the Psalms and Romans.)[5]

Augustine would have become more familiar with Ambrose's exegesis, and also with some of the salient texts of scripture, during Lent 387, while he was being instructed by Ambrose as a catechumen preparing for baptism that Easter. (Ambrose's *De sacramentis* and *De mysteriis* are a valuable insight into just this sort of instruction.) But once baptised, and leaving Italy to return to his home town Thagaste, in Africa, Augustine seems to have been acutely aware of his lack of knowledge of the scriptures (*Ep.* 55.38, 73.5, 104). The works from this period (388–91) are almost all directed, either explicitly or implicitly, against the Manichees, and scriptural exegesis was obviously one of the main bones of contention (e.g. his attempt to interpret Genesis allegorically against the Manichees' literal approach in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*). It was a steep learning curve, and Augustine was clearly very much aware of how far he still had to go when he wrote to his bishop, immediately following his (forced and unintended) ordination as priest, in 391, to ask for time to study the scriptures. The fruits of his reading are evident in the prolific series of commentaries on scripture which he undertook even before his subsequent consecration as bishop in 395: an (incomplete) second attempt at Genesis against the Manichees, *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*; continued work on the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*; reflections on New Testament texts, especially Paul, in *De sermone Domini in monte*; *Expositio epistulae ad Galatas*; *Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*; *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos*. In the year of his consecration he wrote to Jerome, concerned about his duty to interpret scripture from such a prominent position (*Ep.* 9.2) and asked for some translations of Greek commentaries on scripture. He also, significantly, began work on his only treatise on exegesis as such, *De doctrina Christiana*.

Ordained less than five years after his conversion Augustine was to spend the rest of his life reading and interpreting scripture not just as a Christian but as a priest and bishop, responsible for the pastoral care and instruction of his congregation at Hippo, obliged to preach almost every day; to catechise; to advise; to respond to theological (and innumerable other types of) problems; to answer queries about exegesis or doctrine; to defend the faith from heretics, schismatics and pagans he resorted in every instance to scripture. His approach

5 On the preoccupation – one might well say obsession – with Paul in the fourth century and for his crucial influence on Augustine's conversion and theology from the very beginning, see C. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology. An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford University Press, 2006), chapter 5.

is therefore essentially pastoral, theological and apologetic rather than purely academic, critical, rational or analytical. He works from the standpoint of faith, to further and defend the faith. Even when exegetical questions were not directly at stake it was always the scriptures which Augustine turned to as an authoritative statement of the faith, especially against heretics. We therefore obviously cannot apply the same criteria in judging his work as we perhaps might to that of a modern biblical exegete. His particular concerns determine not only the way in which he interprets scripture (as we will see below) but also those parts of it which he interprets.

Augustine did not know the whole of the Bible uniformly well and there are large gaps in his knowledge, especially of the Old Testament. The two Old Testament books he returns to again and again, however, in common with most of the fathers, are Genesis and the Psalms. Genesis (at least the first few chapters, which is as far as Augustine ever gets) provided an authoritative account of the big philosophical and theological questions: creation, time, humanity, good and evil, free will, sin and suffering, providence and grace, the soul and the vision of God. Augustine's five attempts to interpret it punctuate his career and were undertaken for various reasons: against Manichaean criticisms (*De Genesi adversus Manichaeos*); to consider the issues it raises and demonstrate the possibility of a literal interpretation (*De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*; *De Genesi ad litteram*); to reflect on the nature of conversion and time (*Conf.* 11–13); to expound the beginnings of the two cities in the fall (*Civ. Dei* 11). Needless to say, he also frequently returns to it in other works, on other subjects. The *Enarrationes in Psalmos* were probably begun as early as 392 and stretch across Augustine's ecclesiastical career. His constant meditation on the Psalms clearly had a profound influence on his language, imagery, thought and prayer, and, above all, on his theology of the church as the body of Christ. The early expositions tend to take the form of commentary notes whereas the later ones (32 onwards) are primarily sermons; together they cover the entire psalter with at least one sermon (sometimes more) devoted to each psalm (Ps. 118 merits a series of 32 sermons!). The other major scriptural work to which Augustine devoted an extended series of 124 sermons is John's Gospel (*Tractatus in Johannis evangelium* – delivered *c.* 408–20). As well as rich material for theological reflection on the mysteries of the faith, John obviously provided him with the occasion for profound, pastorally orientated, reflections on the nature and purpose of the incarnation as a demonstration of God's humility and love which all Christians are called to imitate and follow. These themes are continued in the shorter series of sermons on the first Epistle of John (*In epistulam Johannis tractatus*). In addition

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to numerous sermons on New Testament texts, Augustine also composed some observations on various questions raised by the Gospels (*Quaestiones evangeliorum*), and by Matthew's Gospel in particular (*Quaestiones in Matthaeum*). There are also considerations of various Old Testament texts (*De octo quaestionibus ex Veteri Testamento*), including the Heptateuch (*Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*; *Locutionum in Heptateuchum*) and Job (*Adnotationes in Job*).

Paul was a figure and thinker who attracted the attention of most of the western fathers in the fourth century. His dramatic conversion, his tortured grappling with the questions of works and faith, merit and justification, the law and grace, free will, election and predestination, seemed to touch a sensitive nerve in Late Antique theology, and his influence is apparent not just whenever these questions surface, but in actually framing and articulating them. It is as if Paul sets the agenda for theological debate on the central issues of the faith: any discussion of them could not ignore him but had to take place in dialogue with him and his subsequent interpreters. Augustine's engagement with Paul, both before and after his conversion, had profound and far-reaching repercussions on his life and thought. Paul's teaching on God's grace provided the necessary counterweight and corrective to the Platonists' pride: the latter had answered many of his doubts but his reading of Paul had persuaded Augustine that pride in human reason, and confidence in unaided human striving and free will, was fundamentally misguided and would never lead to salvation; that what was needed was a humble acceptance of our own incapacity to know or to do the good without God's grace offered to us in Christ. It was thus not as a Platonist that Augustine embraced Christianity but as a Christian fully persuaded by Paul that everything was of God's grace. Paul seems to resonate with Augustine's own intuitive experience of what it is to be a human being and to attempt to know, love and do the good. His continued meditation on him, culminating in a series of works on Romans and Galatians in the mid 390s (*Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos*; *Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*; *Expositio epistulae ad Galatas*; *Ad Simplicianum*), which conclude with a prolonged and unsettling battle with Rom. 9, and in particular the story of Esau and Jacob in *Ad Simplicianum* 396 (one of whom was chosen, and the other rejected, by God while they were still in their mother's womb, before they were able to do any works to merit or to exclude themselves from his grace), led to a reconfirmation of this basic intuition: that fallen human beings are unable to will or do the good without grace; that we are all subject to original sin and belong to a *massa peccati*; that we merit nothing but damnation; that it is due to God's gracious providence and election that some believe and are saved. In the course of the works on

Romans we see Augustine fighting with the shadows of determinism and divine justice to establish some role for human free will and merit – the merit of freely chosen faith (the *initium fidei*) which is then rewarded by grace – only to admit defeat and return to the position he had always held; that everything is of grace: 'I indeed laboured in defence of the free choice of the human will, but the grace of God conquered' (*Retract.* 2.27.1). Engagement with the text of scripture thus allowed Augustine to work out, and articulate, his own deepest understanding and intuition of human life and Christian faith.

It is estimated that Augustine would have preached over 8000 times during the course of his episcopal career. While we now possess less than a tenth of these sermons, we still have a rich source of insight into how Augustine read and expounded scripture in the course of the liturgical year, in the context of pastoral admonition and instruction. It seems clear that, while Augustine's sermons are always based on one of the readings set by the lectionary, he would rarely have prepared a written text in advance; rather his practice usually seems to have been simply to preach extempore (presumably having reflected beforehand on the text and on any particular concerns which he felt needed to be addressed). His words, as was the common practice in the law courts and other contexts where a speech was delivered, would then be recorded in a form of shorthand by secretaries or *notarii*. It is not always clear whether he reviewed and revised their transcription. What *is* evident is his rhetorical training and his highly developed powers of oratory – both in constructing a coherent, extended sermon (they average about three quarters of an hour in length) and in the accomplished verbal fireworks he employs to teach, move and persuade his congregation of the truth he wants to communicate: he shifts with ease between the various rhetorical 'styles' – the grand, temperate and subdued – and displays a finely honed, masterly use of rhythm, assonance, word play, ornaments, allegory, parables, figures, metaphors, imagery, puns, proverbs, antitheses, parallelism, *abundantia*, rhythmic closures and so on. This arsenal of rhetorical weaponry was, however, something Augustine was deeply uncomfortable with and highly ambiguous about: on the one hand he was acutely conscious of how effective it could be in attaining his goal – the goal he shared with all classical orators – to teach, to move and to persuade his audience. But, whereas traditional oratory had tended to lose sight of the classroom and could, at worst, become a mere performance, intended to entertain, delight and please the hearer, with no further aim of instilling a lesson or truth (what Augustine elsewhere might describe as *curiositas*: knowledge or experience sought simply – and therefore

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idly – for the sake of knowledge or experience, with no useful end in view, (e.g. *Conf.* 10.25.55)), Augustine is always clear that for the Christian speaker the goal of teaching comes first and last, and must determine everything he or she says, and, above all, the style used and the techniques and methods employed. Rhetoric is therefore firmly subordinated to clear, straightforward elucidation of the truths of the text of scripture. If it proves useful in communicating and instilling those truths then it is to be employed to this end; if delight in the truth persuades and convinces the hearer more effectively than a bald, unadorned statement, then rhetorical artifice is not to be scorned.

This approach to the use of rhetoric in preaching, which Augustine elaborates in book 4 of *De doctrina Christiana*, is indicative of his general attitude to the role and use of classical culture by the Christian exegete: it is not to be scorned outright but to be studied and used in so far as it lends itself to an understanding and exposition of scripture. We noted above that it was significant that *De doctrina Christiana* (which might accurately be translated as *On Christian Teaching and Learning*) was begun just after Augustine's consecration as bishop of Hippo: he was now in the front line and had sole responsibility for his congregation and church in Hippo – to catechise, preach, arbitrate and defend them from heretics. He firmly believed that scripture was his one and only resource as it was the single, definitive source of Christian truth to which everything else was to be referred and subsumed. His attempt to demonstrate the unique status of scripture in book 1 of *De doctrina Christiana*, and then to set forth how secular, classical culture and learning might relate to it and be used in understanding it (book 2), how the exegete should go about dealing with the particular problems which the text of scripture raises (book 3) and, finally, how the same exegete should go about communicating its truth in preaching (book 4), therefore represents an attempt to provide both for himself and for other Christian teachers and preachers, faced with the same formidable task, a handbook of scriptural interpretation and preaching.

Book 1 of *De doctrina Christiana* is a highly systematic, formal argument for the truth – the ultimate and definitive truth – of scripture. Whereas all other texts and languages are merely signs (*signa*) which function as pointers to a truth which lies beyond them, the text and language of scripture is not just a sign but actually contains and is the truth (*res*) which it signifies. This is because it is inspired by God's Spirit; it is his Word; it communicates because it contains within itself the truths of the faith: God the Trinity, the incarnation of his Word, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Whereas one must always look beyond

signs, in other words, use (*uti*) them and refer them to find what they signify, scripture contains within itself the ultimate truth which is not only to be used but to be enjoyed (*frui*). It is the task of the exegete to discover this and, once discovered, to elucidate and articulate it. The signs or words of scripture are therefore unique in that they at once signify and point beyond themselves, but also contain within themselves the truth to which they point – they are, as it were, sacramental. They simply need to be read – or, more accurately, received – properly.

All of this meant for Augustine that scripture was the one text which informed Christian language, thinking and behaviour – in other words, Christian culture. It became the norm, the rule, the blueprint for how Christians should understand themselves; how they should relate to others; how they should live in the world; most especially, how they should relate to God. Augustine sums this up at the end of book 1, in a rule which, as we will see below, was to become his paradigm for interpretation: love of neighbour and love of God. This was the one message of scripture; the truth or *res* of scripture and all of its signs ultimately signify, point to and contain this one meaning. But Augustine is clearly aware in *On Christian Doctrine* that before he can consider how the exegete should go about interpreting the admittedly difficult text of scripture, so as to discover this meaning, he must take account of the 'baggage' which he and other interpreters bring to the task: what of classical culture? What of the liberal arts and disciplines, the social norms, conventions, practices and beliefs which the exegete, trained and formed by this culture and society, inevitably brings to his or her Christian life and reading of scripture? In book 2 he therefore carefully and systematically evaluates every aspect of Late Antique society and culture – from weights and measures to natural history to wrestling – to determine how useful it is for the exegete. There are whole areas which are of purely human institution: some of these must obviously be repudiated and avoided, most especially anything to do with pagan cult, ritual or superstition; others are indeterminate and might be regarded either as superfluous – such as the conventions of actors in the theatre – or useful, such as letters, signs and shorthand; those things which have to do with human activity, such as crafts, agriculture and navigation; those things which have been discovered in the course of time, such as history, natural history, geography. Other areas are of divine institution, and have to do with human reason, such as the liberal arts. All things which are not positively hostile, or superfluous, to the task of the exegete might prove useful, Augustine suggests, so long as they are used with moderation, and without pride or ostentation. The exegete should always be conscious that wherever truth

is found, it belongs ultimately to God: it derives from the 'mines of Divine providence' (*Doct. Chr.* 2.40.60) and, like the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians of their treasure, is the rightful possession of the Christian to reappropriate (2.40.60).

So, the culture, social conventions, education and disciplines of pagan society are not rejected in so far as they prove useful to the exegete in his or her attempt to understand scripture, and to discover the treasure or *res* which is to be found within it, but they are most firmly relegated to a subservient and secondary role: whereas they represent everything which is of human institution or simply a matter of agreement among human beings, scripture is of divine institution; it is given by God. Christian culture and society is not just a matter of relative and ambiguous human convention and agreement, but one of divine authority and ultimate truth. It is this which allows, indeed impels, the exegete to *use* and order classical culture, or indeed any aspect of created reality, towards a higher end; to make it subject to the only thing which is to be enjoyed and loved for its own sake – God, the divine Trinity.

How does the exegete go about this? In *De doctrina Christiana*, as so often elsewhere, Augustine frames his answer in terms of love: love of God and love of neighbour. The exegete must rest content with nothing other than love of God, he or she must love everything else (including him- or herself and his or her neighbour) on behalf of (*propter se*), or in reference to (*referre ad*) God. The exegete's attitude towards all created reality, as towards scripture, must therefore be one of 'ordered love' or virtue, using it towards, and referring it to, its maker and orderer, and enjoying it, if at all, only in God and towards the final end of love and enjoyment of him. It is this which Augustine finds summed up in the double commandment (*Doct. Chr.* 1.35.39):

> It is to be understood that the plenitude and end of the Law and of all the sacred scriptures is the love of a Being which is to be enjoyed and of a being that can share that enjoyment with us . . . that we might know this and have the means to implement it, the whole temporal dispensation was made by divine providence for our salvation. We should use it, not with an abiding but with a transitory love and delight . . . so that we love those things by which we are carried along for the sake of that toward which we are carried.

As we have seen, the double commandment is also the key for interpretation of scripture (*Doct. Chr.* 1.36.40):

> Whoever, therefore, thinks that he understands the divine scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and neighbour

does not understand it at all. Whoever finds a lesson there useful to the building up of charity, even though he has not said what the author may be shown to have intended in that place, has not been deceived.

What this means for the exegete is that there is no fixed reading, no single and definitive interpretation, no one meaning to be found in scripture; rather there is a genuine openness, an extraordinary freedom, whereby a text is open to as many different readings as it has readers, so long as what they find there is congruent with the double commandment of love. It is therefore not so much the particular words or expressions (*verba/signa*), or even the specific details of the story or account that matter, but the truth (*veritas*), intention (*voluntas*) and meaning (*sententia*) that they convey. Augustine sums this up in the admonition: *res non verba* – the exegete must search after things, not words. The exegete is thus at liberty, indeed he or she is obliged, to move beyond what might at first seem a badly written, or perhaps just banal, obscure, contradictory, or even sinful and offensive text to discover its truth or *res* (*Doct. Chr.* 3.9.17, 3.12.18, 26.24). So as long as what he or she finds does not contradict the double commandment, then it is acceptable (*Doct. Chr.* 3.10.14–15):

> Whatever appears in the divine Word that does not literally pertain to virtuous behaviour or to the truth of faith you must take to be figurative. Virtuous behaviour pertains to the love of God and of one's neighbour; the truth of faith pertains to a knowledge of God and of one's neighbour . . . Scripture teaches nothing but charity and condemns nothing except cupidity, and in this way shapes the minds of men.

The sort of problems which we noted above, and which Augustine and other educated, cultured, intelligent readers might have encountered with scripture, were thereby effectively overcome by 'figurative exegesis': a text could be read at a number of levels and the exegete was free to move beyond the obvious, often all too uncivilised, problematic surface, to plumb its spiritual inspiration; to search out the intention of its author; to discover a meaning and truth which spoke to his or her needs, and when communicated, to those of the church; above all, to establish the lesson of charity.

Gerald Bonner has noted a move in Augustine's thought which clearly exemplifies this emphasis on the significance of every part of scripture: his early tendency to distinguish between the historical and prophetical texts of scripture (between *res gesta* – God's past actions in history, e.g. *Gn. litt. imp.* 2.5 – and *res gestura* – what God will do, e.g. *Agon.* 13.15) and his later, near identification of the two, in works such as *De civitate Dei*, which reflect his

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growing conviction that the whole of the Bible, including the history books, is prophetic.[6]

This is not to say that Augustine neglects, or does not value, the literal sense: rather it is given primary consideration (eg. *Gn. litt.* 7.1.1, 8.1.4). In *Doct. Chr.* 3 he distinguishes between literal (*propria*) and figurative (*figurate*) signs and insists that the former, especially if ambiguous, must be given first consideration: rules of faith in scripture and the church; context; punctuation; different translations and earlier texts; temporal customs should all be taken into account in establishing the author's intention and the truth of the passage, in this respect. He is emphatic that just because a text can be interpreted figuratively does not mean that what it recounts at a literal level did not happen, or is not true, or is not valuable in itself (e.g. *Civ. Dei* 13.21; *Div. qu. 83* 65; *S.* 2.6). Most especially, where the literal sense is explained by the Lord himself, or is valuable as teaching a lesson of charity, or of moral behaviour, then Augustine is insistent that it should be left to stand as it is.

Augustine makes much of these rules for figurative and literal exegesis in his work on synoptic criticism, *De consensu evangelistarum*, where he attempts to account for the evident discrepancies between the different Gospel accounts. He argues that, despite the surface differences between the evangelists, they were all inspired by the same Spirit. The fact that the Spirit allowed them to recount the life, passion and death of Christ in their own words, and from their own perspectives, might indeed lead to contradictions, but these are merely what he terms the 'casualties of their recollections'. At a much more important level their witness is unified: they are all inspired by the Holy Spirit and their message or 'intention', the truth they wish to convey, is the same. It is this 'harmonious diversity' (*Cons. Ev.* 2.66.128) which constitutes the 'truth' of scripture, and which the exegete should be searching for beyond the distorting mirrors of the evangelists' individual accounts (e.g. *Cons. Ev.* 2.21.51–2, 3.13.49). As he puts this in a sermon (*S.* 71.13): 'There is no other reason why the evangelists do not relate the same things in the same way but that we may learn thereby to prefer things [*res*] to words [*uerba*], not words to things, and to seek for nothing else in the speaker, but for his intention, to convey which only the words are used.' More generally, divine inspiration – the presence of divine truth or *res* – means for Augustine that scripture cannot lie (this conviction lies behind Augustine's objection to Jerome's interpretation

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6 Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine as Biblical Scholar', in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible, Vol. 1: From the Beginning to Jerome* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 54–62, at pp. 553–4.

of Paul's censure of Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–14) as a staged lie and his insistence that Peter had in fact erred, was rebuked and changed his ways; *Ep.* 28.3–5, 40.3–7); the whole of scripture is infallible and harmonious *(Doct. Chr.* 2.12.28–9); hence the common patristic practice of taking two verses which are apparently diametrically opposed and wholly contradictory and 'harmonising' them, or of using a clear, straightforward text to interpret an obscure, difficult one *(Doct. Chr.* 3.26.37f).

Conf. 12 makes much the same point. Here Augustine is attempting to make sense of the many and diverse interpretations which have been offered of the first verse of Genesis: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' Again, he observes that in interpreting any passage there are two main criteria: what the author intended and the truth of the passage. These two are really synonymous, for the author was inspired to write, so whatever truth each individual finds there is 'true'. As Augustine observes (clearly contradicting those who are reluctant to admit that he allows the possibility that any passage of scripture might have a number of different, but equally acceptable, meanings), 'if I had to write with such vast authority I should prefer to write that my words should mean whatever truth anyone finds upon these matters, rather than express one true meaning so clearly as to exclude all the others' (12.31.42). Thus, the meanings and the truths which the text of scripture contain remain eschatologically open, provisional and inconclusive; always capable of further, future, different interpretations so long as they too resonate with the single, unifying rule of the double commandment. As Augustine puts this in *Doct. Chr.* 3.27.38:

> He who examines the divine eloquence, desiring to discover the intention of the author through whom the Holy Spirit created the scripture, whether he attains this end or finds another meaning in the words not contrary to right faith, is free from blame if he has evidence from some other place in the divine books. For the author himself may have seen the same meaning in the words we seek to understand. And certainly the Spirit of God who worked through that author, undoubtedly foresaw that this meaning would occur to the reader or listener. Rather he provided that it might occur to him, since that meaning is dependent on truth.

Augustine and the fathers practised a number of traditional techniques to undertake such exegesis. In *Doct. Chr.* book 3 (30.42–37.56), Augustine describes seven rules for exegesis which were set forth by the Donatist Tyconius in his *Liber regulorum*, not so much as rules to be followed, but rather as representative of a potentially fruitful approach which the Catholic exegete might

benefit from in dealing with otherwise obscure passages. In two texts (*Gn. lit. imp.* 2.5, 3.6 and *Util. Cred.* 5) he identifies, and theoretically outlines, four different senses in scripture which it is the exegete's duty to be aware of and to expound: *historia* (historical: the fact that something was written); *anagogia* (analogical: the harmony of the Old and New Testaments); *aetiologia* (aetiological: the reason why something was written); *allegoria* (allegorical: the fact that not everything in scripture should be taken literally, but some things should be understood spiritually or figuratively). His own attempts to do justice to these different senses most commonly take the form of what might be loosely termed figurative or allegorical exegesis (Augustine's own terminology is fluid: he uses a variety of terms such as *allegoria*, *figura*, *typus*, *similitudo*, *sacramentum*, *imago*, *mysteria*, *umbra* and so on to refer to the way in which the words of scripture function as signs which should be read so as to discover the meaning or *res* which they not only point to, but also contain). Such an approach first of all allowed historical figures, events or stories in scripture not only to signify themselves, but also to foreshadow and interpret future figures and events (for example Moses as a type of Christ; the Israelites crossing the Red Sea as a type or figure of baptism; the wood of Marah as a type of the cross), thereby forming a sort of unbroken eschatological thread, interwoven throughout salvation history, from the Old to the New Testament, into the church and through to the present, held in tension by a constant foreshadowing of the age to come (for example, from Noah's ark, to Israel, to the church, to the City of God). It brought a historical identity and continuity to the church whereby it could understand its past, interpret its present and be shaped by its future. An 'allegorical' or 'figurative' approach also allowed each detail or story of scripture to be significant: to be open to articulating and teaching the truths of the faith, lessons in Christian living, and to provide moral exhortation or admonition – in sum, to direct, sharpen and reflect whatever message the preacher wished to communicate to his congregation in and through its multifaceted prism. In other words, it gave the preacher an enormous freedom to say what needed to be said in specific circumstances while endowing his words with the authority of divine inspiration and truth: pagans could be refuted, heretics undermined, schismatics condemned, philosophers persuaded, doubters convinced, cultured detractors won over. At the level of the text itself, its contradictions could be reconciled, its apparent immorality or offensiveness overcome, its anthropomorphisms explained, its surface crudeness and vulgarity made eloquent and profound.

Indeed, Augustine often observes that the difficulty and obscurity of so much of scripture is in fact providential: it is intended to guard its mysteries

from the unworthy (*Cons. ev.*, 2.13.49; *S.* 51.5); to exercise the mind of the reader (*Doct. Chr.* 3.34.47; *Io. ev. tr.* 45.6); to break down pride and inculcate humility (*Doct. Chr.* 2.6.7); to inspire a search for meaning which, when found, is welcomed with much greater delight than if it lay on the surface (*Mor.* 1.17; *Trin.* 15.17.27); to meet each individual at his or her level, however simple or learned, and to speak to them (*Mor.* 1.17.30; *Gn. litt.* 5.3.6; *Conf.* 6.5.8, 12.26.36–28.38). The sort of approach which scripture inspires in the Christian preacher really amounts, for Augustine, to what might – rather surprisingly, given his initial cultured distaste for it – be termed a 'Christian aesthetic': scripture functions very much as does a work of literature, communicating its meaning by means of figurative, symbolic language. It provokes a desire to understand, exercises the mind, and brings about understanding through inspiring delight and love (*Doct. Chr.* 2.6–8; *S.* 51.5, 12; *Mend.* 24; *Civ. Dei* 17.20).

The importance of delight and love is, of course, central to Augustine's theology of grace: we can only know or will the good if God inspires within us, through the gift of his Holy Spirit, a desire and love for it. It is not surprising that this is also the determinative feature of his approach to exegesis of scripture. Indeed, one might well speak of a hermeneutical circle of love in Augustine's thought, for in treatises such as *De catechizandis rudibus* (*On Teaching the Uninstructed*) he is quite clear that scripture will not be understood unless one's reading of it is motivated by faith, hope and love; that everything it contains only has meaning as a lesson in the double commandment of love of God and love of neighbour; that it is love which motivates and inspires the preacher; love which the preacher seeks to inspire in his or her hearers; love which renders the exegete's message effective. It is love, therefore, which informs the nature, content, practice and goal of exegesis; the rhetoric and practice of love which creates and forms Christian society and culture.

Augustine's paradigm here is, of course, Christ's humble descent to human beings in love. The language of scripture and the preacher, like the Word assuming human form, descends to the level of human beings in order to reorient their fallen wills by inspiring humility and love of God within them (*Fid. et sym.* 3.3; *S.* 119.4.4–7.7; *Io. ev. tr.* 37.4; *Cat. rud.* 10.15). Indeed, he often stresses that the whole of scripture must be read christologically: it is a sacrament of the Word incarnate in that it is a visible or audible bearer of his divine reality and truth. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are therefore to be interpreted as finding their true meaning only in Christ. Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, for example, is one of the central texts for his incarnational theology and ecclesiology, in that the Psalms are interpreted

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in relation to the Christ who is the head of his body, the church. He writes, 'our whole design, when we hear a psalm, a prophet, or the law, all of which was written before our Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh, is to see Christ there, to understand Christ there' (*En. Ps.* 98.1).

What we called a 'Christian aesthetic' is elaborated by Augustine in this context: for the truth or meaning of scripture to arouse interest, and inspire love and delight, it must be something pleasing and engaging, which meets human beings not only at a rational level but at the affective level of imagination, intuition and aesthetic sensitivity. We have noted how uncomfortable and wary, not to say ambiguous and contradictory, Augustine can be when he turns to consider the use the exegete should make of classical culture and rhetoric, and his or her deployment of it in communicating that truth. The same tensions are evident in what he has to say about the text of scripture itself: on the one hand he is emphatic that its simplicity, clarity and truth should be valued above all else; on the other he is acutely sensitive to the power that rhetorical, eloquent prose possesses, not just to express that truth, but also to persuade and move the reader to accept it and act upon it. He cannot therefore ignore the latter, but in demonstrating the rhetorical eloquence of scripture according to classical rules and ornaments in book 4 of *De doctrina Christiana*, he seems to treat the latter like the gold of the Egyptians: they are to be reappropriated and used as the rightful possession of Christianity. Lest he be misunderstood, he urges that the truth which scripture contains is eloquent in an intuitive, natural, unforced, uncontrived and wholly unconscious way simply because it is true; truth is beauty. Its eloquence naturally accompanies its inherent wisdom in a manner wholly removed from the purple prose with which the classical rhetors could praise even the immoral exploits of the gods: 'like wisdom coming from her house (that is, from the breast of a wise man) followed by eloquence as if she were an inseparable servant who was not called' (*Doct. Chr.* 4.6.10). Although it is not so much the words (*signa*) which matter as the truth (*res*) they communicate (*Doct. Chr.* 4.28.61), they are nevertheless unquestionably eloquent!

How much these comments owe to a desire to undermine pagan and Manichaean criticisms of the shortcomings of scripture; how much they are motivated by Augustine's desire to reconcile himself, and other refined, educated, sensitive readers, to its dubious literary merits; how much they are rooted in a theological aesthetic which recognises the important role of divinely inspired delight in motivating, inspiring and reorientating the fallen will to love and act upon the truth and meaning of scripture, in love of God and love of neighbour, is difficult to determine. What they do clearly reveal are the

various social, cultural, personal and theological factors which contributed to Augustine's exegetical approach.

Like most of the fathers Augustine's engagement with scripture was primarily undertaken in the pulpit and addressed to his congregation. His obligation to preach almost every day meant that both he and they built up a real familiarity with at least those parts that were set by the lectionary. The result was a shared, common grasp of Christian faith and life, continually nourished, formed and reformed by their engagement with scripture. The tacit understanding of themselves, of each other, and of their relation to the world and God which this continuous involvement with scripture involved is often left unexpressed by other exegetes, more concerned with establishing the meaning or moral of a text. In Augustine, however, it comes to the fore in a highly personal manner, as he reflects on his own experience of the Word of God as it is revealed in scripture, and his relationship to it – as an individual, as part of the Christian community and most especially, in the person of Christ. It is a Word which cannot just be read, but demands a response; its meaning can only be fully understood in relationship. Augustine, more than any other father, allows us an insight into this relationship.

Syriac exegesis

J. F. COAKLEY

To have a separate chapter on this subject presumes the fact that biblical exegesis as practised by Syriac authors, at least early ones, exhibits some differences from what is found in Greek and Latin sources. Whether this difference has some overarching cultural explanation is a deep question on which we save comment until the end. But, however that may be, exegesis in Syriac has its own history. The fourth century is a kind of natural centre in this history, and in what follows we discuss in sequence the periods before, during and after it.

The earliest period

Properly speaking, there is no exegetical literature in Syriac before the fourth century. This is partly a consequence of the sparsity of surviving Syriac literature in general before this time; and is partly, no doubt, related to the obscure history of the Christian church in Syriac-speaking Mesopotamia and Persia that only lately settled into orthodoxy.

The early Syriac translations of the Bible are themselves products of this period, and in their renderings of difficult or sensitive passages an exegetical input from outside can sometimes be recognised. An example is Gen. 41.43 in Hebrew, in which the Egyptians acclaim Joseph with the obscure word *Abrek* ('bow the knee'?). The Peshitta translates this as 'Father [*aba*] and ruler', probably in awareness of the tradition behind the Jewish Targum that also split the word into two, 'Father and tender in years'. (This is one among many passages that support the case for a Jewish origin of the Old Testament Peshitta.[1]) The *Diatessaron* likewise furnishes some remarkable passages, of which the best known are those that show an ascetical tendency.

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[1] See Williams in this volume, pp. 527–35.

John the Baptist's diet including locusts (Matt. 3:4) becomes a meatless one of 'honey and milk of the mountains'.[2] Examples like these have contributed to the debate about the Jewishness, or the ascetical character, of early Syriac Christianity. A few other passages may give evidence of particular exegetical traditions. One of these is Matt. 16:18 where the *Diatessaron* says that the '*bars* of hell' will not prevail against the church, suggesting an allusion to Christ's descent and breaking into hell at his resurrection, a widely attested theme in other early Syriac writing.[3]

Besides the biblical text itself, the harvest of exegesis from the earliest Syriac literature is slight. Some developing exegetical traditions may, however, be identified in the small corpus of biblical Apocrypha written in Syriac. In what is probably one of the earliest of these apocryphal books, the *Testament of Adam*, Seth writes down his father's prophecy about future history, and declares: 'We sealed the testament and put it in the Cave of Treasures with the offerings that Adam had taken out of Paradise: gold and myrrh and frankincense. And the sons of kings, the Magi, will come and take them and bring them to the Son of God, to Bethlehem of Judea to the cave.'[4] This is the beginning of a considerable literature in Syriac elaborating the story of Matt. 2.1–12, the coming of the Magi (in Syriac *Mgushe*, 'Magians', Zoroastrian priests) at the birth of Jesus. These characters naturally had a special interest for Syriac writers, who explained in various ways their foreknowledge of the birth of the Messiah – if not by admitting the power of astrology, then by supposing that they had a secret tradition from Adam or some other biblical character like Nimrod or Balaam.[5] The *Testament of Adam* has some relationship with another and more substantial apocryphon, the *Cave of Treasures*, which is a retelling of biblical history, from creation down to the New Testament Pentecost. In its present form it has to be dated later (probably to the sixth century), but it incorporates an older layer that may go back even to the third

century. This text has a number of features in common with Jewish exegesis of Genesis, and with Ephrem's commentary (on which more presently).

The fourth century

Our discussion arrives on solid ground in the fourth century, the era of the two important figures Aphrahat and Ephrem. It is in this period, and in these two writers, that the special character of 'Syriac exegesis' has often been looked for and found.

Aphrahat is the earliest of the Syriac church fathers known by name – although this name (a Syriac form of the Persian name Farhad) is not attested in any source before the ninth century. The earliest manuscript of his works calls him only the 'Persian sage'. (The next earliest calls him 'Mar Jacob', perhaps his name as a bishop.) He is the author of a collection of twenty-three 'demonstrations', in fact not different from letters, nominally addressing a single member of his Christian community. The first group of ten demonstrations, mostly on general topics like 'On faith' (*Dem.* 1), 'On love' (2), 'On fasting' (3) and so on, are dated to 337. The second group of twelve, mostly on topics of controversy with Jews like 'On circumcision' (11), 'On the Pascha' (12) and so on, are dated to the year 344. These twenty-two form an acrostic series, beginning with successive letters of the Syriac alphabet. *Dem.* 23, starting again with *alaph*, has the date 345.

Although Aphrahat's works do not have exegesis as their stated purpose, scripture is quoted profusely and is the author's chief subject matter. (The word 'demonstration', *taḥwitha*, that gives a title to the whole, is actually the word he uses often for a specific point made from scripture.) The Old Testament predominates, not only in the demonstrations that engage Jews, but everywhere. For Aphrahat, the place of the Gospel in succession to the Old Testament ('the peoples', i.e. the Gentiles, having replaced 'the People', i.e. the Jews (*Dem.* 16, title)) is fundamental. Even the basic tenet that Jesus is God is justified by citing the Old Testament precedent: 'When [God] chose Moses and made him head and teacher and priest for his people he called him "God"' (Exod. 7:1; *Dem.* 17.3). Moral examples are drawn largely from the Old Testament, very often in long sequences. So we have a list of people brought down by pride: Adam, Cain, Ham, Esau, Pharaoh, the sons of Eli, Goliath, Abimalek, Absalom, Adonijah, Ahithophel, Jeroboam, Ahab, the king of Edom, Haman, the Babylonians – and from the New Testament, only Judas (*Dem.* 14.10). Another example of particular interest is the list of

Old Testament heroes of virginity, or 'holiness' (sexual continence within marriage) that Aphrahat musters to show the excellence of this way of life: Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (*Dem.* 18.7).[6]

In the demonstrations that reflect controversy with Jews, Aphrahat naturally argues from history and fulfilled prophecy, and he seems to avoid dealing in *raze* ('mysteries', 'symbols') and *tupse* ('types') which his opponent would hardly admit. The argument in *Dem.* 13, 'On the Sabbath', turns on practical discussions of animals obeying the Sabbath, precedents for overriding the Sabbath commandment and the like. But typology is never too far away. In *Dem.* 12, 'On the Pascha', there is a long section (12.5–10) interrupting the argument and describing for the Christian reader the new Pascha 'whose symbol was given to the former people and whose truth is now expressed today among the peoples'. This contains a typical quasi-poetical series of comparisons, beginning:

> The Jews eat unleavened bread with bitter herbs;
> Our saviour has put away the cup of bitterness, and taken away all the
> bitterness of the peoples when he tasted and did not want to drink (Matt. 27:48).
> The Jews recall their sins from season to season;
> We remember the crucifixion and the shameful treatment of our saviour.
> They went out on the Passover from subjection to Pharaoh;
> We on the day of the crucifixion are redeemed from the subjection of Satan.

He goes on to argue that the old Pascha typified Jesus as the true paschal lamb, and was a symbol (*raza*) of baptism.

In other demonstrations, typological reasoning is more central. The first statement that Aphrahat makes about faith in *Dem.* 1 is that

> It is like a building that is built up of many constructed pieces, and so rises upwards. And know, my beloved, that in the foundations of the building stones are laid, and then the whole building goes up upon the stones until it is topped off. Thus also the foundation of all our faith is the true stone, who is our Lord Jesus Christ. And on it, the stone, faith is based, and on faith the whole building rises until it is completed.

And he continues: 'And this, that I have called Christ the "stone", I have not said out of my own opinion, but the prophets beforehand called him the stone. And this I shall demonstrate to you.' The argument that Christ is the 'stone'

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6 On Aphrahat's many extended sequences of scriptural examples see R. Murray, 'Some Rhetorical Patterns in Early Syriac Literature', in R. H. Fischer (ed.), *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus* (Chicago, IL: Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1977), pp. 109–31.

then proceeds, expounding in turn the Old Testament testimonia Ps. 118:22, Isa. 28:16, Dan. 2:34–44, Zech. 4:7 and Zech. 3:9. There is no logical conclusion to this chain of remarks, and in this demonstration there is only the briefest credal statement at the very end (1.19) that gives any propositional content to Christian faith. Typological exegesis seems to carry the rest of the weight of theology.

In one complex exegetical set piece in his *Dem*. 5, 'On Wars', Aphrahat's treatment of the prophecies of Daniel illuminates the situation of his church in the Persian empire. In the vision of Dan. 8, Aphrahat takes the 'ram standing beside the river' (8.3) to refer to his own ruler, the Sassanid Emperor Shapur II, at that time (337) hostile to Christians, if not yet actively persecuting them; and the he-goat 'coming across the face of the whole earth' (8.5) to denote the Roman emperor (though neither is named explicitly). He warns the ram that it cannot stand before the he-goat (8.7), that is, that Shapur cannot stand against the Christian Roman empire. Rome, however, is also the terrifying fourth beast of the vision in Dan. 7, and Rome, 'as it is now, does not wish to be subjected to the power of the king [Christ] who is to come and take his kingdom (Dan. 7:27). But it keeps his hostages [i.e. Christians] in honour, so that when he comes and puts an end to the kingdom [of Rome], he will come upon them without anger.' Exegesis thus furnishes Aphrahat with the means for a political and even subversive discussion, although it is necessarily encrypted.

Ephrem, slightly younger than Aphrahat, lived across the border in Roman territory. His native city was Nisibis, but, when this was ceded to Persia in 363, he emigrated further west to Edessa. There he spent the last ten years of his life. Ephrem has his pre-eminent place in the history of Syriac literature on account of his poetry: more than four hundred *madrashe* ('hymns') and a few *memre* ('verse homilies').[7] Like the poetry are some compositions in artistic prose style, in particular the *Letter to Publius* and the *Sermon on our Lord*. All these compositions are steeped in the Bible, and they furnish the primary evidence in many discussions of Ephrem as an exegete;[8] but the 'exegesis' that we find in Ephrem's poetry is of a peculiar kind. Like Aphrahat, Ephrem considers scripture as a fount of images, types and symbols, but as a poet

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7 A *madrasha* (pl. *madrashe*) is properly a 'doctrinal song' rather than a 'hymn', since *madrashe* are not always addressed to God. A *madrasha* has the same pattern of syllables in each stanza, somewhat like an English hymn. A *memra* (pl. *memre*) is usually a longer composition, having the same number of syllables (seven in Ephrem's *memre*) in each line.
8 Notably S. Griffith, 'Ephraem the Exegete (306–373)', in C. Kannengiesser (ed.), *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 1395–428.

he can call them up entirely freely for the benefit of spiritual and theological reflection. To be sure, sometimes the subject of this reflection is itself more or less biblical. For example, in the *Hymns on the nativity*, Ephrem speaks about the time of Christ's conception and birth (*H. Nat.* 5.13–14):

> The sun has been victorious and given a symbol
> by the degrees it has risen. Twelve days since it has risen, and then today
> The thirteenth – a symbol of him and his Twelve.
> Moses confined the lamb in Nisan, on the tenth of the month –
> A symbol of the Son who came to the womb and confined himself
> On the same tenth. He went out from the womb
> In this month when the light has been victorious.

That is: Christ's nativity is celebrated on 6 January (the usual date for Christmas in the early Christian East, thirteen days after the winter solstice), but his conception took place on 10 April. The April ('Nisan') date, although explained here in terms of typology (the sequestering of the paschal lamb according to Exod. 12:3) is actually part of an exegetical construction starting from the annunciation to Zechariah of the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:8–23). This was taken to have happened on the Day of Atonement (10 Tishri), six months after which, on 10 Nisan, Jesus was conceived (Luke 1:26).[9]

The cycle of *Hymns on Paradise* furnish a more nuanced example of Ephrem's method.[10] *H. Par.* 1 is a meditation on the geography of paradise, and in parts is a reflection of the Genesis story. Ephrem says in stanza 10:

> When Adam sinned God cast him forth from it [paradise],
> but in his grace he gave him a place at a distance, the foothills,
> settling him in the low ground below the edge of paradise.

The idea that paradise was a mountain explains the 'valley' where Cain killed Abel according to the Peshitta of Gen. 4:8, and it gives a background for the events of Gen. 6, where the 'children of God' (i.e. the descendants of Seth) come further down the mountain to take wives from among the descendants of Cain. However, this hymn is only exegetical up to a point. Paradise is also the abode of the blessed dead, not a physical place at all. In this hymn, stanza 5 had already made this clear:

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9 For this early tradition see A. de Halleux, 'Le comput éphremien du cycle de la nativité', in F. van Segbroeck (ed.), *The Four Gospels 1992. Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (Leuven University Press, 1993), pp. 2369–82.
10 For a fuller discussion see Brock, *Paradise*.

> Not that the ascent to paradise is arduous because of its height,
> for those who inherit it experience no toil there.
> With its beauty it joyfully urges on those who ascend.
> Amidst glorious rays it lies resplendent,
> all fragrant with its scents;
> magnificent clouds fashion the abodes of those who are worthy of it.

So paradise is a larger conception than just the garden in the Genesis story. The same way of thinking characterises the *Letter to Publius*. Ephrem likens the Gospel to a mirror, and in this mirror various scenes and images of judgement appear, among them some from the Gospels, like the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19–31) and the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31–46); but the basic image of the text is the mirror itself, not specifically taken from the Bible. All these compositions have considerable power and beauty,[11] but typically for Ephrem scripture counts as just one source alongside others (here, the natural symbolism of gardens and mirrors) for the author's reflection and they are therefore only in a broad sense 'exegetical'.

Ephrem is credited with commentaries on most of the Bible. These are our immediate subject here, and in particular the commentaries on Genesis and Exodus (preserved in one early Syriac manuscript) and the commentary on the *Diatessaron* (extant in one early but incomplete manuscript in Syriac and in a complete Armenian version).[12] These commentaries are the first dedicated works of exegesis that we have from the Syriac church. This remains true even if the *Diatessaron* commentary, which raises critical problems on account of the differences between the Syriac and Armenian and some inconsistencies with the hymns, may not be the single work of Ephrem himself. All these works are written in a compressed prose that is not always explicit and challenges translators.

In the introduction to his *Commentary on Genesis*, Ephrem explains that he had not wanted to write a commentary but, 'compelled by the love of friends, we have written briefly the same things that we wrote at length in the *memre* and *madrashe*' (*Comm. Gen.* 1). But this remark hardly prepares the reader for the commentary to come (including that on Exodus), which concerns itself

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11 This is anyhow the view of most modern interpreters of Ephrem, led by S. P. Brock, R. Murray and S. Griffith (to name only some scholars writing in English). But in the nature of the case, it is possible to be out of sympathy with Ephrem's poetic constructions. For F. C. Burkitt, Ephrem's images were only 'pretty fancies' that did not conduce to clear theological thinking: *Early Eastern Christianity* (London: John Murray, 1904), pp. 95–110.

12 A commentary on Acts and the Pauline Epistles is preserved in Armenian only and has not been thoroughly studied. Comments in Ephrem's name on other parts of the Old Testament, preserved in a later Syriac catena, are less likely to be authentic.

only occasionally with signs and types, and almost exclusively with the plain sense of the biblical text and with explaining difficulties on the level of history. This concern can be seen, for example, in the way Ephrem deals with the question of whether human beings were created mortal or immortal. His answer is: 'In creating Adam, [God] did not make him mortal nor did he fashion him deathless, so that Adam, by either keeping or transgressing the commandment, might acquire from one of the trees [in paradise] that which he wished' (*Comm. Gen.* 2.17). He attempts to understand the obscure sentence pronounced on Cain in Gen. 4:15, that Cain will be 'avenged sevenfold' by taking it to mean that Cain would remain alive to endure his shame for seven generations. Again, as Ephrem explains the story of Noah's drunkenness (Gen. 9.21), Noah did not drink too much; it was only that he had been so long without drinking wine that it affected him. In fact he had not had wine for at least six years, given the length of time it required for the vineyard planted from seeds he had had with him in the ark to mature. The same length of time is suggested by the fact that Ham 'went out into the street' to tell his brothers, implying that villages had by that time been laid out and built. All these examples show Ephrem dealing with the text deliberately at a strictly historical level. The likeness of this proceeding to Jewish *haggadah* is clear (and will be returned to presently). It may be that Ephrem was furnishing his community with a Christian counterpart to Jewish books of midrash.

There are occasional passages in the Genesis commentary that explain events in terms of God's wider dispensation. When Abraham gave Sarah to Pharaoh (Gen. 12:10–19), God punished Pharaoh with plagues and she was delivered from him – so that, as Ephrem says, 'the mystery of her descendants might be depicted in her', that is, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt in time to come (*Comm. Gen.* 9.3). More often, but still infrequently, such references to types and mysteries are Christian, for example, Abraham making the sign of the cross in traversing the land of Canaan (Gen. 13:17), or the ram caught in the thicket (Gen. 22:13) as a type of Christ fastened to the cross. The exception to this restraint is a self-contained section (*Comm. Gen.* 43) on the blessings of Jacob (Gen. 49) giving a 'spiritual' interpretation largely in terms of Christ, the apostles and the church.

The *Commentary on the Diatessaron* is different, even though at first sight it seems to be taken up, again, with resolving plain-sense questions. Why did Jesus submit to being baptised? Why did he enjoin silence on those whom he healed? Why did John the Baptist appear to doubt that Jesus was the one to come? Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? Why did he decline to be called 'good'? How can he have prayed in Gethsemane that the cup might pass from

him? Why did he say to Mary Magdalene 'Do not touch me'? These questions receive initially matter-of-fact answers. For example (*Comm. Diatess.* 16), the owner of the fig tree had earned the curse by leaving no fruit on the tree for orphans and widows to glean, in defiance of the law (Deut. 24.19–20). But usually such answers are only a starting point, and explanations on a different and properly theological level soon come in. In this case, Ephrem considers several other ways to understand Jesus's action, culminating in this one: that 'He made the fig tree wither, to show that fig leaves were no longer required for the covering of Adam, because he had restored him to his former glory, in which he had had no need of fig leaves or of covering made from skins.'

Other Gospel passages are the occasion for elaborations in a similar poetical or imaginative vein. One such is the silencing of Zechariah when he disbelieves the angel's announcement of the birth of John the Baptist. This, says Ephrem (*Comm. Diatess.* 1.13–15), was appropriate for many reasons, including to show Zechariah that 'he who could close an open mouth was able to open a closed womb'. A similar reflection is set off by the word 'peace' in Jesus' command to his apostles to say 'Peace' to any household they enter. This peace, when given, is with the recipient and yet still with the apostle, thus reflecting the essence of the Father himself, which is with all and in all, and the mission of the Son who is with all even when returning to the Father (*Comm. Diatess.* 8.4). Among many other examples that might be mentioned are some curious ones. When Jesus multiplies the bread, it is like a whole year's agricultural cycle of growth and harvest taking place in his hands (*Comm. Diatess.* 12.3); and the Canaanite woman who recognised Jesus and asked him to heal her daughter was drawing on the Canaanite people's long-ago memory of Joshua (in Syriac the same name as Jesus; *Comm. Diatess.* 12.14). These characteristically Ephremic passages illustrate how his symbolic and typological view of scripture operates as well in this commentary as in his poetry.

Besides the works of the named authors Aphrahat and Ephrem, there is a body of anonymous literature that comes into consideration here. This consists of poems that retell biblical stories dramatically, either as a plain narrative or as a dialogue between biblical characters. The latter type is especially well represented in Syriac, many examples being in a particular form called a *sogitha* (pl. *sogyatha*; a kind of *madrasha* in four-line stanzas, usually acrostic), designed for antiphonal singing. The genre certainly goes back to the fourth century, since Ephrem is the author of several examples, although most of the anonymous compositions will be later. Probably the best known of these is a dialogue between the repentant robber to whom

Jesus promises 'Today you will be with me in paradise' (Luke 23:43), and the cherub who guards paradise with a flaming sword (Gen. 3:24). The robber has to persuade the cherub to admit him. To quote one exchange:

> *Cherub* Our region is fearsome and is not to be trodden,
> Fire is its unassailable wall.
> The sword-point flames around it.
> How have you dared to come here?
> *Robber* Your region is fearsome, just as you have said,
> But only until your Lord mounted the cross.
> He transfixed the lance of suffering
> And your sword-point no longer kills.

At last the robber shows the sign of the cross and the cherub yields to him. Dramatic poems like this were not written for scholarly or doctrinal use but for liturgical performance. Still, they qualify as exegesis in the sense that they interpret and actualise the biblical text for those who sing and hear it.[13]

A good deal of scholarship has been brought to bear on the fact that early Syriac writers share exegetical traditions, particularly haggadic ones, with Jewish sources. Aphrahat, listing men who were led into sin by women, says: 'Moses was sent to deliver the people from Egypt, and he took with him a woman who counselled hateful things. And the Lord met Moses and sought to kill him (Exod. 4:24), until he returned his wife to Midian' (*Dem.* 6.3). That is, the Lord's anger had been brought against Moses by his wife Zipporah, who had prevented one of their sons from being circumcised. The story is told at greater length by Ephrem in his commentary on Exodus (*Comm. Exod.* 4.4). Now, according to the Tannaitic midrash, Moses had agreed to the demand of Jethro, his wife's father, that he should dedicate his first son to idolatry, and only subsequent sons to the Lord; and this agreement was the reason why God (or his angel) sought to kill him.[14] The two stories are clearly related, although the details differ (as to whether Zipporah or Jethro was at fault). This is one parallel among many where no literary dependence can be established, yet which call for some explanation. Some scholars have sought to

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13 This *sogitha* is still performed as part of the east Syriac daily office in Holy Week. See S. P. Brock, 'Syriac Dialogue Poems. Marginalia to a Recent Edition', *Le Muséon* 97 (1984), 29–58, specifically 47 for a reference to the Syriac text here translated; and his *The Bible in the Syriac tradition*, pp. 81–8 and 172–8 for this genre of literature more generally.

14 *Mekhilta* on Exod. 18:3. Similar exegesis is found in the Palestinian Targums. See A. Guillaumont, 'Un midrash d'Exode 4,24–26 chez Aphrahate et Ephrem de Nisibe', in Fischer (ed.), *Tribute*, pp. 89–95.

find this in a special Jewish, or even specifically Palestinian Jewish, connection characterising early Syriac Christianity. Others point to the general attraction of Christians to Jewish traditions observable at many times and places; or to the likely existence of now lost books in the genre of the 'rewritten Bible' that were read in common by Jews and Christians.[15]

The fifth century

The way that Syriac biblical exegesis developed in the fifth century was in part a consequence of the curriculum of the so-called 'school of the Persians' in Edessa. This school may have been founded by disciples of Ephrem; in any case, traditions associated with him were known as the 'tradition of the school' up until the 430s or thereabouts. Around this time, however, Qiyyore, the director of the school, began to oversee the translation into Syriac of some of the exegetical works of Theodore of Mopsuestia. Parts of Theodore's commentaries on Genesis, the Twelve Prophets, Psalms, Qoheleth and John survive in Syriac and may all have been translated at this time. Commentaries of Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore's teacher, were reportedly also translated, although these translations do not survive. Theodore's see was near Antioch and his writings would have been known among Greek readers in and around Edessa. His exegetical method, which emphasised the historical context of the biblical text and rejected allegorical interpretation, must also have appealed to those in the school.[16] How far Theodore's dyophysite christological position (the recognition of two distinct natures in the incarnate Christ) may have added to his initial appeal is unclear, but at all events the school became a stronghold of dyophysite teaching.

At this moment, Theodore's condemnation by the Second Council of Constantinople (553) was still in the future; but the dyophysite christology with which he was associated had powerful opponents in Edessa, and not less so after 451 when the Council of Chalcedon canonised a two-nature formula.

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15 For various nuanced verdicts see Murray, *Symbols*, pp. 279–347 *passim*; S. P. Brock, 'Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources', *JJS* 30 (1979), 212–32; and van Rompay, 'Christian Syriac Tradition', p. 617. Against any Jewish background for Syriac Christianity is H. J. W. Drijvers, 'Syrian Christianity and Judaism', in J. Lieu et al. (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 124–46.
16 Whether earlier Syriac writers like Ephrem were already 'Antiochene' like Theodore in their exegesis is partly a matter of definition. Against a too-easy identification are Muto, 'Early Syriac Hermeneutics', and L. van Rompay, 'Antiochene Biblical Interpretation. Greek and Syriac', in J. Frishman and L. van Rompay (eds.), *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), pp. 103–23.

The school lost the protection of Bishop Hiba (who had earlier been one of the translators of Theodore) at his death in 457, and it was eventually closed by order of Emperor Zeno in 489. The director of the school, Narsai, had already fled to Nisibis in Persian territory, where a new school opened, and came into prominence, under his leadership. In the school of Nisibis the exegetical authority of Theodore was strictly taught, and it was enforced by synods of bishops as the official doctrine of the church in Persia until the seventh century. In documents of this period and later, Theodore is referred to simply as 'the exegete'.

The overlaying of Greek exegesis, and specifically Theodore's exegetical project, onto earlier Syriac biblical interpretation at this time is a remarkable development in itself, but it had the additional effect of precipitating the division of the Syriac tradition into two. Narsai and writers who followed him in the church of the East (i.e. the church in Persia) reflect the influence of Theodore, while, among the miaphysite authors (that is, those who took a 'one-nature' christological position) in the Roman empire, a different 'west Syriac' tradition developed. In the fifth century, the two traditions had their principal representatives in Narsai (d. 502) and Jacob of Serug (d. *c.* 521).

Narsai and the east Syriac tradition

Narsai's chief literary output was of verse *memre*, supposed to number 360, of which 81 survive. These show Narsai as a dedicated interpreter of the Bible. The majority of the *memre* are on biblical subjects, including subjects from both Old and New Testaments (some from each being among the minority that have so far been well edited and translated).[17] Narsai's verse, in seven- or twelve-syllable lines, often follows the biblical text closely, and in its expression it can be so didactic, or even argumentative, that it practically counts as prose commentary.

The dominant impression of Narsai from his *memre* is of his fidelity to Theodore. Sometimes this goes so far as to cause him to deal with the Greek text of the Bible underlying Theodore's commentary rather than the Syriac Peshitta. Although Narsai does in some places show a continuing dependence on Ephrem (and Ephrem himself continued to be venerated in east Syriac tradition), his allegiance to Theodore overrides it almost everywhere. In his

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17 A classified list of the *memre* is given in Gignoux, *Homélies de Narsai*, pp. 9–11. For editions and translations see S. P. Brock, 'A Guide to Narsai's Homilies', *Hugoye* 12.19 (2009), 21–40.

account of the creation and fall story, for example, Narsai confronts God's statement in Gen. 2:17 that if Adam eats the fruit of the tree of knowledge, he will die.

> Hearing the lection has very much troubled the simple, [thinking]
> That Adam's transgression made our race mortal.
> But if Adam's folly condemned Adam and his descendants,
> Did this surpass [the providence of] the One who knows all?
> Why did he fashion creatures designed to be mortals,
> And why male and female by nature for posterity?
> It is not seemly to say about the intention of the Creator
> That he did not know that we would sin, and changed his intention in anger!

Adam's transgression was, indeed, not a tragedy, but God's device to make humanity aware of the free will with which it had been endowed.

> He called it the tree 'of knowledge' because, although itself not sentient,
> The knowledge hidden in Adam was revealed by means of its fruit.
> Adam was plain gold before eating from the tree,
> But after he ate the fruit, he showed the fineness of his design.[18]

All this corresponds closely to Theodore's view of Adam as originally mortal and of his transgression as part of a pedagogical process.[19]

Narsai's adherence to Theodore, and departure from earlier Syriac norms, may also be seen in his suspicion of typology and references to Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Christ. We do find instances in Narsai, for example in his interpretation of the prophecy of Jacob in Gen. 49:11, where there might seem to be an echo of an older style of exegesis:

> 'The king who comes will whiten his garment in pure wine
> And in the blood of grapes the covering with which he is wrapped.'
> Hidden is the blessing with which you bless, o righteous Jacob!
> How can they whiten garments in wine which stains clothes? . . .
> But Jacob's word is not hidden from the discerning
> And it is a great force for the faith of the orthodox.
> 'Wine' is death with which the human race is stained;
> And is it not the body with which [Christ] is 'wrapped' that ravaging death
> stains?

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18 *Memra* 4 on creation, lines 49–56, 65–8.
19 See Gignoux, *Homélies de Narsai*, pp. 70–7; and R. A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), p. 166, who does also point out Theodore's ambivalence in some other passages.

And because he humbled and handed over his soul to the suffering of death,
He went up to heaven and was made worthy to sit on the Right Hand.
He whitens with wine the 'garment' with which he is 'wrapped', from our
    humanity
And with the blood of grapes, the 'covering' that comes from the House of
    David.

But this turns out to be a rare case where Theodore himself allows a messianic and even allegorical interpretation of an Old Testament text; and it is his specific interpretation, that the 'garment' is the form of a servant taken by Christ, that Narsai is following.[20] This was also congenial to a dyophysite christology in which the subject of Christ's suffering was not God but only Christ's assumed manhood. Narsai continues:

What [Jacob] has said in prophecy about [Christ's] death
Is a great blow to Cyril [of Alexandria], the apostle of deceit.
What shall he say, that one who makes God to suffer,
Against Jacob, who attributes death to the *body* of our Lord?[21]

Jacob of Serug and the west Syriac tradition

Jacob of Serug (d. *c.* 521) was also a student in the school of the Persians in Edessa, but he was resistant to the dyophysite christology taught there. In one of his letters he mentions that as a young man he was repelled by the works of Diodore that he saw in translation, and he dutifully denounces him along with the other dyophysite teachers Theodore, Theodoret and Nestorius (although only in response to some insistent questioners). Jacob must have started writing *memre* already while he was in the school, if we credit a report that Narsai himself began his own literary activity to counteract the influence of Jacob.[22] (But Narsai adopted a different metre, not copying Jacob's characteristic metre of twelve syllables per line.) At all events, Jacob was an even more prolific writer in this genre than Narsai. His biographers credit him with 723 *memre*, and over three hundred exist today, their popularity in the church attested by a rich manuscript tradition. Jacob also wrote a cycle of six prose homilies for the church year, and forty-three of his letters survive.

20 For Theodore, see *PG*, 66.645b–c.
21 There is no published translation of this *memra*. For the Syriac text see *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2 vols. (San Francisco, CA: Patriarchal Press, 1970), vol. I, pp. 385–6. The ellipsis is of four lines.
22 See Vööbus, *School of Nisibis*, pp. 65–9.

More than two hundred of Jacob's *memre* are on biblical subjects,[23] many overlapping with Narsai's. But the impression given by the two poets is different. Narsai is exegetically and doctrinally the more precise, but poetically poorer for being constrained by rules of exegesis that inhibit the use of symbols and types. Jacob is under no such restriction, and, while his train of thought is sometimes more digressive, that is because his imagination finds one symbol after another to explore.

It is true that the influence of Theodore's exegesis can still be seen in Jacob's poetry. When in one of the *memre* on the six-day creation he likens Adam to the image of a king that the king places in a city so that the local people will recognise him and praise his work, this is a metaphor taken from Theodore (and also found in Narsai).[24] Such borrowings will be Jacob's inheritance from the school. More usually, however, Jacob does not follow Theodore. He devotes a whole *memra* to the question of whether Adam was created mortal or immortal, taking the older view of Ephrem but bringing new metaphors to bear on it:

> In his wisdom [God] joined the natures [mortal and immortal] opposite
>   each other
> And he engraved and erected an image that faced in both directions.
> He did not stamp it with the image of those [angels] like Michael,
> So that he would be immortal even if he sinned;
> Nor did he make it have the stamp of all the animals,
> So that he would all come to death even if not offending.

Unusually here, Jacob alludes to the opposite opinion, and says:

> If someone should wish to refute my words with objections,
> Let him bring his case and let it engage with our rendition.
> My word is set out simply, without polemic;
> I have not been provocative with scholarly inventions![25]

Jacob's *memre* on Old and New Testament subjects are full of typology, citations of fulfilled prophecy and occasional flights into allegory. In this respect, of course, he differs from Theodore completely and shows a more fundamental affinity with the older Syriac authors. It is not easy to illustrate

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23 Translations of Jacob's *memre* are still few, although a number have been published in recent years. A list up to 2006 can be found in vol. VI of P. Bedjan (ed.) *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug*, 6 vols. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006), pp. 400–6.

24 Jacob, *Memra* 6 on the six-day creation: French translation by B. Sony in *Parole de l'Orient* 11 (1983), 172–99, especially 177–8. On Jacob's echoes of Theodore, see T. Jansma, 'L'hexaméron de Jacques de Sarug', *L'Orient Syrien* 4 (1959), 1–42, 129–62, 253–84, especially 158.

25 Homily 2, lines 177–82 and 237–40, in Alwan, *Quatre homélies métriques*, pp. 25, 27.

this point with short quotations: Jacob, unlike Ephrem, does not compress his thoughts and expressions. He relies on repetition, choosing an image and circling round it, gradually introducing fresh observations before going on to another. A good study is his *memra* on the veil over Moses' face (Exod. 34:33–5 and 2 Cor. 3:13–18), which not only illustrates Jacob's reading of particular passages and themes, but expounds his view of the Old Testament as a whole. According to him, the veil stands for prophecy, whose true meaning was hidden from the Hebrews.

> That veil on Moses' face – it is a symbol for this:
> That the words of prophecy are veiled.
> For this reason did the Lord cover Moses' face:
> That it might be a type for prophecy, which is something covered.
> The Father had a Son in secret, and no one knew,
> And he wanted to reveal him to the world symbolically.

For example, that husband and wife should become one flesh (Gen. 2:24) was a profound statement about Christ and the church, only not expressed openly. (Jacob makes a detour to mention bridal veils.) Likewise, the Passover lamb, the crossing of the Red Sea and other events in the wilderness, the bronze serpent, the apparatus of the cult – everything in the books of Moses – were symbols.

> He [Moses] spoke symbols; he did not speak their explanations.
> For the man was a stammerer (Exod. 4:10) and could not explain.
> For this indeed the stammer was kept:
> That his speech might be kept from explanation.
> Our Lord came, straightened the tongue of the stammerer Moses,
> And now all his words can be heard clearly.[26]

In the west Syriac tradition, there was no counterpart to the enforcement of a particular canon of exegesis as in the church of the East. Furthermore, by the end of the fifth century various Greek exegetical works were becoming current in Syriac translations. These included in particular the homilies of John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa on the Song of Songs and Cyril of Alexandria on Luke, all of which survive in early Syriac manuscripts. The result was a certain broadening in the western tradition starting in the sixth century, with

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26 This *memra* has 460 lines. Quotations are lines 21–6 and 283–8. The whole text may be read in S. P. Brock's English translation in 'Jacob of Serugh on the Veil of Moses', *Sobornost* 3:1 (1981), 70–85.

the influence of Greek sources being further magnified.[27] At the beginning of this century Philoxenus of Mabbug supervised a new translation of the New Testament. This was aimed at least partly at giving a sound philological basis, by carefully translating sensitive passages from Greek into Syriac, for a defence of miaphysite christology. Philoxenus' commentary on the prologue to John, linked to this translation, is not so much a commentary as a doctrinal work. Philoxenus does not quote Greek authors by name, but subsequent Syriac authors did so more and more, and later Syriac exegesis – although it has its own interest – lost much of its original character.[28]

A few general conclusions can be drawn about the character of early Syriac biblical exegesis. It rested first of all on interest in the text historically and in its plain sense. The resemblance to Jewish exegesis has already been mentioned, however it is to be explained. 'Alexandrian' works, on the other hand, in particular Origen's commentaries, had no discernible influence on Syriac writers in our period. But the emphasis on symbols and types existed side by side with this historical exegesis and – to various degrees in different authors, as we have seen – practically displaced it. It is this affinity for symbolic and figurative kinds of expression, taken to be characteristic of Syriac authors, that has elicited different cultural explanations – the discussion of which would extend well beyond this chapter.[29] In any case, what is probably most distinctive in Syriac exegesis is the choice of poetry as a vehicle by so many writers; and since types, symbols and images belong, arguably, to a poetic kind of thinking, Syriac exegetical literature (broadly defined to include this poetry) has a logic of its own, and holds some special attraction even for modern theologians.

27 On this development (not limited to exegetical sources) see S. P. Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation. Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning', in N. G. Garsoïan, T. F. Mathews and R. W. Thomson (eds.), *East of Byzantium. Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982), pp. 17–34.
28 This general verdict applies to the east Syriac tradition as well as to the west. Eventually with the assimilation of Greek sources by both traditions, they reconverged somewhat in later times.
29 A classic treatment is S. P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye. The Spiritual World of St. Ephrem* (Rome: CIIS, 1985), especially pp. 132–4, who points out Ephrem's freedom from the Greek rhetorical tradition. (But other scholars would regard Ephrem as more 'Hellenised': see U. Possekel, *Evidence of Greek Philosophical Concepts in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian*, Corpus Scriptiorum Christianorum Orientalium Subsidia 102 (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), especially pp. 1–32.) Another avenue that has been explored is the inheritance by Syriac writers of ancient Near Eastern traditions, 'a native gift nurtured in the soil of northern Mesopotamia' as R. Murray has put it ('The Characteristics of the Earliest Syriac Christianity', in Garsoïan, Mathews and Thomson (eds.), *East of Byzantium*, pp. 3–16, especially p. 12).

Figurative readings: their scope and justification

MARK EDWARDS

It is almost an axiom of modern commentary that any materials for inter-pretation, when they are not discovered in the text itself, must be discernible in the circumstances of its composition. Whatever cannot be learned from the dictionary must be explained from the known intentions of the author, from soundings in the hinterland of his consciousness, from the latent or declared presuppositions of his contemporaries – in short, from facts which may be regarded as causes or concomitants of writing. It is nevertheless a historical fact, and one which the historian has a duty to understand as well as to notice, that the earliest Christian readers of the Bible (or, more properly, of what we now call the Bible) did not address the text with such assumptions. But for a certain reading of the Septuagint, the church would have no Old Testament, and the contours of its own Testament, if it had one at all, would not be as we now find them. In the first part of this chapter, I shall attempt to define a figurative reading and, in the second, to show what forms such readings took for Greeks and Romans. In the third, I shall try to show that for Jews in ancient times the application of the text to the reader's case was so habitual and instinctive that acquaintance with the Greeks produced noth-ing more than refinements of a spontaneous practice. After briefly reviewing early specimens of Christian artifice in the fourth part, I shall devote the fifth to Origen, who surpasses and subsumes the experiments of his predecessors by adopting the incarnation as a ubiquitous principle of exegesis. For him, and for many after him, the Septuagint is at once a seamless testimony to God's accomplished work and an organ of the redemptive purpose still to be achieved in the individual. In the sixth part it will be seen that even those who professed to be innocent of allegory were seldom faithful ministers of the literal sense. In the seventh we shall witness the ripening among Ori-gen's heirs of a new hermeneutic of narrative, according to which the deeper sense of the text is read by the light that meditation on the literal sense has kindled in the reader. By then it should be apparent that early Christians

practised figurative reading as a discipline of the soul, in the conviction that the word remains opaque unless the Word himself is present in the reader. The theological ripening of this principle, which I can illustrate only briefly in the epilogue, is Augustine's view that spiritual discernment, the discovery of love by love, is the one hermeneutic exercise that does justice to the letter of the text.

Preliminary reflections

We cannot approach this subject without determining what it is to call a reading figurative. First we must understand what it means to use a figure in composition. The Latin *figura* renders the Greek noun 'trope', for which reason theorists use the word 'tropological' as a synonym for 'figurative', and the science of figures is called 'tropology'. The Latin word means 'shape', the Greek a 'turning' or 'inflection'; both, when they themselves are used figuratively, imply a deviation from, or modification of, the 'primary' or 'literal' use of words. The three cardinal figures are metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche. Metaphor is the translation of a term from species to species: thus, 'she out-foxed them', 'you are a snake', 'the quicksands of tropology'. Metonymy is the use of a name derived from a concomitant to designate the subject: conspiracy to assassinate the king, for example, is said to be directed against the throne, and a judge's speech is said to come from the bench. Synecdoche is the substitution of part for whole, as when a woman 'gives her hand' in marriage. These figurative usages (which seldom perplex a competent speaker) must not be confused with figurative *reading*, which is a tropological operation performed on an entire text, or on some extensive part of it, with the purpose of eliciting an arcane sense that could not have been discovered by the examination of its internal logic or the evocation of rules which guide the use of tropes in an ordinary sentence.

The term *allêgoria* (blending Greek words for 'other' and 'speech') was used in Antiquity of texts which were believed to 'say one thing and mean another'. The term for the art which divines this 'other' sense was *allêgorêsis*. In modern English, 'allegory' has come to be an ambiguous term, which signifies not only the presence of a buried meaning in the text but the exhumation of this meaning. For critics who deny that the biblical texts are allegorical in the former sense, this second sense of 'allegory', corresponding to the Greek *allêgorêsis*, has come to be almost the only one; in the present study, however, 'allegory' will stand for *allêgoria*, and 'allegorical reading' for *allêgorêsis*. It will also be necessary to employ the word 'typology', which describes the trope

(more often, the tropological operation) whereby characters and episodes in the Old Testament are made to foreshadow the work of Christ or a mystery of the church. Some scholars have proposed to extrapolate allegory from metaphor and typology from metonymy, setting up an opposition between the two that reduces synecdoche to a province of the latter;[1] this, however, is a fragile bifurcation. For one thing, the metonymic bond is one of contiguity or physical association rather than one of proleptic similarity; for another, while the definition of allegory as extended metaphor has ancient warrant and holds good (for example) if vices are personified as agents, it is equally possible to construct a synecdochic allegory. Thus in *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan the hero, Christian, is a man who represents not an abstraction but the whole company of the elect. We shall see that the distinction between typology and allegory was never more than embryonic in early Christian writers, and that they were not inclined to assimilate either to the tropes of common speech.

The classical milieu

Figurative reading of canonical texts has a history in Greek and Latin before the birth of Christ. Its premise – not unnatural in an age when books were the privilege of the elite – is the omniscience of the author. The intention of the author, as for the dominant school of biblical criticism in our own day, was the principal determinant of meaning; but, at the same time, a higher sense would be read into an author of unassailably classic status, on the assumption that he could never have written in vain or without the power to edify. The first known essay in *allêgorêsis*, a commentary on a poem ascribed to the legendary prophet Orpheus, assumes that the bard was acquainted with every philosophy that Greek wit had devised before the fourth century BC.[2] In the works of Homer there are at least two passages that are patently allegorical;[3] the argument that the whole admits of an allegorical reading was advanced by one Theagenes of Rhegium in the sixth century BC as an answer to those who took offence at the petulance of Homer's heroes and the turpitude of his gods.[4] Plato was not persuaded but, for most readers in Antiquity, Homer was not the one in need of a defence. In the *Homeric Allegories* of

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1 N. Frye, *The Great Code* (London: Routledge, 1982), pp. 24–5 and 84–5. For the dichotomy see R. Jakobson, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances', in R. Jakobson and M. Halle (eds.), *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp. 67–96.
2 See A. Laks and G. Most (eds.), *Studies in the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997).
3 *Il.* 9.502–12 and 19.86–100.   4 Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 9, 42, 158.

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the Stoic Heraclitus of Ephesus, sustained *allēgorēsis* lends the sanction of a great poet to moral precepts and to the teachings of his own school on the nature of matter and the elements.[5] Porphyry, the first Platonist to leave us an allegorical study of Homer, contends that he did not invent the mysterious cave which he represents as a meeting place of mortals and immortals, but interpreted a structure that had been purposely imbued with symbolism by ancient masons.[6] His interpretation does not observe the rule laid down long before by Greek philologists, that Homer should be interpreted from Homer;[7] on the contrary his witnesses are Platonic myths, philosophers of the last hundred years and the mysteries celebrated by the wisest or most ancient of barbarians. His method is thus intuitive and eclectic – intuitive because any enlightened mind can divine the thoughts of a mind that is similarly enlightened, and eclectic because the intellect of Homer is a microcosm of all truth, and no truth can be the monopoly of a single race, let alone a single book.

In the investigation of myth, collective wisdom supersedes the personal inspiration of the bard. Once the fantastic dress was removed, the myth was supposed to yield a true reminiscence of some historical event or an insight into the course of nature. Plato, in his dialogues on education, mocked this as a subterfuge,[8] but, in a dialogue on language, he suggests that the wisdom of a primordial legislator can be retrieved by analysing the names that he gave to the gods (*Cratylus* 391d–392a etc.). The Stoics took up this principle in earnest, and the prolific allegorist Cornutus, writing in the first century AD, transformed every member of the pantheon into a constellation of moral and cosmological truths, all underwritten by his etymologies.[9] Plutarch of Chaeronea, a younger contemporary, took a Platonic view of the 'violence' used by the Stoics upon Homer[10] yet he was willing, in his *Isis and Osiris*, to dispel the superficial obscenities of Egyptian myth by the identification of each of the warring gods with a natural element.[11] It was generally conceded that,

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5 See the Budé edition of F. Buffière (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 1962).

6 Porphyry, *De Antro Nympharum*, in A. Nauck, *Porphyrii Opuscula* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1886), 58.16.

7 See Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philolog*; G. Bendinelli, 'Il Comento a Giovanni e la tradizione scolastica dell antichita', in E. Prinzivalli (ed.), *Il Commento a Giovanne di Origene. Il Testo e suoi contesti* (Villa Verucchio: Pazzini, 2004), pp. 133–56.

8 *Phaedrus* 230a; *Rep.* 378d–e.

9 See G. Most, 'Cornutus and Stoic Allegoresis. A Preliminary Report', in H. Temporini (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.36.3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989), pp. 2014–65.

10 *On Listening to the Poets* 11.30. Plutarch's works are best consulted in the 15-volume Loeb Classical Library edition (New York: Heinemann, various editors and dates).

11 See *On Isis and Osiris* 32.

as a myth has no one author, so no one reading of it is mandatory. As many as five levels of understanding were distinguished by the fourth century,[12] though, so far as our evidence shows, the Greeks did not attempt to codify their own practices until they received an example from the church.

A typical Greek exponent of *allêgorêsis*, then, would be likely (i) to believe that the deeper sense was the true intention of the text or myth; (ii) to look for indices of the probable intention outside the text; and (iii) to admit a variety of intentions, all disguised. None of these assumptions could be embraced without reserve by Jewish or Christian exegetes. Their faith informed them (i) that the Holy Spirit was the agent whose intentions determined the sense of scripture; (ii) that, while he might conceal the key to one canonical book in another, he had not left any text in need of a picklock which must be sought outside the canon; and (iii) that if the text had more than one sense, this was because it admitted a graduated hierarchy of meanings. Porphyry, ignoring his own example, accused the Christian Origen of following the Stoics in his attempts to purge Hebrew myth of its absurdities. It would be truer to say that they took up the principle of 'interpreting Homer from Homer', which (as we have seen) he purposely eschewed. The theory of inspiration implies that sublime truths could be found in every syllable of the scriptures; it need not surprise us, therefore, that interpreters of these scriptures should exceed their pagan models in devotion, pertinacity and attention to the letter of the text.

Jewish antecedents

To be able to say of the same term that it is predicated literally of one thing and metaphorically of another – literally of a tree and metaphorically of the just man, for example, or literally of the tribe and metaphorically of the eponymous progenitor – is to inhabit a cloven world, which some historians believe to have been the product of analytical reflection centuries after the dawn of consciousness. It has even been maintained that it is the work of the Greek intelligence in the fifth century BC.[13] While this can hardly be true, it is a clear truth that the private and individual voice is seldom to be heard in Israelite literature. No song of thanks or victory is composed on behalf of the singer alone; Job portrays himself not as an outcast on his own dunghill but as a beggar exposed to the taunts of young and old on the civic highway.

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12 See Sallustius, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe* 4.
13 So J. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1951); B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), chapter 1.

Jonah recounts his imprisonment in the belly of the fish as a descent into the underworld, and the reading of the Shunamite in the Song of Songs as a surrogate for Israel seems more plausible when we observe that she is credited with a nose like a tower and a terrible beauty like that of an army with banners. There is in such passages not so much a conscious use of metaphor as a habit of representing the individual as an archetype, so that every Israelite stands for the house of Jacob and every guiltless sufferer wears the disfigured image of God.

As the people is one, so the text is one. Correlation and polarity (to use Michael Fishbane's terms)[14] were instinctive tropes for the biblical prophets, which became pillars of haggadic exegesis. The first divines a common tenor in episodes or motifs which are widely separated in the scriptural canon so that each augments or modifies the significance of the other; the second sets two agents, events or sites against one another as type and archetype. Correlation may be the seed of allegory in so far as it implies that one particular could take the place of another as an instance of the same paradigm; polarity is the counterpart of typology in Christian exegesis, though of course the Jewish commentator does not regard the old as a mere foreshadowing of the new. The natural sense of the text (or the sense that seems to us most natural) can also be augmented by the reification of terms denoting powers of God: thus the Word, the Name, the Glory of God become metaphysical subjects, not identical with God as he is himself yet not distinct enough to be worshipped independently. This is not allegory in the sense of a departure from the letter – it is rather a hypertrophy of literalism – but it might be called allegory by a reader who means by this a violation of the 'plain sense', the sense available to one who, having mastered the common tropes of speech, is able to parse the power, the name and the glory as synecdochic terms for God.

In the voluminous works of Philo of Alexandria, a Greek-speaking Jew who was intermittently conscious of the Hebrew behind the Septuagint, we see a confluence of the Jewish and the classical traditions. The true child of God for him is at once an Israelite and a cosmopolitan, ignorant of local cults, indifferent to national custom and serving his Creator in accordance with both natural law and the law revealed at Sinai. The revealed law is not in conflict with the natural one for those who follow its ordinances literally but apply them allegorically. The animals declared unclean by the dietary code are emblems of the passions that must be excised by the regimen of the soul; the devout will not eat the proscribed meat any more than they

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14 See for instance Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 418–40.

will indulge the prohibited vices. The rite of circumcision, which gives only symbolic instruction to the Gentiles, is performed by the Jews both inwardly and outwardly, and thus serves them not only as a moral emblem but as a preservative to health (*Spec. leg.* 1.4). Even in Antiquity it was noted that he resembled the Pythagoreans,[15] who also held that the precepts of their founder encoded universal principles of morality, but added that for those who have learned to practise that morality it becomes possible to regulate the outward life according to the literal application of the precepts. In the personification of divine attributes Philo outruns any Jew of his time: his Logos, or Word of God, as at once the plan and the instrument of the entire creation, at once the educator of every human intellect and the wisdom embodied specially for Israel in the Torah.[16] His aim is not to belittle either the truth or the singularity of the Mosaic dispensation, but to show that it contains and anticipates all that the Greeks had subsequently discovered through philosophy and 'encyclopaedic learning'. The emblem of the latter is Hagar the bondmaid of Abraham, while Sarah his wife represents the higher way of the philosophical Israelite (*Cong.* 72). Philo differs from the Pythagoreans, and from most Greeks, in maintaining that the God who reveals himself in the course of history also gives us moral instruction through the recording of that history: thus Lot's secession from Abraham prefigures the vain pursuit of heathen learning (*Migr.* 217–24), while the combination of wisdom and probity in the life of Moses surpasses any example in profane literature (*Leg. all.* 1.40, *V. Mos.* 2.40). Philo holds that, as Abraham did not spurn Hagar, so the exegete may borrow all the tools of encyclopaedic learning – no Greek, for example, had hitherto made such play with etymology as the key to the inner meaning of a canonical text – but his aim throughout is not to import a philosophy into the Torah but to elicit from the Torah a philosophy that will overreach all other claims to truth.[17]

Christian beginnings

The charter for *allêgorêsis* is the existence of patent allegory, of which Christians had examples throughout the Old Testament[18] and (as they supposed) in the parables of Jesus. Some twentieth-century critics have maintained that

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15 In the sixth century AD, Hierocles in *On the Golden Verses* 26 recommended three modes of observance: literal, for the health of the mortal body, metaphorical, for the cleansing of the soul; and metonymic, for the liberation of the tenuous and immortal body.
16 See H. A. Wolfson, *Religious Philosophy* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), pp. 28–37.
17 See further Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*.   18 Jdg. 9.7–21; Isa. 5.1–7; Ezek. 17.1–10.

every parable conveys a single point, which is obscured if we wring out every ounce of meaning from the details;[19] early Christians dwelt on jots and tittles, however, not because the conventions of *allêgorêsis* required this – Heraclitus the Stoic treated Homer as lightly as these modern authorities treat the parables – but because they assumed the literal inspiration of the text. Moreover, they had before them the example of the evangelists, whom they believed to be vehicles of this inspiration (Matt. 13.36–43; Mark 4.11–20). Even a modern critic will not deny that there are instances of typology in apostolic writings. A 'type' in Paul's nomenclature often carries an admonition: thus Adam was a 'type of the one to come' (Rom. 5.14), and those who stumbled in the wilderness are a 'type' to warn their spiritual descendants against apostasy (1 Cor. 10.6). Although Paul's word at Gal. 4.24 is *allêgoroumena*, it would have been consistent with his usage to speak of Sarah as a type of the new Jerusalem when she presented Abraham with a freeborn son. More harshly, he writes that sacred ordinances are but a shadow of things to come (Col. 2.17), and at Heb. 9.9–10.25 the Levitical code of sacrifice falls under the same aspersion. At Heb. 8.5 the same author proves from Exod. 24:40 that the temple on earth is merely a copy of an invisible archetype.

A letter ascribed to Paul's companion Barnabas, perhaps of similar date, declares that, among the acts enjoined in the cult, there was one, the immolation of the red heifer, which did not even have provisional significance for the Jews before it was seen to foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ (chapter 8). Circumcision too, says the author, was first prescribed symbolically (chapter 9), and would not have been administered to the flesh had the Jews possessed any stronger defence against demonic fraud than the second law which remained after Moses broke the first in anger (chapter 4). But for the first proviso, one could have held that, because the author construes the law with a change of referent, he is handling it allegorically; in fact he enjoins the literal observance of the first law given to Moses, which has been restored in the ordinances of the church (chapter 14). Nor, when Barnabas substitutes six epochs of world history for the six days of creation (chapter 15), is he conscious of expounding any 'other sense' than the one desiderated by a text which, if read literally, would imply that God was incapable of creating all things by a single word.

Origen (185–254) appears to commend a figurative reading of a passage from the Gospels in Numenius, a philosopher of the previous generation who was perhaps the first to offer a Platonic interpretation of Greek myths.[20] At

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19 C. H. Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet, 1935), pp. 13–29.
20 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.51. On Numenius see Lamberton, *Homer*, pp. 56–77.

the same time Origen contends that, even when literally construed, the Bible harbours no obscenities to match Plato's story of the birth of Eros;[21] Christian allegory is therefore a means of enhancing the edification derived from the literal sense, whereas its pagan counterpart is merely a quack's charm for an incurable disease. Porphyry – another Platonic allegorist, as we should say – had no more desire than Origen to trace the Christian use of this conceit to Platonic sources. He suggests that it was only after Origen's conversion, when he found that there was no other way of wresting a philosophy from the scriptures of the Jews, that he turned to figurative reading, and that his masters in this discipline were the Stoics (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.19).

Origen's predecessor, perhaps his teacher, in Alexandria was Clement, who lays many a pagan work under contribution in his enterprise of perfecting faith through *gnosis*. He does not shrink from the term *allêgoria*[22] and seeks a warrant for his own practice in the arts by which the Pythagoreans gleaned a more profound or a more expedient sense from the cryptic sayings, the *sumbola*, of the master. It was, however, a Pythagorean doctrine that only those who have understood the literal import of these sayings have the strength to apply them literally, and this precedent therefore tells us obliquely what Clement himself says plainly enough – that the goal of the Christian gnostic is not to transcend faith but to consummate obedience.[23] That is the purpose of his treatise *On the Salvation of the Rich Man*, where he puts aside the 'carnal' interpretation of Christ's commandment to give one's goods to the poor in favour of the 'hidden intent',[24] which allows the rich man to keep his goods so long as he regards them with detachment and employs them for the benefit of the church. This is the gloss most commonly heard from the modern pulpit also, though few perhaps would be brave enough to join Clement in telling the wealthy to regard the poor as their benefactors in Christ, or to observe the frugal regimen which he enjoins, without ambiguity, on rich and poor alike in his *Paidagogos*.

Nor would the typical theologian, moralist or scholar of our own day be any more literal than Clement in handling passages which speak of God under anthropomorphic imagery. This is perhaps his chief concern in book 5 of the

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21 *Contra Celsum* 4.39, commenting on Plato, *Symp.* 203b.
22 Thus: *Prot.* 11.111 (serpent represents carnal appetite); *Paid.* 1.45–6 (change of diet signifies the transition to allegorical reading); *Strom.* 7.80.6 (the living creatures of Isa. 6.3 are to be allegorised).
23 *QDS* 9; *Strom.* 5.2.3–6.
24 *QDS* 5.2, commending the deeper interpretation as a means of preserving the harmony of the Gospels. The terms 'mystic' (5.2) and 'enigmatic' (5.2) seem roughly coterminous with the 'hidden intent' (*kekrummenos nous*).

Stromateis, or *Miscellanies*, where he is most prolific in figurative readings. Here as elsewhere we may take exception to his transforming ethical maxims from the Gospels into parables which justify the figurative interpretation of these and other passages; but it may be that such ingenuities were required to persuade the literalists of Clement's time that God does not have arms and that the Logos, or second person of the Trinity, is more than a catena of divine syllables. Modern scholarship cannot blame Clement for seeking his scriptural hermeneutic in scripture, and his devices are not wholly foreign to those of the canonical evangelists, for whom the opening of a blind man's eyes is at once a symbol and a promise of the illumination that Christ bestows upon the receptive intellect (Mark 8.22–6). It is not clear whether Clement believes that a manifest and a latent meaning coexist in every verse of scripture; he records, perhaps with approval, the dictum of a contemporary that 'the Saviour taught his apostles some things mystically and typically, the second parabolically and enigmatically, the third plainly and openly when alone'.[25]

Origen's hermeneutic

Origen received his first instruction in exegesis from a 'Hebrew', who compared the text to a corridor in which every door and the key beside each door were designed to unlock not that room but another.[26] This parable means, on the one hand, that the immediate context cannot foreclose the interpretation of any text in the canon, and on the other that the interpretant is not to be sought outside the canon but in some other part of it where cognate or homonymous terms occur. The scripture is in reality not many words but one Word, the effusion of the one Spirit: this Word, as Origen holds, is not only the author but the subject of the whole corpus (*Philocalia* 5.4), which may even be called his flesh because, like the vehicle of his first ministry in Palestine, it at once communicates and veils his teachings (*Contra Celsum* 4.15). Just as then he assumed humanity in body, soul and spirit, so his continuing incarnation in the text entails that the bodily sense, which everyone sees, is the footstool of a psychic and a spiritual or mystical sense, which become apparent only with the progress of understanding in the reader.[27] The carnal

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25 *Excerpts from Theodotus* 66. This Valentinian author is no doubt alluding to Mark 4.33–4 and John 16.25.

26 *Philocalia* 3.2. On the Hebrew see *On First Principles* 1.3.4, with *Hom. Jer.* 20.1, where the Hebrew is said to have been ejected from the synagogue after embracing Christianity.

27 See M. J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 134–5; also King, *Origen on the Song of Songs*, pp. 244–8.

mind apprehends the bodily meaning, but the soul of scripture speaks to the soul, the spirit to the spirit – which is not to say that one eclipses the other, any more than spirit eclipses soul or body in the pilgrimage of the elect from earth to heaven. In what is written, as in what is read, the higher irradiates but does not consume the lower.

Just as the body of the incarnate Word was subject to the fatigue and weakness that pertain to our condition, so readers who construe the scriptural text according only to the outward sense will encounter contradictions and absurdities which they might mistake for symptoms of imperfect inspiration. But these *scandala*, or stumbling-blocks, have not been sown without purpose, for there are some who would not divine the presence of a higher sense if the superficial gloss were always wholesome, the histories always credible, the moral precepts always adapted to our circumstances (*On First Principles* 4.2.9 (16)). Pagans had offered similar defences of the obscenities performed in the antechamber of the mysteries;[28] in the mysteries, however, all that was profitable to the adept was concealed until the epiphany, whereas much that lies on the surface of the scripture was, in Origen's view, both true and edifying. When the evangelists follow incompatible chronologies, we are forced to discard the external sense of at least one (*Comm. Joh.* 10.4.15–17); the historicity of the incarnation we cannot deny, for it is the fact, not the mere conception, of God's communion with humanity in body, soul and spirit that provides us both with a mandate and with a rule for tropological exegesis. Ordinances, for the most part, should be obeyed as they are worded; if the sacrificial laws are obsolete, the enlightened Christian learns to obey them inwardly, not tempering the austerity of the original commandment, but on the contrary observing it at more cost than one would incur by adhering to the outward sense. Thus the literal construction is not invariably the more liberal: knowledge, as Clement says, perfects the obedience of faith.

As there are blots in scripture that betray the presence of a dissembled meaning, so there are symbols that prefigure, and therefore sanction, the labours of an inquiring critic. Where there is a well, there is a mystery to be fathomed – not in an instant, as we learn from the three receptacles dug by Isaac (*Hom. Gen.* 15), each representing a different mode of exegesis; and not by heretics, whose thoughts touch nothing deeper than the pitcher which the Samaritan woman casts aside for the promise of living water (*Comm. Joh.* 10.48). If we ask what constitutes a true gloss, one criterion is that the author should have intended it. Origen's anagogic reading of the three songs

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28 Cf. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 1.12.

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ascribed to Solomon requires that Solomon himself should have written Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, conceiving and arranging them in the order now canonical, so that the reader may progress from ethics to physics and thence to a contemplative discipline which in our manuscripts is variously styled theoric, enoptic and epoptic.[29] If the last term suggests a mystery, we must remember that a mystery in the biblical sense is not so much a thing concealed as a pregnant revelation. Each of Solomon's three tiers of ascent appears to match on the natures that the Word assumed in stooping to our condition. Moral injunctions, naively construed, may exceed the strength but not the understanding of the carnal reader; theoric or epoptic truths, by contrast, are experienced rather than apprehended, and only when the spirit is free enough to become one spirit with the bridegroom. Between Proverbs and the Song of Songs stands the preacher, Ecclesiastes, who exhorts us to accept our place in the scheme of nature – a scheme that the soul discovers to be providential only when she discards her earthly tenement. Thus the body is edified by Solomon's ethics, soul by his physics, spirit by his mystical or contemplative vein; once again, the ascent from level to level of exegesis mirrors the progress of understanding in the reader. Each promotes the other, for the disclosure of a higher sense illuminates the faculties, while the illuminated faculty is more capable of disclosing a higher sense.

Should we say that the one who perceives a higher sense is reading allegorically? This usage seems to be authorised by Origen's citation of Gal. 4.24, where Paul, in expounding the higher signification of the two marriages of Abraham, states that Hagar, when allegorised (*allêgoroumena*), stands for servitude to law and Sarah for sonship in Christ Jesus (*On First Principles* 4.2.6 (13)). This exegesis turns the story itself into a paradigm of the exegetic method: Hagar represents the servile parsing of the outward sense and Sarah the discernment of an emancipated soul. Yet Origen is sparing – far more sparing than the majority of his admirers or his critics – in his use of *allêgoria* and its cognates; nor are they often used with approbation,[30] unless they take their colour from some neighbouring term that remained unsoiled by previous usage. A reading that Origen favours may be characterised, in the course of a single paragraph, as allegorical and as tropological (*Hom. Jer.* 1.14), and it is tropic or tropological constructions, rather than allegories, that are generally contrasted with the reading *kata lexin*.[31] While this often corresponds to what

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29 Proem, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, p. 75.
30 Thus allegory (sometimes in contradistinction to *anagôgê*) is the instrument of heretics at *Comm. Joh.* 13.8, 20.20 (18).
31 E.g. *Hom. Jer.* 1.17; at *On First Principles* 4.3.1 the tropic reading is contrasted with the somatic.

English calls the literal construction, the same expression can also signify a detailed and attentive exegesis of the text in contradistinction to one that merely conveys the main argument of a passage. The pejorative antonym to allegory is the reading *kata rhêton*, 'according to what is said' (*Comm. Joh.* 13.17 etc.); that one thing should be said and another intended in the word of God is, in Origen's view, no more unworthy of God than it is unworthy of a doctor to sweeten his medicines with honey (*Hom. Jer.* 20.3).

More frequent still is the pairing of allegory with *anagôgê*, or 'ascent',[32] a motif which tacitly likens the fruits of sound exegesis to the transfiguration of Christ, or the glorification of Moses on Sinai. It is not so much the text as the interpreter himself who undergoes this transformation,[33] and it is because the carnal reader does not experience this that his readings prove to be hybrids of the literal and the allegorical, as in Heracleon's comment on the saying of Christ that 'the harvest is ripe but the labourers are few' (*Comm. Joh.* 13.41). Elsewhere the anagogic interpretation is said to wean the soul from the allegories of false teachers (*Comm. Joh.* 20.20 (18)); conversely, the wholesome allegory is one that takes the form of an *anagôgê* (*Comm. Joh.* 1.1), though we are not told in any instance whether it terminates in the soul or in the spirit of the scriptures. We may therefore conclude that, while he does not consistently disclaim the practice of allegory, Origen is conscious that too bold an application of the term would offend his readers, and he does not think that it suffices by itself to define, let alone to justify, his own three-tiered itinerary.

Ancient critics of allegory

'Allegory' is a term of reproach in the bitterest of the invectives hurled against Origen in the fourth century. Epiphanius maintains in his *Ancoratus*, a prophylactic against all heresies addressed to the monks of Palestine, that there is no equivocation or obscurity in the word of God, though there are passages that elude the comprehension of Jews and heretics. The Christian has the advantage of the obstinate Jew (so he argues in his treatise *On Weights and Measures*) because it was under the guidance of the Spirit that the seventy-two translators of the first Greek Bible completed the sense or pruned the redundancies of the Hebrew original (*Ancoratus* 3). Because they differed

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32 See further Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure*.
33 *Comm. Joh.* 10.28 compares the disciple who can perform the *anagôgê* with the one who grasps only the shadow.

under inspiration, a plurality of readings may be accepted in some passages, but only a perspicuous text will serve for the proof of doctrine. The church does not assume that the natural reading is the literal one in passages where the presence of a metaphor is signalled by some manifest disparity between predicate and subject. In aphorisms such as 'God is light' the trope, because it is easily perceived to be a trope, does not obscure but illuminates the subject (*Ancoratus* 4); enigma too may be present in the Law, as when it foreshadows the revelation of the triune God by ordaining that every case be proved by two or three witnesses (*Ancoratus* 10). It is quite another thing to impose a new subject on a passage that is superficially plain and unambiguous. Origen, who is not indicted here, is praised for his diligent redaction of the Septuagint (*Ancoratus* 18); yet, in almost every surviving work by Epiphanius, allegory is a term of abuse and Origen its most dangerous expositor.[34] His cardinal error according to Epiphanius (not attested in his extant works) was the substitution of flesh and blood for the coats of skins that God devised for Adam and Eve at Gen. 3.21 (*Ancoratus* 55–62). Epiphanius is himself no anthropomorphite,[35] and it is not so much the figurative reading that offends him as the corollary (which he wrongly supposes Origen to have drawn from it) that embodiment is a consequence of the fall and hence no part of our original condition or of the eternal beatitude laid up for the saints. He himself advances a figurative reading (though he would not have called it an allegory) of the dove among Solomon's eighty concubines in the Song of Songs, which he takes to prefigure the one true church, betrothed to Christ in apostolic purity.[36] Such an interpretation would commend itself to the instincts of a man who held that no good could be derived from a literal reading of the Song, but it appears that Epiphanius felt no need of a general principle that would indicate the presence of a hidden sense or enable one to adjudicate between two alternatives to the literal reading. In his tract *On Weights and Measures*, it is not so much the second as the first creation, not the word made flesh but the word inscribed, that point beyond the literal sense. The result is a panegyric on the letter as the six days of creation are resolved into twenty-two episodes corresponding both to the books of the Hebrew canon and to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (*De Mensuris* 22–4).

It does not follow that the text is self-interpreting, for in the treatise *On Gems* which Epiphanius devotes to the precious stones that adorned the high priest's

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34 See especially *Panarion* 64.
35 See *Panarion* 70 and E. A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton University Press, 1992).
36 *Panarion*, proem, 1.3, citing Cant. 6:8–9.

breastplate, references to these minerals in the scriptures are supplemented by the evidence of profane sources.[37] Thus he makes the text answerable to that 'encyclopaedic learning' which in Philo is never more than a handmaid to interpretation. For Origen the horizon of exegesis is defined by the canonical text: as Homer can be held up to the philosophers as an authority on the flight of birds (*Contra Celsum* 4.91), so the emblematic properties of the scents which act as condiments to love in the Song of Songs are elicited from other parts of scripture (*Comm. Song* 2.9.1 etc.). To Epiphanius this is allegory, the perfidious substitution of a homonym for the material referent; once the material referent is identified, however, he assumes that whatever the thing itself can signify, by nature or convention, is concealed in the word that scripture employs to signify the thing.

Not every critic of Origen shuns allegorical exegesis. Thus Jerome in his *Commentary on Galatians* – a work avowedly indebted to Origen's *Stromateis* – maintains that the particulars of Paul's itinerary after conversion would be trivial if no allegory were applied to them.[38] It was one of Jerome's bugbears, Theodore of Mopsuestia, who attached to Gal. 4.24 a complaint that certain allegorists had adduced this verse as though it gave them untrammelled licence to warp the obvious meaning of the scriptures.[39] The butt of this invective is often supposed to have been Origen or his living disciple Didymus the Blind; yet neither is named, and the accusation would have been unfair if it fell on either of these Alexandrian writers. The conjecture appears to be rooted in some fallacious notion of an inveterate rivalry between Antioch and the Egyptian metropolis; only after 431, however, in the wake of the Council of Ephesus, do we hear of an altercation between the patriarchs of the two cities. Before this date it was only when an Antiochene was translated to the see of Constantinople that his doctrines or his pretensions caused a stir in Alexandria. Theodore was posthumously denounced in Alexandria for his errors in christology, but never for his hostility to figurative readings, and it may be that the vagaries denounced in his annotation to Gal. 4.24 existed only in the imagination of polemicists.[40]

Whether or not he knowingly impugned the methods of Origen, Theodore certainly does not imitate them, and, as his fellow Antiochene John Chrysostom also refrains from any figurative reading where the biblical text does

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37 See e.g. chapter 15 on the adamant which changes hue in the presence of sin or danger.
38 Jerome, *Comm. Gal.* 1.1.17.
39 H. B. Swete, *In epistolas Beati Pauli Commentarii*, vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1880), pp. 73–4.
40 Some venerable fallacies are exploded by Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 161–85.

not expressly demand it, we may reasonably assume that both were reared in a tradition which discountenanced such practices. Diodore of Tarsus and Theodoret worked under the same embargo after receiving an education in Antioch, and so we may confidently postulate the existence of an Antiochene school distinguished by its parsimony in biblical exegesis. This austerity set it apart not only from Alexandria but from other centres of Christian scholarship, and it is not to be accounted for by crediting the Antiochenes with a devotion to Aristotle that enabled them to resist the encompassing tide of Platonism. It would be truer to say that authors raised in a city that took a just pride in the celebrity of its orators would naturally read the texts as works composed in particular circumstances and with a view to inducing a certain disposition in the audience. Elsewhere – not least, though not only, in Alexandria, the home of the greatest library in the ancient world – the Spirit who had ordained that the text should survive so long was supposed to have imbued it with a meaning that would be equally accessible to readers in every subsequent generation. This meaning was supposed to reside in the words, the enduring handiwork of the author, and not in his transitory intentions. Such commentators could not avail themselves, as the Antiochenes did, of the notion of *psukhagôgia*, or calculated play upon the emotions of the audience, which limited the significance of certain utterances to the first occasion of delivery. They were thus required to seek a timeless meaning where the Antiochenes saw only vestiges of an unrepeatable performance. For Theodore the meaning of a text is so inseparable from its origin that he even declines to seek adumbrations of the New Testament in the Old, except where such discoveries are sanctioned by an apostolic writer. We do not know whether allegory and typology were distinguished in his lexicon, but Chrysostom dissociates the two, evincing a preference for the latter, when he asserts that Paul used 'allegory' as a synonym for 'typology' at Gal. 4.24.[41]

The emerging figure

Attention to the *akolouthia*, or logical sequence, of the biblical text is a salient feature of Antiochene exegesis. At the same time, it was not ignored by those who took up Origen's principles[42] – could not be ignored, indeed, if they were to trace a more abstruse, and to them more profitable, species of *akolouthia*,

41 F. Field, *Ioanni Chrysostomi interpretatio omnium epistularum Paulinarum*, Vol. IV (London: Oxford University Press, 1845–62), p. 73.
42 Nor by Origen himself, as at *Comm. Joh.* 6.41.208–11, where he takes pains to retrace the physical itinerary of Jesus.

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the slow detection of a profound design in the construction of the external narrative. Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses* is perhaps the best-known product of this hermeneutic strategy. It is divided into two books, of which the first is much the shorter and purports to be a bare historical sketch of the life of Moses as the scripture relates it. Even here, however, we meet an occasional intimation of the deeper sense that Gregory will pursue in his second book. The entry of Moses into the cloud on Sinai, for example, is said to intimate that those who seek the acquaintance of God must pass beyond all that is visible (1.46). Again, when the creation of the golden calf is deplored as an apostasy from Israel's *paidagogos*, or childhood mentor, it is not the Pentateuch that supplies the image but Paul's saying at Gal. 3:24 that the law was a *paidagogos*, leading us to Christ (1.58). Here, as elsewhere, the trope itself is a charter and a template for the practice of tropology. If God is ineffable, nothing that is said of him can be affirmed in the sense that is true of other creatures; if the law (which includes the Pentateuchal narratives for early Christian writers) is but a chaperone to truth, it will be precious to latter-day readers not for what it said when written but for what it signifies when fulfilled in Christ.

In book 2 Gregory urges that the very career of Moses – his ascent from small beginnings, his growth in wisdom, his deliverance from an evil land, his approach to God through light and then through darkness – serves not only to characterise him as a paradigm of holiness but to foreshadow the course that readers themselves must follow if they are to penetrate the truth that is veiled by the luminous exterior of the text. For Gregory, as for Origen, the text itself yields precepts for the improvement of the understanding, but only to those who already know how to look beyond the letter. Such readers will recognise Egypt as a perennial symbol of violence and carnality (2.93); they will interpret the transformation of Moses' rod into a serpent as an adumbration of Christ's descent to manhood (2.32); in the exodus they will see the liberation of the righteous soul from the pleasures and afflictions of the body (2.122). In the foothills of exegesis, no distinction need be observed between the moral, the typological and the anagogic levels (all of which are illustrated in the last sentence); but, as readers ascend with Moses, they are no longer seeking propaedeutics to virtue but the knowledge of God himself, which cannot be gained by the mere substitution of doctrines for symbols or even of archetypes for ectypes. As the journey of Moses culminates in darkness, so the end of exegesis is a nescience surpassing knowledge (2.163).

Ambrose of Milan, pursuing a similar harvest in the biblical story of Abraham, contrasts two levels of exegesis, the moral and a higher one, to be

undertaken in successive books (*On Abraham* 1.1). The moral interpretation, which treats Abraham as a type of imperilled rectitude, may bloom into aphorisms such as 'even if your adultery deceives the husband, it will not deceive God' (1.7) and 'because he spurned all things from God, he received all things from God in greater abundance' (1.9). Abraham's sexual congress with a handmaid needs no excuse but that he lived before the Mosaic law (1.23), yet even in that age he could warn the Christian not to take a Jew or pagan for his son-in-law by forbidding his son to wed a Canaanite (1.84). At the same time, there are scenes in Abraham's wanderings which convey no explicit moral, but attest the profundity of God's hidden purpose. Even on this plane of understanding, certain mysteries can be fathomed with the assistance of the Gospel. Thus the three measures of flour which Sarah is told to scatter as a means of procuring childbirth (Gen. 18.6) are an omen of the Trinity (1.38), while the ass which carried Jesus into Jerusalem is prefigured in the one that bore Isaac to the place of sacrifice (1.71). These are instances of what we should call typology, the juxtaposition of shadow and fulfilment; we reach the second plane, where allegory succeeds typology, when the analogy is drawn between the outer life and the inner, between phenomenon and paradigm, between that which passes and that which is to come. Here Adam stands for intellect, Eve for the senses (2.1); Abraham in Haran is the mind besieged by appetites (2.2); Egypt is not merely the home of despotism but the symbol of our ubiquitous pride (2.16); the circumcision of infants on the eighth day anticipates the resurrection (1.79). The promulgation of the highest mysteries is deferred to a treatise on Isaac, which, like similar works by Ambrose on the fall and the sin of Cain, is rubricated with choice texts from the Song of Songs.

Epilogue

Augustine (354–430), the pupil of Ambrose, represents paradise as an image of the soul in an early treatise against the Manichees,[43] but a few years later sets aside this 'allegorical' premise in a commentary *On Genesis according to the Letter*. The title implies an exposition faithful in every particular – not a literal one, this being precluded, not (as now) by evidence of the antiquity of the world, but by a theory of omnipotence which required that a

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43 See e.g. *On Genesis against the Manichees* 1.20.31 on government of beasts as an allegory for subjection of passions; 2.5.6 on the fount in Eden as the irrigation of the human soul by the spirit of God.

divine creation should be instantaneous. Accordingly, he argues that the six transitions from evening to morning adumbrate the progress of knowledge from potency to act, or the superimposition of form on matter (*Gn. litt.* 4.1.1, 4.24.41); if such interpretations are not mandatory, they at least uphold the mandatory truths that it is God who creates all things and that all creation is benign. The allegorical sense, on the other hand, is not required for the preservation of any dogma, but may edify those who have already grasped the proper sense 'according to the letter'. A reading which was unintended need not be infelicitous, for Augustine holds, with Origen, that scripture is the continuing incarnation of the Word whose body is now invisible to us (*Doct. Chr.* 1.13.12). For Augustine, if not for Origen, it follows that no inference can be sound if it fails to evoke the love that the Word manifested in becoming man. Conversely, there may be utility in an erroneous though charitable reading, though there is more in the confluence of truth with love (*Doct. Chr.* 1.36).

Early Christian readings of the scriptures are thus as close and polyphonic as those which modern criticism brings to poets like Dante and Shakespeare.[44] They differed none the less from modern encomiasts of 'ambiguity', 'polysemy' and 'deconstruction' in offering a variety of translations while insisting upon the primacy of one.[45] In Origen, as we have seen, the highest sense does not annul but subsumes the others; Augustine, while he entertains allegorical senses, thinks them obligatory only when an episode could not otherwise be reconciled with the justice of God,[46] and deprecates even orthodox attempts to align the prophecies of the old covenant with events and figures of recent history (*Ep. cat.* 16.42). It is of paramount concern for him (as for all early Christian authors) that an interpretation of scripture should be true, not only because he believes that a lie is always a sin, but because he holds that all our reasoning, on profane as on sacred matters, owes its validity to the presence of the invisible Word in the intellect. The Word himself, however, becomes an object of knowledge to us only through his condescension to the embodied state and the testimony of scripture to that embodiment.[47] Though he

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44 On the reluctance of latter-day scholars to handle the scriptures as 'literature' is now handled in the academy, see S. Prickett, *Words and the Word* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 19–23.

45 The terms 'ambiguity' and 'polysemy' are properly used to denote irremediable diversity of meaning. 'Deconstruction' is the restoration to the text of latent meanings which are excluded by attempts to impose an authoritative reading. This philosophy expressly denies what Augustine asserts at *Trin.* 15.11.20 – that every word is the expression of discrete, though hitherto unspoken, thought.

46 E.g. *Questions on the Hexateuch* 70, on the union of Abraham with Keturah.

47 *Lib. arb.* 3.30; *Doct. Chr.* 1.14.13.

defends them with peculiar force and clarity, none of these opinions is peculiar to Augustine. All allegorical reading in the early church is governed by the axiom that Christ is at once the universal interpreter and the universal subject of the scriptures; it follows for all of them that there is no revealed sense of scripture that fails to imbue the reader's soul with his humility and love.

Traditions of exegesis

FRANCES M. YOUNG

It is clear that in the fourth century the so-called 'Antiochenes' reacted against allegorical interpretation, criticising Origen in particular. The question is whether this suggests, as has been generally supposed, that divergent traditions of interpretation are represented by different schools which may be named Alexandrian and Antiochene. The first part of this chapter argues that too great a binary opposition obscures the reality of debate within common traditions, and also creates a model that fails to encompass the exegesis not only of those outside these supposed schools, such as the Cappadocians or the western fathers, but also of some who might be supposed to belong to one or other of them, such as Cyril of Alexandria; to treat such commentators as having a 'hybrid' approach is less than satisfactory.

Traditions of interpretation there certainly were. Sometimes these suggest methodological differences, but more often they reflect debates about reference which accumulate around specific texts. In the second part, a particular case study will illuminate the continuities and flexibilities within exegetical traditions.

Antiochene versus Alexandrian traditions?

Who were the Antiochenes?

John Chrysostom, the most prolific exegete of Antiquity, is taken to belong to this school. Otherwise the principal representatives are generally listed as Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, names also associated with the christological controversies of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. That there is a connection between their interest in the humanity of Jesus and their insistence on biblical history is one of the assumptions of much modern scholarship.[1] The danger is making them too

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1 See especially Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, and *The Captain of Our Salvation*.

like modern historico-critics who have welcomed their critique of allegory. That critique is usually thought to be first advanced in a treatise *On the Witch of Endor and against Origen* written by Eustathius of Antioch.[2] The many fragments of Eusebius of Emesa's exegesis found in the catenae are often said to reflect Antiochene methods, as is a little work by one Adrianos entitled *Isagoge ad sacras scripturas*.

The Antiochene reaction against allegory

The scholarly literature tends to treat the Antiochenes as primarily interested in the literal meaning and in history, by contrast with the spiritualising allegory of the Alexandrians. Was this an alternative tradition?

In his chapter in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as representative of the Antiochene School', Maurice Wiles begins by suggesting possible anticipation of the fourth-century Antiochenes in Paul of Samosata and Lucian. Both were associated with stress on the human nature of Christ, Paul being condemned as a heretic and Lucian being treated as the father of Arianism; but to Lucian was also attributed great biblical scholarship and text-critical importance. Wiles comments, 'There is [in the Antiochenes] the same emphasis on the biblical text, on historical fact and on the humanity of Jesus, which we can already detect in the scanty and biased accounts of Paul and Lucian.'[3] In other words he hints at a tradition of interpretation with this kind of emphasis. Others, however, are more sceptical: 'in fact little that is relevant to such a judgment is known about either of them', states R. A. Norris.[4] Some have drawn attention to another possible precursor, Theophilus of Antioch, and his literal interpretation of Genesis in the second century; and a more general influence of contacts with Jewish rabbinical interpretation has been suggested.[5] It is a matter of debate, then, whether anything approaching a consistent tradition of interpretation can be claimed. Eusebius of Emesa was associated with Arianism, but also with Eusebius of Caesarea, who though

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2 But see Joseph Trigg, 'Eustathius of Antioch's Attack on Origen', *Journal of Religion* 75 (1995), 219–38, for a contrary view.

3 M. Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School', in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to Jerone* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 489–509, at pp. 489–90.

4 'Antiochene Interpretation', in R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 29–32. Cf. Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 59.

5 R. M. Grant, with David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, 2nd edn revised and enlarged (London: SCM Press, 1984), p. 63; Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 60; Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 31.

a historian, was also a defender of Origen: so can we clearly trace distinct traditions at all?

Norris may not detect a long-standing tradition, but a similar characterisation is found – the Antiochenes 'take pains to interpret biblical books as texts to be understood in the light both of their historical setting and of their historical reference'.[6] Similar statements occur in the standard literature: 'The school of Antioch insisted on the historical reality of the biblical revelation.'[7] 'Theodore concentrated on the meaning of texts in their surrounding verses, on their historical reference and chronological significance, and on principles of translation.' 'The Antiochenes differed from the other school in believing the factual and historical aspect of the text to be the primary locus of interpretation.'[8]

Much of the more recent literature has been careful to gloss this with a warning that we should not project back onto the Antiochenes the concerns of modern historico-critics. Yet the impression given is still that the reaction against allegory was fundamentally a concern with the literal meaning and with historical reality. We need to take another look at what the Antiochenes actually said, and what they actually did.

What the Antiochenes actually said about methodology

Allegory is a recognised trope or figure of speech recognised by anybody who engages in literary analysis. Compositional allegory, evidently arising from the intent of the author, is fine. The problem arises with allegorical interpretation where the reader arbitrarily imputes an 'undersense' or *hyponoia* to a text. This distinction seems to be one the Antiochenes were trying to make: Chrysostom (*Hom. Isa.* 5.3) observes that 'everywhere in scripture there is this law, that when it allegorises, it also gives an explanation of the allegory'; and Adrianos[9] but briefly describes allegory among other figures of speech. Allegory was to be recognised where it was intended, but not read into everything.

For many of the Antiochenes Paul's apparent endorsement of allegory in Gal. 4.24 had to be explained. On reaching this point in his *Commentary on the Minor Epistles of St Paul*, Theodore turns on the allegorists:[10] 'There are people

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6 Norris, '*Antiochene Interpretation*', p. 30.   7 Grant, *A Short History*, p. 66.
8 Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, introduction, pp. 33, 34.
9 Young, 'The Fourth Century Reaction'; the text of Adrianos is found in *PG*, 98.1273–1312.
10 Quotations below are given in the English version of Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 95–103; the Greek text is found in H. B. Swete, *Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Minor Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. I (Cambridge University Press, 1880–2), pp. 73ff.

who take great pains to twist the sense of the divine scriptures and make everything written therein serve their own ends. They dream up silly fables in their own heads and give their folly the name of allegory. They misuse the apostle's term as a blank authorisation to abolish all meanings of the divine scripture.' Theodore insists that the apostle does not do away with 'history'. He suggests that similarity cannot be established if the comparison is made between things that do (or did) not in fact exist; the statement that Hagar 'corresponds with the present Jerusalem' implies parallel realities across time. The allegorists with their 'spiritual interpretation' reduce it all to 'dreams in the night', claiming that 'Adam is not Adam, paradise is not paradise, the serpent not the serpent.' They end up by undermining the whole story of salvation.

So if Paul did not mean the allegory of the allegorist, what was his intention? Theodore states that what Paul wants to show is that the events surrounding Christ's coming are greater than anything contained in the law. So he points out that there are two covenants, one through Moses and one through Christ. He explains how, under the first, righteousness came through keeping the law, but in Christ justification is given by grace. Now in speaking of Sarah and Hagar Paul indicates that one gave birth according to nature, the other by grace. 'Paul mentions the two women in order to demonstrate by their comparison that even now the justification coming from Christ is far better than the other, because it is acquired by grace.' So 'Here we have the reason for the phrase, "this is said by way of allegory." Paul used the term "allegory" as a comparison, juxtaposing events of the past and present.' Theodore is probably dependent on Diodore for this way of interpreting the passage, for we find it discussed in the *locus classicus* for Antiochene discussion of allegory, the preface to a *Commentary on the Psalms* attributed to Diodore of Tarsus, along with the particular preface to the commentary on Ps. 118 (LXX enumeration; 119 in English Bibles).[11] Here the author insists that what the apostle means is insight into the way one narrative mirrors another, both being real and true. Allegorists 'pretend to "improve" Scripture', and 'wise in their own conceit' are 'careless about the historical substance'. But it is alright to compare Cain and Abel with the synagogue and the church, for this method 'neither sets aside history nor repudiates *theōria*' (often translated 'contemplation', this is

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11 Quotations below are given in the English version of Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 82–94; the Greek text is found in L. Mariès (ed.), 'Extraits du commentaire de Diodore de Tarse sur les Psaumes. Préface du commentaire – prologue du Psaume CXVIII', *RSR* 9 (1919), 79–101; and *Diodorus Tarsensis*. Commentarii in Psalmos. *Vol. I: Pss. I–L*, ed. J.-M. Olivier, CC Series Graeca 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1980).

perhaps better understood to mean 'insight'). What is sought is a middle way that avoids the literalism of the Jews as well as the Hellenism that says one thing for another, introducing foreign matter. This would appear to be what modern scholars have termed 'typology', using an expression not found in ancient terminology.

The author goes on to suggest that the scriptural sense of allegory is different from the 'Greek' sense. Greeks speak of allegory when something is understood in one way but said in another. He provides two examples: (i) The story of Zeus turning himself into a bull and carrying Europa across the sea cannot be taken literally since a real bull could not possibly swim so far; so it must mean Europa crossed the sea in a ship with a bull as a figurehead. (ii) Zeus had intercourse with his sister Hera; this means that when ether, a fiery element, mingles with air, it produces a mixture that influences events on earth – air adjoins ether, so they are called 'brother and sister', but their mixture makes them 'husband and wife'. These examples are particularly interesting since they represent the attempts of the Greeks to make sense of their 'canon' in relation to reality as understood by their 'scientists'; modern parallels would be (i) providing a natural explanation for a miracle, and (ii) reconciling the creation narratives of Genesis with evolution. Ironically the allegorists apparently had more in common with modern critical approaches to scripture than their critics did.

Scripture does not allegorise in this way, insists Diodore, but it does speak of *theōria*. This is then explained as developing 'a higher vision of other but similar events', 'without abrogating history'. In speaking of 'allegory' in Galatians, 'Paul develops the higher *theōria*' as follows:

> He understands Hagar as Mount Sinai but Isaac's mother as the free Jerusalem, the future mother of all believers. The fact that the apostle 'theorizes' in this way does not mean that he repudiates the historical account . . . With the historical account as his firm foundation, he develops his *theōria* on top of it; he understands the underlying facts as events on a higher level.

It is this, he suggests, that the apostle calls allegory.

Diodore proceeds to distinguish between allegory and figuration (*tropologia*) or parable (*parabolē*). *Tropologia* turns words with an obvious meaning into an extended illustration: Israel as vine provides an example. Parables are easy to recognise because introduced with 'like' or 'as', and many instances of this are quoted. Parables may be enigmas, and 'one would probably classify much of the material in the books of Moses as enigmas rather than allegories'. In other words Diodore is quite willing to acknowledge figures of speech, and even

goes on to suggest that the talking serpent in Genesis is such an 'enigma'. The devil, of course, acted through the serpent.

So, in the psalm which he is about to interpret, parts are meant to be taken literally but others are figurative expressions, parables or enigmas. There is no allegory. There may be a kind of transcendent meaning: 'In predicting future events, the prophets adapted their words both to the time in which they were speaking and to later times.' He suggests that in the former context the words may appear hyperbolic, only to become 'fitting and consistent at the time when the prophecies were fulfilled'. It is interesting that Adrianos devotes far more space to the figure of hyperbole than to that of allegory, and here Diodore is at pains to give examples, such as Ps. 29 fitting Hezekiah, but even more 'all human beings when they obtain the promised resurrection'. So Ps. 118 is 'a statement adaptable to many situations according to the grace of him who gives it power'. This is what *theōria* is all about.

So two things emerge as important. One is the proper identification of figures of speech, not treating all metaphor as an excuse for allegory; and the other is respect for the narrative coherence of the text. The concern with narrative flow had already proved crucial in Eustathius' treatise *On the Witch of Endor and against Origen*;[12] both are explicit in Adrianos' discussion of methodology.[13] Here meaning is said to be grounded in the *akolouthia* (sequence) of the text. Adrianos uses the analogy of a steersman – the interpreter is blown about if not fixed on a goal. One must begin with the normal sense of words, but one gets a sure and certain outcome by paying attention to scriptural idioms – the figures, tropes and so on – and by taking the *akolouthia* seriously. The *dianoia* (mind/sense) of the words must be earthed in the order found in the body of the text and the *theōria* must be grounded in the shape (*schēma*) of that body, and thus the limbs and their synthesis can be discerned properly. The *dianoia* corresponds with the *hypothesis* of the wording, so that the interpretation is according to the *lexis* (letter/reading): examples of the application of this principle show that the prophetic meaning of a prophetic text is the 'literal' meaning.

The Antiochenes were not modern historico-critics, even though it seems natural to translate some of this as a concern with the literal! However, they certainly were concerned about what seemed to be an undermining of the

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12 *PG*, 18.613–74; cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 163–5; and Frances Young, 'The Rhetorical Schools and Their Influence on Patristic Exegesis', in Rowan Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy. Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 182–99.
13 The following description is borrowed from my article, 'The Fourth Century Reaction'.

overarching narrative of scripture, from creation through salvation to the eschaton: salvation history should not be reduced to 'dreams in the night'.

What the Antiochenes did

According to Theodore (in the introduction to his *Commentary on John*), 'the task of the commentator [is] to comment on the words which are difficult for most people; that of the preacher however, is to reflect on words that are clear and speak about them'. In other words, exegesis is problem-oriented while preaching is pedagogic. However, a comparison between the work of John Chrysostom, the preacher, and the commentaries of Theodore and Theodoret shows that both elements are to be found in each genre,[14] any distinction being no more than a matter of emphasis. Chrysostom may well discuss translation variants and problems in the text, while largely looking for morals and ethical advice for his congregation; the commentators cover much the same ground but ideally, according to Theodore, in brief notes – that being the character of his own very spare commentaries. Some problems in the text were, after all, theological: confronted with a text that said 'God repented', the Antiochenes, as much as the allegorists, looked for a way round it, sometimes appealing to other translation possibilities, sometimes offering alternative explanations.[15] Adrianos is at pains to clarify the way in which God's *energeiai* (activities / energies) are represented in scripture by human attributes, indicating that the wording is not to be identified with the sense: God's knowledge is expressed in the phrase 'God's eyes on us', and God's mercy in the suggestion that God has ears to hear.[16] In dealing with the anthropomorphisms in scripture the Antiochenes made similar moves to the allegorists without using 'allegory' to describe their procedure.

Antiochene exegesis was generally philological and pedagogic.[17] Details of the text are attended to point by point, as they raise questions about the wording, textual variants, translation problems, special biblical word-usages or idioms, figures of speech – the *methodikon* practised in the schools of the ancient world. This often involved making cross-references, on the assumption that the Bible was a unity. Paraphrase would then bring out the sense of the text. They also provided explanatory notes on references to places, dates, genealogies, characters, actions and events – the *historikon* of the schools. They were concerned to deduce what they could about, for instance, the time of the prophet or the events of Paul's life. They usually offered a

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14 Amirav, *Rhetoric and Tradition*, p. 46.   15 Amirav, *Rhetoric and Tradition*, p. 133ff.
16 Young, 'The Fourth Century Reaction'.   17 Young, 'The Rhetorical Schools', pp. 182–99.

summary (*hypothesis*) of the argument or narrative at the head of each section, so bringing out the *skopos* (intent) of the text and avoiding piecemeal exegesis. They, like the rhetoricians, set out the 'subject matter' as distinct from the style or wording. It is clear that these procedures often led to debates about reference: Theodoret maintained that Paul had visited and knew the church at Colossae, though Theodore had denied this.[18]

Any and all of these procedures could produce some edificatory point, doctrinal or moral. Chrysostom generates morals and doctrines from the text by asking why Jesus said or did something: so, commenting on the 'feeding of the multitude' (*Hom. Matt.* 49, on Matt. 14.19),[19] he notes that Christ looks up to heaven to prove he is of the Father, and he uses the loaves and fish rather than creating food out of nothing to stop the mouths of dualist heretics like Marcion and Manichaeus. He goes on to suggest that Christ lets the crowds become hungry and gives them only loaves and fish, equally distributed, to teach the crowd humility, temperance and charity, and to have all things in common. The fact that Christ did not wish them to become slaves of the belly allows him to develop a homily on detachment from worldly pursuits. Such moral reading of the text had its precedent also in the practice of the schools[20] – for Plato's attack on the poets as immoral had made 'moral criticism' an essential part of education as the literature was read for profit, for the sake of identifying moral lessons or noting examples of good and bad conduct. This may not be like Alexandrian allegory, but it is certainly more than what we understand as 'literal' or 'historical' interpretation. This tendency to discern morals and doctrines in the text is one aspect that clearly distinguishes Antiochene exegesis from modern historico-critical interpretation, and places it firmly and properly in the context of ancient approaches to the reading of texts.

In following the exegetical practices of the schools, the Antiochenes were no different from other Christian exegetes. Origen himself had paved the way as the first serious 'professional' commentator: he had used the same philological methods,[21] and it was the identification of figures of speech or *aporiai* in the text which provided him with the springboard for allegory. We find similar procedures used in East and West, Augustine's *De doctrina*

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18 Theodoret, *Hypothesis* (*PG*, 82.592) mentions that 'some say' Paul had not seen the recipients on the basis of Col. 3.1, and advances the contrary view; Theodore makes the claim in the Argumentum of his commentary on Colossians, cf. Swete, *Theodore on the Minor Epistles*, p. 254. I am indebted to Paul Parvis for this observation.

19 Cf. *Hom. Joh.* 42, on John 6:1–15.   20 Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 172–3.

21 Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*.

Christiana providing a textbook for interpreters apparently unversed in the practices of the pagan schools of rhetoric. Eusebius, the Cappadocians, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose and Jerome – all the great exegetes among the fathers – understood the basic strategies of providing synonyms to bring out the meaning, identifying figures of speech, looking for parallel usages, explaining references and so on. In insisting that the true reference (or literal meaning) of a prophecy was to be found in its fulfilment,[22] the Antiochenes were no different from Eusebius of Caesarea, among others. In resisting allegory and undertaking moral interpretation, the Antiochenes were engaging in a debate with other Christian exegetes parallel to the recurrent tension (despite overlap and confluence) between practices pursued in the rhetorical schools and those used in the philosophical schools, the latter increasingly using allegory to discern in Homer and the classic mythologies the truths of their systems.[23]

The reaction against allegory, it is true, could be taken to extremes. It is salutary to contrast the work of Theodore and Theodoret, the latter rowing back from the challenges offered by the former to traditional Christian exegesis. Theodore had compared the Song of Songs to Plato's *Symposium*, suggesting that the occasion was the wedding of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh; he noted that God is not mentioned in the Song, and that it was read publicly neither by Jews nor by Christians. Theodoret, however, recognised its spiritual significance, and provided a reading which identified the church as the bride and Christ as the spouse, a view which finds its precedents in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, and its parallel in the Jewish Targum, which treats the Song as an account of the relationship between God and his people. But Theodore even went beyond the question of allegory, profoundly challenging the traditional approach to prophecy. He had dismissed christological readings of the prophets, a notable example being his discussion of texts in Zechariah,[24] which, he insists, refer to Zerubbabel, pouring scorn on those who think the text keeps switching from Zerubbabel to Christ and back again. Similarly he had asserted that, despite its words being used by Christ on the cross, Ps. 22 could not be spoken prophetically in the person of Christ, because (in the LXX version) the first verse refers to his sins. He thus rigidly applied the principle that a psalm, or other whole text, had a single *skopos* and, finding that this excluded christological readings of many

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22 R. C. Hill, 'Antiochene Exegesis of the Prophets', *Studia Patristica* 39 (2006), pp. 219–31.
23 Lamberton, *Homer*.
24 Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 163ff.; Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia', provides fuller treatment of his approach to the psalms and prophets.

traditional passages, gave alternative accounts of the texts which confined them to history prior to Christ. Theodoret criticised this approach as Jewish exegesis, restoring most traditional prophetic references to Christ. His more relaxed acceptance of traditional prophecies can be observed in his treatise concerning the christological controversies, the *Eranistes*. He does not hesitate to use in argumentation a traditional prophecy from Gen. 49.10–11,[25] and to give it the usual 'allegorical' interpretation. For the fact that the sceptre will not depart from Judah means it is to be read christologically, and the parousia which the nations expect must be the coming of Christ to the Gentiles; so 'washing his own garment in wine and his own veil in the blood of the grape' clearly refers to the Eucharist, assuming you read it in the light of 'I am the vine' – 'For as we call the mystical fruit of the vine after the holy blood of the Lord, so he named the blood of the true vine the blood of the grape.' The prophetic reference, and the riddling allegory by which it is achieved, is simply taken for granted.

Even Theodore, however, accepted the principle that events of the Old Testament were 'types' of events in the New. The exodus prefigured salvation from sin through Christ; Jonah is a *typos* of Christ.[26] He also agreed with other Antiochenes that some statements were 'hyperbolical' – they referred to matters in the prophet's own time but in such an exaggerated fashion that they pointed beyond themselves to a fuller fulfilment in Christ: Zechariah's prophecy at 9.8–10 (quoted in more than one Gospel in relation to the 'Triumphal Entry') provoked discussion of this, and he admitted it was a case in point, despite his insistence that it is bizarre to imagine that the text in itself kept switching from Zerubbabel to Christ. The Old Testament has a shadow of what is to come in the New – indeed, Theodore seems to have had a heightened sense of this fundamental difference between Old and New and was resisting the flattening of scripture which came about when the whole of the Christian dispensation was read back into the old covenant. So, while many of the psalms had a setting in David's lifetime, David being the unquestioned author, others certainly had later settings, referring to Solomon, or the siege of Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah, or exile in Babylon, David being unquestionably a prophet. But apart from Pss. 2, 8, 45 and (probably) 110,[27] he

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25 Frances Young, 'Exegetical Method and Scriptural Proof. The Bible in Doctrinal Debate', *Studia Patristica* 24 (1989), pp. 291–304.

26 Preface to his *Commentary on Jonah*; Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 69ff., which provides also a fuller account of Theodore's (non-)christological interpretation of the prophets and the psalms.

27 The commentary does not extend as far as this, so this cannot be confirmed.

located the psalms' reference firmly in the era before the coming of Christ. Any application to Christ is 'secondary'.

The Antiochenes were not 'a monolithic block',[28] nor were they wholly out of line with the traditions of Christian exegesis in general. They certainly developed objections to 'philosophical' allegory, but they sought moral and ecclesial meanings by alternative means that were exemplary and typological, calling it *theoria*. Prophecy remained fundamental to their understanding of the Old Testament. So did their sense that the meaning of scripture was contained in the overarching story of the rule of faith. So in what sense, if any, can we speak of Antiochene exegesis being a different tradition?

Antiochene exegesis a different tradition?

I have argued that the Antiochenes represent debate within a common methodological approach, and indeed that they argued among themselves. I have also suggested that they were just as prone as the allegorists to see the text of scripture as pointing beyond itself. Yet there is a different flavour to their interpretation, and the question is whether we can characterise this more precisely.

Previously I have distinguished between the 'ikonic exegesis' of the Antiochenes and the 'symbolic allegory' of the Alexandrians.[29] Both, like ancient exegetes in general, saw the text as *mimēsis* (representation); and both sought deeper meaning, but in very different ways. Representation may be through genuine likeness, an analogy, 'ikon' or image; or it may be by a 'symbol', defined here as something unlike standing for something else. Antiochene *theōria* (insight) looked for the resemblances in person or event, finding images of dogmatic truth or moral teaching in the *skopos* (overall intent) or narrative sequence: thus, according to John Chrysostom, Christ heals bodies as well as souls so as to stop the mouths of heretics, signifying by his care of both parts of our being that he himself is the maker of the whole creation (*Hom. Matt.* 15, on Matt. 4.23–4); and Christ is unambitious and void of boasting, teaching on a mountain or in a wilderness rather than in a city or forum, and instructing us to do nothing for display, and to separate ourselves from the tumults of ordinary life (*Hom. Matt.* 15, on Matt. 5.1–2). Alexandrian allegory, on the other hand, found the clues to the *skopos* of the Holy Spirit in the impossibilities (*aporiai*) of the text, which meant it must mean something other than it says, and they decoded the words, often by spelling out the metaphorical meaning,

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28 Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 68.
29 Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 210–12 and elsewhere.

or by cross-referencing other passages from across the Bible as a whole. Studies of the rediscovered commentaries of Didymus the Blind, the Alexandrian exegete most nearly contemporary with the Antiochenes, indicate the way in which his exegesis seems to develop a systematic code of biblical meanings of words, and to see the scriptural text as referring constantly to two different levels, the ordinary earthly realm and the spiritual world.[30] By contrast the Antiochenes trace a single providential outworking of God's *philanthropia* in the whole biblical narrative from the beginning of the creation to the end of time. But if that is a key description of how these 'traditions' differ, then Cyril of Alexandria is the exception that proves the rule – fall and redemption, played out over and over again in the stories of Abraham and the exodus, are the theme of his work on the Pentateuch,[31] and this Alexandrian's typological reading is much nearer to the Antiochenes and Ephrem the Syrian than it is to the allegory of Origen and Didymus.

It is not easy, then, to specify how the supposed two schools represent different traditions. Furthermore, it is clear that there was interaction. Both points are well illustrated in a detailed study of John Chrysostom's treatment of Noah and the flood.[32] In some specifics there does seem to be a difference in reading, for example: Chrysostom begins with the story of the sons of God having intercourse with the daughters of men, challenging the exegesis that the sons of God were fallen angels, identifying them with the human descendants of Seth, and attributing to this act the great wickedness which caused the flood. The tradition of identifying a human reference can be traced back to Julius Africanus, and is found in Eusebius of Emesa, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Gennadius. By contrast the 'Alexandrians', Philo, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea and Didymus, all argued that the sons of God were angels, demons or souls. In such detailed verse by verse examination of how Chrysostom's treatment compares with that of other exegetes, such divergences can sometimes be attributed to a difference between 'Antiochene' and 'Alexandrian' traditions. Yet the counter cases are also there: even in this example, Cyril of Alexandria rejects the 'Alexandrian' reading and follows the reading that identifies the sons of God as the descendants of Seth; and there are 'numerous examples of exegetical common ground between Didymus and Chrysostom',[33] and even some connections with Origen. The witch of Endor

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30 W. A. Bienert, *Allegoria und Anagoge bei Didymos dem Blinden von Alexandria* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972); J. Tigcheler, *Didyme l'Aveugle et l'exégèse allégorique, son commentaire sur Zacharie* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1977).
31 *On Worship in Spirit and in Truth*, PG, 68.   32 Amirav, *Rhetoric and Tradition*.
33 Amirav, *Rhetoric and Tradition*, p. 230.

occasioned another dispute which does not neatly divide along the supposed 'school' lines: Justin, Origen, Ambrose and Augustine thought Samuel did appear to Saul; Tertullian, Eustathius, Ephrem, Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius Ponticus, Jerome and Ambrosiaster argued that a demon appeared in his guise. John Chrysostom and Theodoret left the question open.[34]

So to sum up: it seems very unlikely that there were different independent traditions as such; rather there was debate and interaction. The group we call Antiochenes objected to allegory as practised by Origen and his followers. They were anxious that allegory undermined salvation history, and tended to imply a 'docetic' attitude towards the materiality of creation. Theodore challenged more aspects of the common tradition, partly on methodological grounds, having a firm commitment to the single *skopos* of a text, partly on theological grounds, having a strong eschatological view of two eras. Historicity or literalism did not primarily inform their approach – like other Antiochenes, Theodore never questioned the idea that the literal meaning of prophecy is its fulfilment, he agreed that some prophecies were hyperbolic and so transcended their immediate reference, and he accepted typology.

A case study of patristic exegetical traditions – wrestling Jacob

Irrespective of whether we can trace schools with differing traditions, traditions of exegesis there certainly were.[35] The christological reading of the Old Testament was deeply traditional, carrying a strong dispensational flavour as well as providing exemplary typology, so facilitating the process whereby the church read itself into the text and generated moral and spiritual outcomes. The deep continuity and yet variegation of such exegetical traditions can be illustrated by taking one case study, the story of wrestling Jacob.

The earliest and most common patristic use of this tale is to list it as one of the Old Testament 'theophanies' or revelations of the pre-existent Logos. A whole series was traditionally identified, the most well known being the story of Abraham entertaining angels unawares (Gen. 18). Referring to this example, Eusebius of Caesarea continues (*Hist. eccl.* 1.2):

34 Trigg, 'Eustathius' Attack', pp. 222–3, quoting K. A. D. Smedlik, 'The Witch of Endor. 1 Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 AD', *VC* 33 (1977), 160–79.
35 The material in this case study is published also in Frances Young, *Brokenness and Blessing. Towards a Biblical Spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007).

> To Him, too, when He later appeared to Jacob in a man's shape, Holy Scripture again refers as God – when he said to Jacob: 'No longer shall your name be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name; for you have prevailed with God.' Then too: 'Jacob called the name of that place 'The Form of God,' saying: 'For I saw God face to face, and my life was spared.'

This is the line taken over and over again: already in the second century, Justin (*Dial.* 58) speaks of the angel who appears to Jacob as Christ, listing this story with many others from the Jewish scriptures where the Lord appears. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catechetical Lectures* 12.16), Hilary of Poitiers (*De Trinitate* 4.31, 12.46; *De synodis* 49), Leo the Great (*Epistle* 31) and the *Apostolic Constitutions* (5.20) follow suit in the fourth and fifth centuries. It was a classic *topos* for proving the pre-existence of the Son of God, in which features like the wrestling were just ignored.

The wrestling was taken up in exemplary readings. Clement of Alexandria draws on this story in the *Paidagogos* (1.7). God appears as Jacob's instructor or trainer, wrestles with him and anoints him against evil. The face of God that he saw was the Logos by whom God is manifested, that is, the pre-existent Word which would be incarnate in Jesus. The Word acts as a trainer for the athlete of God, giving him practice for contending against the powers of evil. Clement's successor, Origen, gives it a slightly different twist (*On First Principles* 3.2.5): human nature is limited and powerless in the struggle against evil powers, so the angel wrestled with Jacob, not in the sense of *against* him, but rather *alongside* him. The angel is there to help Jacob in the struggle against evil, wrestling against the principalities and powers that Paul says we have to contend with. This is a spiritual fight, wrestling to endure sufferings, to avoid being provoked into fierce anger, excessive sorrow, the depths of despair or complaint against God. All this leads Origen into a discussion of the story of Job. So the wrestling becomes a 'type' of human spiritual struggles, through which we receive God's blessing.

In his great work, *The Preparation for the Gospel*, Eusebius introduces another way of turning the story into something useful for the spiritual life: 'Israel had formerly borne the name of "Jacob", but instead of "Jacob" God bestows upon him the name "Israel", transforming the active and practical man into the contemplative' (*P. E.* 9.6.) This idea depends upon etymological interpretation of the two names: Israel has a double name, because he was called Jacob when 'exercised . . . in practical habits and modes of life, and experiencing troubles on behalf of religion', the name meaning 'a man in training, an athlete';

but when afterwards he receives the rewards of victory . . . and is already in the enjoyment of the blessings of contemplation, then his name also is changed by the God who communes with him, who both vouchsafes to him a vision of God, and bestows by his new name the rewards of diviner gifts and honours . . . Israel indicates 'the man who beholds and contemplates': since the very name when translated means 'a man beholding God.'[36]

Gregory of Nazianzus takes this approach a bit further. The theme of his *Second Theological Oration* is the transcendence of God, the God who is beyond our comprehension. During the discussion he mentions glimmerings of this in scripture, including Jacob wrestling with God in human form. Gregory is not at all clear what this wrestling means, but he notes that Jacob bore on his body the marks of the wrestling and this signifies the defeat of the created nature. Gregory acknowledges Jacob's reward in the name change to 'Israel', but the climax of what he says is this: 'Neither he, nor any of his descendants in the twelve tribes who made up the children of Israel, could boast that he comprehended the whole nature or the pure sight of God.' For Gregory the story is about the human struggle to know God, and its ultimate failure. It is only because God accommodates the divine self to our human level, through the inevitably limited human language of scripture, and above all by accepting the constraints of incarnation, that we have any chance of knowing anything at all about God.

Exemplary readings may touch on the moral struggle: Jerome sees Jacob as strengthened by God in his struggle for virtue (*Dial. Pel.* 3.8), and the limp signifies that after this struggle with God his thigh shrank, he had no children and achieved chastity (*Ep.* 22.11), a clear example of the kind of twisting of the text for ascetic meaning that Elizabeth Clark has traced in *Reading Renunciation*. Augustine, on the other hand, thinks the wrestling is to hold on to Christ, which means the struggle to love one's enemy – for if you love your enemy, you do indeed hold Christ (*S.* 5.6).

Hilary of Poitiers (*De Trinitate* 5.19–20) makes Jacob an example to us to help us in the struggle against the poisonous hissings of the serpent of unbelief. Jacob prevails in wrestling with one who seems a human being, but he eventually perceives it is God, receives God's blessing and with this vision of faith becomes Israel. Hilary hastens to explain that the weakness and humanity of the supposed man with whom he struggled is no bar to his being God. This is a 'type' anticipating truths taught by the apostles. He turns next to the story of Jacob's ladder, identifying the ladder as Christ, as the Gospel

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36 *P. E.* 7.8.

of John had done. The incarnation is what gives sense to these stories, and Jacob becomes the type of a believer who responds to this human revelation of God.

This example shows how christological readings that go beyond the simple 'theophanic' reference with which we began could grow out of the exemplary. Ambrose provides another example. Characteristically he treats Jacob in an exemplary way: in the *De officiis* he is described as a model of wisdom, who saw God face to face and won a blessing, as well as an example of fortitude in striving with God (1.120). In a sermon (*Jacob and the Happy Life*) which specifically traces the lessons to be learned from Jacob's life,[37] he suggests that 'to wrestle with God is to enter on the struggle for virtue, to contend with one who is stronger and to become a better imitator of God than others are'. But, he continues, it was 'because Jacob's faith and devotion were unconquerable' that

> the Lord revealed his hidden mysteries to him by touching the side of his thigh. For it was by descent from him that the Lord Jesus was to be born of a virgin, and Jesus would be neither unlike nor unequal to God. The numbness in the side of Jacob's thigh foreshadowed the cross of Christ who would bring salvation to all men by spreading the forgiveness of sins throughout the whole world and would give resurrection to the departed by the numbness . . . of his own body.

The sun rising on 'holy Jacob' signifies 'the saving cross of the Lord [which] shone brightly on his lineage'; while 'the Sun of Justice rises on the man who recognises God, because He is Himself the Everlasting Light'.

Generally speaking, as here, the stranger is taken to be the 'type' of Christ, Jacob standing for the believer; but Ambrose also took another approach entirely – both here and in *De officiis* (1.120), he suggests we should imitate the type of Christ in Jacob, linking the paralysing of the thigh with the passion, the cross which achieved the future fellowship of human beings with the angels, of which the ladder at Bethel was a sign. Heaven is open to virtue, so we should follow the patriarchs, he concludes. Augustine, reverting to the identification of Christ with the angel, provides another way of linking the story with the passion (*Civ. Dei* 16.39): the fact that Jacob prevailed over the angel represents the passion of Christ, depicting Christ as the 'willing loser', who though he allows himself to be overcome and crucified, is yet the victor over the powers of evil. This comment is intertwined among the usual points,

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37 *Ambrose, Seven Exegetical Sermons*, trans. M. McHugh, Fathers of the Church 65 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1972); see especially 2.7.30.

giving them another dimension: Jacob receives a blessing from the angel he defeated, implying that Christ blesses the human race which slew him; and, as the name he is given means 'seeing God', so he receives in anticipation the vision of God which is the reward for the saints at the end of the world. This way of reading off truths from aspects of the narrative is reminiscent of the kind of thing we have seen in John Chrysostom and associated with the Antiochenes; clearly it was not simply a feature of their approach.

It is also clear now how typological and christological readings easily encouraged the kind of allegory which linked meanings in the various details of the narrative. Unlocking the text meant turning the key and finding the whole mystery unveiled. Such interpretation also encouraged dispensational reading, such as that of Augustine, who identifies Esau with the Jews and Jacob/Israel with the church. Augustine's pair of sermons on Jacob (5.4 and 5) dwells on the way the younger supersedes the elder: the law was given to the Jews, but the law promises the kingdom, and so the blessing is taken from Esau and given to Jacob. Esau's hairiness is a sign of his sins; but the hair on Jacob's shoulders belongs to another – so the church, like Christ, bears the sins of others. This general perspective is reinforced by the interpretation of many details in the story. 'Behold it is morning, let me go' is expounded by reference to the risen Christ telling Mary not to touch him, and Paul's statement about no longer knowing Christ according to the flesh: so the church finds spiritual illumination by contrast with the darkness of night and carnality, the light of truth and wisdom. But then we find a surprising twist, and a reminder that Augustine was speaking in the context of the Donatist controversy. Jacob, who represents the church, is not just blessed but limps. There are Christians who live badly, and the touch of the Lord's hand strikes as well as giving life. Wheat and tares grow together until the final judgement. Conversely, in the *City of God*, Jacob represents the Jewish people: the limp, and its outworking in the food taboo, seemed to justify the suggestion that they were disabled by their failure to accept Christ. Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 16.39)[38] speaks of Jacob as blessed and lame, blessed in those descendants who believed in Christ, crippled in respect of those who did not believe. He quotes from the Psalms: 'they limped away from their paths' (LXX Ps. 18.45), referring it to the majority of Jews. Christians thus become the true descendants of Israel, that is, the one who saw the face of God in human form.

To turn from this to John Chrysostom is to find another way of approach. None of the exegetical comments reviewed so far have come from

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38 Cf. Ambrose, *Jacob and the Happy Life* 2.7.31.

commentaries on Genesis as such. There is but one extended treatment in context, that of John Chrysostom. Here the story is related to the whole issue of Jacob's reconciliation with Esau. The incident is a demonstration of God's *philanthrōpia* (a favourite theme for Chrysostom); for it shows how God allowed Jacob to wrestle with what is right in the form of a man, so that he would learn not to go to that fateful meeting with bad feelings. Jacob must choose fearfulness, and not meet his brother in a spirit of contest. The stranger tries to leave because he recognises Jacob's righteousness, but Jacob demands a blessing, the story demonstrating Jacob's faith in asking to know who his assailant is. Thus Chrysostom works through the narrative line by line, often by implication drawing out morals applicable to the Christian pilgrimage of faith. The climax of the homily is a celebration of reconciliation and of God's love in the incarnation, of which this story provides a 'type'. The manner of working through the elements in the story has a different flavour, yet the moral struggle is not unlike that described by Origen and others, similar motifs recur, and in particular its exemplary force is clearly paramount.

So our case study reveals something of the differing character of Antiochene readings of narrative. But it also shows how the classic accounts of early Christian exegesis, by focusing on methodology rather than traditions of identifying the reference, fail to give a rich and nuanced description of what was going on.

Pagans and the Bible

WOLFRAM KINZIG

Non-Christians had high expectations as regards the rhetorical style and philosophical sophistication of works of literature.[1] The Bible was seriously deficient in this respect. The generally clumsy style of the Greek and Old Latin versions of the Old Testament and the Gospels was a constant source of criticism in Antiquity. In the East, Christians were told by their pagan contemporaries that their holy scriptures were written in the simple and unrefined Greek of provincial fishermen, peasants and tax collectors and did not conform to the rules of polished style.[2] The reproaches were similar in the West. Some Latin fathers had struggled themselves with the inadequacies of biblical style. Jerome admitted that at one point he had trouble reading the prophets, because their style seemed rude and repellent.[3] Augustine, prior to his conversion, despised the scriptures because they did not live up to the 'dignity of Tully' (i.e. Cicero).[4] These remarks are typical of what most Romans thought about the Bible.[5]

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1 The notes in this chapter draw extensively on the following: Berchman, *Porphyry against the Christians*; Harnack, 'Porphyrius'; Rinaldi, *Biblia Gentium*; Rinaldi, *La Bibbia dei pagani* (numbers in square brackets refer to Rinaldi's edition of 1997/8 where they differ from the edition of 1989); Masaracchia, *Giuliano Imperatore*.

2 On what follows, cf. Kinzig, 'Greek Christian Writers', pp. 634–6.

3 Jerome, *Ep.* 22.30. In his *Commentary on Isaiah* he complains how difficult it was to explain the book of the prophet to his contemporaries, because the ears of the Romans were 'fastidious' and 'felt revulsion' upon hearing the scriptures, since they could 'only be pleased by the clapping of eloquence' (*Comm. Isa.*, prologue, book 1, lines 98–101; R. Gryson (ed.), *Commentaires de Jérôme sur le prophète Isaïe*, 3 vols. AGLB (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), vol. 1, ad loc).

4 Augustine, *Conf.* 3.5.9 (Rin., no. 7). Cf. also his admonitions for Christian orators in *Cat.* 1.9.13 (Rin., no. 2).

5 Not all pagans were critical of the literary qualities of the Bible. There is one example where Moses' literary skills are *praised* in a pagan work; cf. Pseudo-Longinus, *On sublimity* 9.9. If the passage was not inserted at a later stage, as has been suggested, it was probably written early in the first century CE, and so is unlikely to have been influenced by Christianity. There is also a spurious fragment attributed to the Platonist philosopher Cassius Longinus, Porphyry's teacher at Athens, in which the apostle Paul is praised above all Greek orators for 'teaching the doctrine which cannot be demonstrated' (Longinus, frag. 1 Weiske = Rin., no. 631[630]).

Discussion about the Bible as a whole focused not only on its style or its contents, but also on its correct interpretation. It is well known that Christian interpretation, with its emphasis upon Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament, differed markedly from that of mainstream Judaism and that Jews objected to this kind of approach. However, there were pagans, too, who objected to the way Christians read the Bible. Yet in their criticism these pagan readers were by no means unanimous.

If Origen is to be believed, the Pythagorean and Platonist philosopher Numenius in the latter half of the second century quoted Moses and the Prophets in several of his writings and argued that the biblical narratives were not foolish, but were to be interpreted figuratively.[6] His contemporary Celsus, on the other hand, while not rejecting allegory as such, claimed that the book contained fables that were so foolish that they admitted of no allegorical interpretation, and, in any case, that existing allegories were worse than the stories themselves.[7] Porphyry argued similarly, extending his criticism to Origen's hermeneutical method. The Christian interpreters such as the Alexandrine theologian treated as divine oracles what was said plainly by Moses, but what Porphyry considered to be 'outlandish' (*othneíon*).[8]

Hence from the outset the Bible's shabby literary dress made it unattractive for most pagans. There is little evidence that the Jewish Bible (what was to become the 'Old Testament' of the Christians) either in its Hebrew or in its Greek version was read by pagans before the emergence of Christianity. On the whole, the reception of the Bible within the pagan world begins with the Christian era. Since Judaism was not by and large interested in mission, Jews, both Greek- and Aramaic-speaking, did not propagate their holy scriptures among the Gentiles, with the result that the latter were generally ignorant about the traditional laws, narratives, songs and prayers that constituted the identities of these religious communities.

Christianity, however, was a missionary religion. Although there were some texts and practices, such as the creed and the Eucharist, that were kept confidential, the Bible, or parts thereof, was widely available from early on. Yet only when, in the second century, Christianity was made acceptable to an educated Gentile audience, as in the writings of the apologists, do we get

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6 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.15 (Rin., no. 217); 4.51 = frags. 1c, 10a des Places (Rin., nos. 12, 11); Eusebius, *P. E.* 9.8.1f. = frag. 9 des Places (Rin., no. 125). Numenius' interpretation of Gen. 1:2 is mentioned by Porphyry in *Antr. nymph.* 10 = frag. 30 des Places (Rin., no. 27).

7 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.48–52 (Rin., no. 13, in part); cf. 1.17, 20, 4.38.

8 Porphyry, *Christ.* in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.4 (Rin., no. 14 = frag. 39 Har. = frag. 20 Ber.). Cf. also Macarius, *Apocr.* 3.15.4 (Rin., no. 506 = Har., no. 69 = Ber., no. 181; referring to John 6:54).

the first glimpses of a pagan reception of the Bible. As Christianity became a social and religious force to be reckoned with, pagan intellectuals increasingly turned their attention to the sacred texts to which the adherents of the new sect were constantly referring.

There are many Christian writings dealing with difficulties in understanding the Bible. There is even a distinct literary genre – the *quaestiones et responsiones* – in which popular criticisms of the holy scriptures were refuted.[9] Yet in most cases it is unclear whether these difficulties were raised by pagan critics, discussed within the church, or both.

Some pagan authors mentioned the Bible in works not specifically dealing with Judaism or Christianity. One such author was the philosopher and physician Galen (129–*c*. 199). He repeatedly cited the Jews and Christians in his works.[10] Occasionally, he also commented on the Bible. He had difficulties accepting the idea of a divine creation as described in Genesis, because it suggested to him that God's will did not conform to the laws of nature.[11] In general, he was unable to accept the books of Moses, since it was 'his method in his books to write without offering proofs, saying "God commanded, God spake"'.[12] The 'followers of Moses and Christ' (i.e. the Jews and Christians) took everything on faith without proper demonstration.[13] On the other hand, Galen admired the high morality of the Christians, although they were, like most people, 'unable to follow any demonstrative argument consecutively', but drew their faith from parables which he saw as 'tales of reward and punishments in a future life'.[14]

From the second half of the second century onward, pagan intellectuals composed writings specifically dedicated to the Bible and to Christianity, although many of them are entirely lost. One such work,[15] entitled *The Lover of Truth* (*Philaléthes*) or *The Truth-Loving Discourse* (*Philaléthes lógos*), was written at the beginning of the Diocletian persecution (303 CE) by Hierocles, governor of Bithynia.[16] According to Lactantius, Hierocles

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9 Cf. Rinaldi, *La Bibbia dei pagani*, vol. 1, pp. 279–317.
10 The evidence is collected in Walzer, *Galen*.
11 Galen, *De usu partium* 11.14 (Rin., no. 21); cf. Walzer, *Galen*, pp. 11–13.
12 Galen, *On Hippocrates' Anatomy* (Rin., no. 19), quoted in Walzer, *Galen*, p. 11.
13 Galen, *De pulsuum differentiis* 2.4; cf. Walzer, *Galen*, p. 14 and reference 5, and pp. 14f.
14 Cf. reference 6 in Walzer, *Galen*, pp. 15f.
15 Another work is mentioned by Lactantius, *Inst.* 5.2.4–11. Its author is probably not Porphyry, as has sometimes been assumed; cf. Cook, *New Testament*, p. 261; Riedweg, 'Porphyrios über Christus', pp. 155f.
16 For details cf. Cook, *New Testament*, pp. 250–76; DePalma Digeser, 'Anonymous Hellene', pp. 486–9.

endeavoured so to prove the falsehood of sacred scripture, as though it were altogether contradictory to itself; for he expounded some chapters which seemed to be at variance with themselves, enumerating so many and such secret things, that he sometimes appears to have been one of the same sect . . . He chiefly, however, assailed Paul and Peter, and the other disciples, as disseminators of deceit whom at the same time he testified to have been unskilled and unlearned. For he says that some of them made gain by the craft of fishermen.[17]

In doing this Hierocles seems to have relied heavily on Celsus. Unlike Celsus, however, Hierocles compared Jesus to Apollonius of Tyana, a Neo-Pythagorean holy man of the first century CE whose life was the subject of a highly fictionalised 'biography' by L. Flavius Philostratus, the latter having been commissioned by Iulia Domna, wife of Emperor Septimius Severus (193–211). Hierocles' purpose was to demonstrate the superiority of this miracle worker over Jesus whom he charged with being a common robber and a magician.[18]

These are but small glimpses into what must have been a substantial book. There are, nonetheless, three pagan writers whose texts have been sufficiently preserved for us to have a certain idea of their overall argument. The first is the philosopher Celsus, who wrote an anti-Christian treatise entitled *The True Word c.* 177–80 CE.[19] Although the original work is lost, large chunks have been preserved in Origen's refutation *Against Celsus*. To a certain extent it is possible to extract these fragments from Origen's work and to reconstruct a cohesive argument.[20]

Towards the end of the third century, the Neo-Platonic philosopher Porphyry (234–302/5) wrote a massive work *Against the Christians*, comprising no less than fifteen books.[21] A few scattered fragments notwithstanding, the only source to preserve the content of the work, though not necessarily its

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17 Lactantius, *Inst.* 5.2.12–17 (Rin., no. 8), in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (eds.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325. Vol. VII: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorius, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, 2 Clement, Early Liturgies* (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1886), p. 138.
18 Lactantius, *Inst.* 5.3.4, 9, 19; for Celsus cf. below nn. 50, 51.
19 The date is uncertain; cf. Lona, *Wahre Lehre*, pp. 54f.
20 Cf. most recently Lona, *Wahre Lehre*. The best edition of *Contra Celsum* is Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*.
21 The fragments are collected in Harnack, 'Porphyrius', 'Neue Fragmente' and 'Nachträge', to which must be added Schäublin, 'Diodor von Tarsos'; Cook, 'Fragment of Porphyry's *Contra Christianos*'; Nebes, 'Zum sprachlichen Verständnis'; Linguiti, 'Porphyrius'. Berchman, *Porphyry against the Christians* is incomplete. The date of his anti-Christian work is uncertain; cf. the survey of the *status quaestionis* in Riedweg, 'Porphyrios über Christus', pp. 152–4. Riedweg also discusses the integrity of the work which has recently been called into doubt.

wording, is the *Apocriticus*, a dialogue from the pen of the Christian apologist Macarius, written *c.* 375/8.[22]

A similar situation prevails in the case of the third writer, the Roman Emperor Julian, who attempted to revive paganism during his short reign (361–3). In this context, Julian wrote a book specifically directed against the Christians, whom he called 'Galilaeans' in order to underline their origin in one of the most insignificant places of the Roman empire (*Against the Galilaeans*). Julian failed, and his work was later destroyed. Yet again, many decades later, Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria (412–44), took up the challenge and refuted the emperor in detail in his massive tomes *Against Julian* (written *c.* 423–8).[23] This work may have contained as many as thirty books, but only ten have come down to us in their entirety. In these books Cyril quoted Julian bit by bit in order to add lengthy refutations after each quotation. Here it is easy to get a clear picture of Julian's argument, since his words are quoted in the original order and the quotations are clearly marked.[24]

It is perhaps surprising that the pagans, if they commented on the Bible at all, commented on the Septuagint and the New Testament. It appears not to have been widely known that the Septuagint was actually a translation of Hebrew works. In addition, the Christians were never accused of having suppressed apocryphal books which ought to have been in the canon. In fact, they rarely quoted apocryphal books.[25] Instead, they basically used the Bible as we know it.

Celsus

It is a matter of scholarly debate whether Celsus had immediate access to biblical books, since he gives very few verbal quotations. In any case his knowledge of the scriptures is rather limited. He is not interested in the biblical books as literature, which is why we find no criticism of the style of the Bible in *The True Word*. Rather, Celsus concerned himself with the person of Jesus as he appears in these books (including the story of his origin and

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22 As regards the date and the identity of the author cf. Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie*, vol. I, pp. 48–65. Porphryry's (indirect) authorship for the pagan objections is discussed on pp. 127–36; cf. also pp. 261–91. Goulet's argument (cf. especially pp. 121–6) seems to preclude Hierocles from being the author of the pagan objections, as suggested again by DePalma Digeser, 'Anonymous Hellene', who, in addition, sees the *Apocriticus* as reflecting a genuine debate of the early fourth century.
23 As regards the date cf. Vinzent, 'Halbe Heiden'.
24 The best edition to date is Masaracchia, *Giuliano Imperatore*.
25 The Apocalypse of Peter is quoted in Macarius, *Apocr.* 4.6 (Rin., no. 715 = Har., no. 89 = Ber., no. 200).

birth, his miracles, and his passion and resurrection), and in the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

As regards the Pentateuch, Celsus suggested that Moses may have inherited some of his doctrines and myths from pagan sources,[26] but that those doctrines and myths had been misunderstood and thus corrupted. For Celsus the story of the flood (Gen. 6–9) was nothing but a 'debased and unscrupulous version of the story of Deucalion'.[27] Likewise, the story of the Tower of Babel, which Celsus took to imply some kind of purification of the earth (Gen. 11:1–9), originated in Greek mythology, originally referring to the sons of Aloeus (Homer, *Od*. 11.305–20).[28] The tale about Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19) had its exemplar in the story of Phaethon.[29]

As a Greek philosopher, Celsus considered the story of the creation particularly ridiculous and called it 'utter nonsense'.[30] There were logical inconsistencies in the biblical account which spoke from the beginning about 'days' on which the world was created, before days themselves had come into existence. Furthermore, the idea that God should have created the world in, as it were, six 'portions' and, exhausted from his hard work, needed to rest on the seventh day 'like some lousy artisan' seemed absurd to him.[31] Celsus' scorn was partly precipitated by Gnostic groups who thought that the world was created by a 'cursed' demiurge. Why would the 'great God', Celsus asked, let this happen?[32]

The creation of man in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26f.) seemed unduly to minimise the ontological difference between God and man, for God did 'not resemble any other form at all'.[33] If man was made just like worms, so Celsus seems to have suggested, why were not the worms, too, in every way like God?[34] This was also the reason why the Christians contradicted themselves when they refused to venerate images on the grounds that God's shape differed from shapes found in this world. If this was the case, how could man resemble God?[35] Also, the notions 'that a man was formed by the hands of God and given breath, that a woman was formed out of his side, that God gave commands, and that a serpent opposed them and even proved superior to the ordinances of God' seemed to Celsus old wives' tales, because it made

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26 *Contra Celsum* 1.21 (Rin., no. 17).
27 *Contra Celsum* 4.41 f. (Rin., nos. 76, 78); cf. 4.20 (Rin., no. 75) and 1.19.
28 *Contra Celsum* 4.21 (Rin., no. 81). 29 *Contra Celsum* 4.21 (Rin., no. 92) and 1.19.
30 *Contra Celsum* 6.50 (Rin., no. 22). For what follows cf. Cook, *Old Testament*, pp. 64–91; Lona, *Wahre Lehre*, pp. 242–5, 363–79.
31 *Contra Celsum* 6.60f. (Rin., nos. 23, 40), 5.59 (Rin., no. 39).
32 *Contra Celsum* 6.51 (Rin., no. 31).   33 *Contra Celsum* 6.63 (Rin., no. 34).
34 *Contra Celsum* 4.30 (Rin., no. 33).   35 *Contra Celsum* 7.62 (Rin., no. 35).

'God into a weakling right from the beginning and incapable of persuading even one man whom He had formed'.[36] The description of paradise reminded Celsus of unlikely stories about the gods as they were found in the Old Comedy.[37] What was said about God suggested that he was subject to human passions, which was contrary to what anybody schooled in Greek philosophy deemed appropriate.[38] Other stories in Genesis were plainly immoral[39] or 'utterly absurd'.[40]

Apart from the book of Genesis, Celsus had little interest in the Old Testament. He was, however, deeply suspicious of any christological exegesis of the prophets. The latter could not possibly have foretold the passion of Christ, because the idea that God could die was 'evil and impious'.[41] Instead the prophets had foretold a mighty and powerful messiah who would be lord over the whole earth.[42]

We do not know what kind of New Testament, if any, Celsus had before his eyes, writing, as he did, before there was a generally accepted canon of New Testament books. It was the person of Jesus, his origin, birth, life, death and resurrection in which the philosopher was most interested. In his attack he may have drawn some of his information from an anti-Christian Jewish polemical treatise,[43] but he appears to have been somewhat disorganised in dealing with the individual stories about Jesus.[44]

Celsus doubted the genealogy given in Luke 3:23–38 in which Jesus is said 'to be descended from the first man and from the kings of the Jews', because, had it been true, 'the carpenter's wife would have known about such a venerable ancestry'.[45] He mocked Jesus because of his poor family background and called the virgin birth a fabrication, claiming instead that Jesus' birth was the result of an extramarital affair with a soldier called Panthera.[46] He compared Jesus' birth with those of Perseus, Amphion, Aeacus and Minos, saying that the divine lineage of these heroes had been verified by their 'great and truly wonderful works', whereas Jesus had nothing to show for himself.[47] Likewise,

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36 *Contra Celsum* 4.36 (Rin., no. 41), trans. Chadwick. Cf. also 4.38–40 (Rin., nos. 51[52], 55[56], 56[57]), 6.28 (Rin., no. 62).
37 *Contra Celsum* 6.49 (Rin., no. 44).   38 *Contra Celsum* 6.53 (Rin., no. 74).
39 *Contra Celsum* 4.45 (Rin., no. 94), 4.43 (Rin., no. 100), 4.46f. (Rin., nos. 104, 108, 111–13, 116).
40 *Contra Celsum* 4.43 (Rin., no. 96).   41 *Contra Celsum* 7.12, 14, 15; cf. Rin., no. 217A.
42 *Contra Celsum* 2.28f. (Rin., no. 217B).
43 This does not mean, however, that the 'Jew' who is introduced in 1.28–2.79 is a historical person; cf. Lona, *Wahre Lehre*, pp. 172–7.
44 *Contra Celsum* 1.40 (Rin., no. 342).   45 *Contra Celsum* 2.32 (Rin., no. 442).
46 *Contra Celsum* 1.28 (Rin., no. 324); cf. also 5.52 (Rin., no. 327); 1.39 (Rin., no. 326). Panthera is mentioned in 1.32. The name also appears in Jewish sources; cf. Lona, *Wahre Lehre*, pp. 100–2.
47 *Contra Celsum* 1.67 (Rin., no. 513).

he ridiculed the story of the adoration of the magi and of the flight to Egypt.[48] He also considered the narrative of Jesus' baptism in Matt. 3:13–17, in which a dove descended from above, entirely fictitious.[49]

Celsus had no problems with the miracles attributed to Jesus, living, as he did, in an environment in which belief in supernatural events was an intrinsic part of most people's world view. He did, however, claim that Jesus was only able to perform these miracles because he was a common sorcerer, such as were found all over the ancient world. This did not make him a son of God.[50] Instead Jesus had learned the tricks of his trade during his sojourn in Egypt, a country which was generally considered a hotbed of ancient magic.[51]

Jesus' weakness was underlined by his frequent use of woes and 'I declare unto you', which a god would not need to make his point.[52] His teachings were but feeble copies of what had been said much better by Plato.[53] In addition, they were contradictory to what God had taught the Jews through Moses. The God of the Old Testament wanted his people to be rich and powerful and to kill their enemies, whereas the man from Nazareth said that the wealthy and powerful could not come to the Father and that his followers, when struck, should offer themselves to be struck again. The philosopher asked pointedly: 'Who is wrong? Moses or Jesus? Or when the Father sent Jesus had he forgotten what commands he gave to Moses? Or did he condemn his own laws and change his mind, and send his messenger for quite the opposite purpose?'[54]

The passion of Christ also came under scrutiny. If Jesus was divine, how could it be that his own followers betrayed him? Had he himself led them astray? Would such deception befit a God?[55] On the other hand, why did his disciples not die with him, as opposed to denying that they were his disciples? Did such behaviour befit his followers?[56]

Celsus refused to accept the Christian claim that pagan resurrection stories were all fables, whereas the end of the Christian 'drama', as he ironically put it, was supposed to be convincing and plausible. Christ was unable to prevent himself being imprisoned and to help himself on the cross, had to drink filth

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48 *Contra Celsum* 1.58 (Rin., no. 330), 1.66 (Rin., no. 335).
49 *Contra Celsum* 1.40 (Rin., no. 342), 1.41 (Rin., no. 492), 1.48 (Rin., no. 544), 2.72 (Rin., no. 545).
50 *Contra Celsum* 1.68 (Rin., no. 306); cf. also 1.6 (Rin., no. 354), 2.49 (Rin., no. 579).
51 *Contra Celsum* 1.28 (Rin., no. 324), 1.38 (Rin., no. 334). Cf. Lona, *Wahre Lehre*, p. 99 and n. 429.
52 *Contra Celsum* 2.76 (Rin., no. 308).
53 He compares Matt. 5:39 and par. Luke 6:29 to Plato, *Crit.* 49b–c; cf. 7.58 (Rin., no. 551). He also sees in Mark 10:25 and par. a copy of Plato, *Leg.* 743a; cf. 6.16 (Rin., no. 575).
54 *Contra Celsum* 7.18 (Rin., no. 576), trans. Chadwick.   55 *Contra Celsum* 2.20 (Rin., no. 581).
56 *Contra Celsum* 2.45 (Rin., no. 587).

like vinegar and gall and finally died an ignominious death (which was later embellished by the Christians who added earthquakes and darkness),[57] but we are to believe that 'after death he rose again and showed the marks of his punishment and how his hands had been pierced'. Indeed, the evidence for the truth of this statement was rather slim, since only hysterical and hallucinating women were witnesses to this supposed event.[58]

Given the detailed argument, therefore, it is very likely that Celsus had access to the text of the Gospels. However, there is little evidence that he knew the Pauline Epistles or any other of the writings which were to be included in the New Testament.

Porphyry

Since most of Porphyry's work *Against the Christians* is lost, we have only scant information about his views on the Old Testament. His knowledge of the finer details of biblical philology was considerable and he even criticised the evangelists for erroneously quoting from the Old Testament.[59] Porphyry may also have emended the text, as a result of which he (and Julian) was charged with falsification.[60]

Although he made some comments on the Pentateuch,[61] Porphyry appears to have been most interested in the Prophets, whom, as Theodoret says, he 'read carefully, for he devoted much time to them when he concocted his writing against us'.[62] In particular, he preferred a literal interpretation over a figurative or allegorical reading.[63] This insistence on the 'historical' interpretation of the scriptures (which in some ways anticipated the way the Bible was to be interpreted by the fathers who later belonged to the Antiochene exegetical school) became particularly relevant in relation to Old Testament prophecy. The crucial question was whether a given prophecy

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57 *Contra Celsum* 2.59 (Rin., no. 413).
58 *Contra Celsum* 2.55 (Rin., no. 403); cf. also 2.9 (Rin., no. 584), 2.24 (Rin., no. 401), 2.34 (Rin., no. 406), 2.36 (Rin., no. 532), 2.37 (Rin., no. 594), 2.58 (Rin., no. 596), 2.59 (Rin., nos. 597, 604), 7.13 (Rin., no. 595).
59 *Christ*., frags. 9A (Har. = Rin., no. 421), 9B (Har. = Rin., no. 422 = Ber., no. 94), 10 (Har. = Rin., no. 370 = Ber., no. 92); Pacatus, *Contra Porphyrium*, frag. 1 (Rin., no. 386).
60 Cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.23 (Rin., no. 14C).
61 Cf. *Christ*., frags. 42 (Har. = Rin., no. 61[48] = Ber., no. 164), 4 (Har. = Rin., no. 123 = Ber., no. 93), 79 (Har. = Rin., no. 160 = Ber., no. 113).
62 Theodoret, *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 7.36f. (Porphyry, *Christ*., frags. 38; Har. = Rin., no. 218 = Ber., no. 163), trans. Rinaldi.
63 Cf. above p. 753.

referred to some previous event in Jewish history or to Christ's incarnation. Porphyry insisted on the former, on which grounds he disputed the Christian claim that the advent of Christ had been prophesied in the scriptures. He thought that the prophecy about the future of Jerusalem and the Day of the Lord in Ezek. 14 referred to the political situation under King Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–64 BCE) which led to the Maccabean revolt of 167–164 BCE.[64] He dedicated an entire book (book 12) to the exegesis of Daniel, categorically denying that it had a Christian meaning.[65] We happen to be well informed about this particular aspect of his work, since Jerome quotes long portions from the twelfth book in his commentary on Daniel (though possibly not from first-hand knowledge).[66]

Porphyry made three important claims about Daniel. First, he denied that the book had been written by an author named Daniel, ascribing it instead to a Judaean writer who had lived at the time of Antiochus. In fact, Porphyry claimed it had originally been written in Greek and did not belong to the Hebrew scriptures at all. Apparently, he only knew the text of the Septuagint and was, therefore, unable to see that the Hebrew and Aramaic text was shorter than the Greek version.[67]

Second, Porphyry claimed that 'Daniel' did not speak about the future at all but about the past. Finally, all events which were mentioned by 'Daniel' were true until the time of Antiochus, 'whereas anything he may have conjectured beyond that point was false, inasmuch as he would not have foreknown the future'.[68] For almost a century this claim caused a storm of indignation among Christian theologians. Refutations were written by Methodius of Olympus, Eusebius of Caesarea, Apollinarius of Laodicea and Jerome; all of these refutations, except for Jerome's, are lost.[69] Christian writers were so intensely disturbed by Porphyry's claims because, in their view, 'no other prophet had so clearly spoken about Christ' as had Daniel. What gave Daniel's prophecies the edge over those other prophets was the fact that he alone was able to

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64 *Christ.* frag. 47 (Har. = Rin., no. 289 = Ber., no. 19).
65 For scholarly discussion about the sources and the precise nature of Porphyry's exegesis of Daniel, cf. Cook, *Old Testament*, pp. 187–247 with full bibliography.
66 Cf. Cook, *Old Testament*, pp. 196f.
67 *Christ.*, frag. 43B (Har. = Rin., no. 280 = Ber., no. 71).
68 *Christ.*, frag. 43A (Har. = Rin., no. 241 = Ber., no. 70), in W. C. Wright (trans.), *The Works of the Emperor Julian with an English Translation by Wilmer Cave Wright*, 3 vols., Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann / New York: Macmillan, 1913/23). As regards authorship cf. also *Christ.*, frag. 43G (Har. = Rin., no. 243 = Ber., no. 77).
69 Cf. Rinaldi, *La Bibbia dei pagani*, vol. 1, pp. 128–35; Cook, *New Testament*, p. 126.

indicate the time when Christ would come again and to describe the precise series of events leading up to his coming.[70] Yet this very precision made Porphyry suspicious, which is why he preferred a 'historical interpretation' almost from start to finish, referring the prophecies to actual events that had taken place during the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes. Porphyry claimed to have taken his knowledge of the period under discussion from older Greek historians and thus to have begun from a secure historical basis.[71]

The core of the debate related to the four beasts in Dan. 7. While Christian exegetes such as Hippolytus and Jerome identified the last two beasts with the 'Macedonians' (i.e. Alexander and the kingdoms of the Diadochi) and the Romans,[72] respectively, Porphyry claimed that the leopard (7:6) was Alexander, whereas the fourth beast represented the four successors to Alexander.[73] The ten horns (7:7) represented the ten kings until Antiochus Epiphanes which, again, are not identified in the extant fragments. The three uprooted horns were identified with Ptolemy VI Philometor, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes of Egypt and Artaxes of Armenia, who had been defeated by the 'little horn', in other words Antiochus Epiphanes (7:8). Consequently, the 'mouth speaking monstrous things' was not the Antichrist (as Hippolytus had surmised), but Antiochus himself.[74] It is unclear, then, who slew the fourth beast and took away the dominions from the other beasts. Jerome appears to suggest that Porphyry thought of Judas Maccabaeus, but this is uncertain.[75]

However, the disagreements between Porphyry and exegetes such as Jerome did not extend to the whole book. In fact, Jerome himself admits that Porphyry's and his own interpretation of the sequence of events alluded to in Dan. 11:1–20 was largely identical.[76] Yet in what followed in 11:21–45 Jerome saw a prophecy of the Antichrist, whereas Porphyry referred the verses to

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70 Jerome, *Comm. Dan.*, prologue; cf. Rin., no. 241 = Har., no. 43A = Ber., no. 70 (in part). Cf. also *Comm. Dan.* 4.12.13; cf. Rin., no. 279 = Har., no. 43W = Ber., no. 90).

71 *Christ.*, frag. 43C (Har. = Rin., no. 242 = Ber., no. 72).

72 Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan.* 4.3–5; Jerome, *Comm. Dan.* 2.7.7b.

73 Perhaps Ptolemy I Soter, Philip III Arrhidaeus, Antigonus I Monophthalmus, Seleucus I Nicator; cf. Jerome, *Comm. Dan.* 3.11.3–4 (Rin., no. 259), where Jerome quotes from an unknown source (Porphyry?); see below, n. 76.

74 *Christ.*, frags. 43L (Har. = Rin., no. 254 = Ber., no. 79), 43M (Har. = Rin., no. 255 = Ber., no. 80).

75 *Christ.*, frag. 43M (Har. = Rin., no. 255 = Ber., no. 80).

76 Cf. Jerome, *Comm. Dan.* 4.11.21. This is why it has sometimes been assumed that the historical details given by Jerome in his exegesis of 11:1–20 were taken over from Porphyry. Cf. Jerome, *Comm. Dan.* 3.11.2b (Rin., no. 258), 3.11.3–4 (Rin., no. 259), 3.11.5 (Rin., no. 260), 3.11.6–9 (Rin., no. 261), 3.11.10–14 (Rin., no. 262), 3.11.13–14 (Rin., no. 263), 3.11.15–16 (Rin., no. 264), 3.11.17–19 (Rin., no. 265). There was a slight disagreement in 11:20 where Porphyry saw a reference to Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180 BCE), whereas Jerome perceives a reference to Seleucus IV Philopator (187–76 BCE); cf. *Christ.*, frag. 43O (Har. = Rin., no. 266 = Ber., no. 83).

the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes.[77] This historical interpretation was difficult to sustain with regard to what was obviously a prophecy of the resurrection of the dead in Dan. 12. Yet here, too, Porphyry seems to have stuck to his historicising hermeneutics and, as was mentioned above, taken these verses to allude to the Maccabaean revolt in 167–164 BCE.[78]

However, Porphyry appears not to have dispensed with a messianic interpretation of Daniel altogether. In his explanation of the stone that 'became a great mountain and filled the whole earth' (2:35), he seems to have followed a Jewish interpretation which referred the stone to the future strength of the people of Israel. Yet Porphyry attached no prophetic value to it, considering it instead to be a lie of Pseudo-Daniel, fabricated 'in order to revive the hope of his people'.[79]

In comparison with Porphyry's assessment of the Old Testament, we have far less information regarding his view of the New Testament. Like Celsus he criticised the genealogies of Jesus given in Matthew and Luke.[80] He also demonstrated inconsistencies in the chronology of Jesus' birth and in the flight to Egypt.[81] Likewise, the prologue of the Gospel of John came under attack: 'If the Son of God is a Logos then he is either an uttered Logos [*prophorikós*] or an inward Logos [*endiáthetos*]. But he is neither the former nor the latter. Therefore he is no Logos at all.'[82] Here Porphyry used Stoic terminology, which was also current in later Platonism, to show the absurdity of the Christian claim, since the man Jesus could not possibly be one or the other kind of Logos.

Furthermore, it was difficult to reconcile Jesus' supposed divinity with passages (such as John 7:8–10) which narrate that Jesus changed his mind.[83] Discussing John 14:6, Porphyry asked why, if Christ was the truth, he had remained hidden for so long. What of the multitudes of people who were born and died before his advent? Reference to the Jewish Law was hardly a sufficient answer, since there were many peoples who had never even heard of the Jews' provincial religion.[84] He also asked why, if Jesus 'wanted to be

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77 *Christ.*, frags. 43P–V (Har. = Rin., nos. 267–73, 275 = Ber., nos. 84–89).
78 *Christ.*, frag. 43W (Har. = Rin., nos. 276–9 = Ber., nos. 90f.).
79 *Christ.*, frag. 43D (Har. = Rin., no. 246 = Ber., no. 74); cf. also Jerome, *Comm. Dan.* 4.11.44–5 (Har., frag. 43V = Rin., no. 275; Ber., no. 89, yet all shortened). See further Cook, *Old Testament*, pp. 206–8.
80 *Christ.*, frag. 11 (Har. = Rin., no. 318[317] = Ber., no. 73).
81 *Christ.*, frag. 12 (Har. = Rin., no. 328 = Ber., no. 144).
82 *Christ.*, frag. 86 (Har. = Rin., no. 481 = Ber., no. 214).
83 *Christ.*, frag. 70 (Har. = Rin., no. 507 = Ber., no. 108, translation incorrect).
84 *Christ.*, frag. 81 (Har. = Rin., no. 519 = Ber., no. 112).

considered a man above man', he did not 'gather at Sion Jews and Greeks from all the nations'. Why did he not 'descend as a man from heaven as he will descend at his second coming'?[85]

The Gospel texts certainly drew Porphyry's ire. Porphyry pointed out the contradictions between the introductions of the Gospel texts.[86] He poked fun at Jesus' own parables[87] and sayings,[88] all the while accusing the Gospel authors of lying about Jesus' deeds.[89] Indeed, they must have been lying when claiming that the disciples obeyed Jesus' summons to follow him without the slightest hesitation (Matt. 9:9), unless, of course, the disciples followed a complete stranger out of sheer stupidity.[90] Then again, the disciples were so daft that they failed to realise that the darkness at the hour of Christ's death (Matt. 27:45) was a result of a solar eclipse.[91] Porphyry's critiques extended even to minute interpretive details. For example, in the account of Jesus' walking on water, when the Lake of Gennesaret is described as a 'sea' (*thálassa*; cf. Mark 6:48 and par.), Porphyry accused the Gospel authors of attempting to exaggerate the magnitude of the miracle through lexical legerdemain.[92] He even questioned Christian exegesis that construed the resurrections of Lazarus and Christ as types of the future resurrection.[93]

The apostles came under attack just as their master did. They were said to have 'abused the simplicity and inexperience of their listeners'.[94] Porphyry censures the apostle Peter for calling down death upon Ananias and Sapphira (cf. Acts 5:1–11), an act which he found inconsistent with Christian moral teaching.[95] He attacked the wording of the Apostolic Decree as recorded in Acts 15:20, 29, although no details are known.[96] To him Paul was a Jew with

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85 *Christ.*, frag. 65 (Har. = Rin., no. 607 = Ber., no. 211).
86 Pacatus, *Contra Porphyrium*, frag. 3 (Rin., no. 312).
87 Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Ps.* (5.308.11–14 in M. Gronewald, *Didymos der Blinde. Psalmenkommentar (Tura-Papyrus). Part v: Kommentar zu Psalm 40–44.4*, Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 12 (Bonn: Habelt, 1970) = Rin., no. 310 = Ber., no. 27); Pacatus, *Contra Porphyrium*, frag. 4 (Rin., no. 456).
88 Didymus, *Comm. Job* (3.280.1–281.10 in U. Hagedorn, D. Hagedorn and L. Koenen, *Didymos der Blinde. Kommentar zu Hiob (Tura-Papyrus). Part iii: Kap. 7.20–11*, Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 3 (Bonn: Habelt, 1968) = Rin., no. 382 = Ber., no. 25); *Christ.*, frags. 3 (Har. = Rin., no. 391 = Ber., no. 97), 91 (Har. = Rin., no. 557 = Ber., no. 114); Pacatus, *Contra Porphyrium*, frag. 5 (Rin., no. 522).
89 *Christ.*, frag. 7 (Har. = Rin., no. 301 = Ber., no. 17); cf. also frag. 2 (Har. = Rin., no. 302).
90 *Christ.*, frag. 6 (Har. = Rin., no. 561 = Ber., no. 95).
91 *Christ.*, frag. 14 (Har. = Rin., no. 409 = Ber., no. 99).
92 *Christ.*, frag. 55B (Har. = Rin., no. 570 = Ber., no. 64).
93 *Christ.*, frag. 92 (Har. = Rin., no. 514 = Ber., no. 111).
94 *Christ.*, frag. 6 (Har. = Rin., no. 607A = Ber., no. 95).
95 *Christ.*, frag. 25B (Har. = Rin., no. 609 = Ber., no. 105).
96 *Christ.*, frag. 8 (Har. = Rin., no. 621).

a hot temper who was unable to control himself.[97] He made much of the incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–18) in order to demonstrate the discord between the apostles Paul and Peter and the inconsistencies of their teachings.[98] Still, the *Apocriticus* notwithstanding (for which see below), there is little to suggest that Porphyry discussed Paul's teaching in any detail.[99]

Julian

It is obvious from what has been said that Porphyry was well versed in the scriptures, which may lend credence to the ancient claim that he had been raised a Christian.[100] In his biblical knowledge he was surpassed only by Emperor Julian 'the Apostate', who himself had a Christian education and was taught the scriptures as a child by Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia before returning to paganism.

In *Against the Galilaeans* (*Gal.*) Julian quoted primarily from the Pentateuch and the Gospels, since, as we shall see below, he discussed the works and the sayings of Moses and the person of Jesus at length. Quotations from or allusions to the Bible also occur in other works.[101]

Julian thought that every nation was subordinate to some national god and that this accounted for the diversity in their laws and characters. As a consequence, he criticised the Judaeo-Christian concept of monotheism. He attempted to demonstrate that Moses was inconsistent in his discourse about God. On the one hand, he repeated time and again that there was just one God, the God of Israel[102] (which, incidentally, meant that Jesus could not possibly be a god).[103] On the other hand, when Moses said in Deut. 4:19f. that the creator of the world had chosen the Hebrew nation, he had left unsaid which gods governed the other nations.[104] Indeed, in Julian's view Moses had in fact adhered to some form of polytheism.[105]

Julian went on to give a full analysis of the creation narrative in Genesis, in the course of which he carefully compared it with the account given in

97 *Christ.*, frag. 37 (Har. = Rin., no. 694); perhaps by another pagan critic.
98 *Christ.*, frags. 19 (Har. = Rin., no. 675 = Ber., no. 114), 20 (Har. = Rin., no. 677 = Ber., no. 102), 21A (Har. = Rin., no. 678 = Ber., no. 100), 21B (Har. = Rin., no. 679), 21C (Har. = Rin., no. 680 = Ber., no. 103), 21D (Har. = Rin., no. 681), 22 (Har. = Rin., no. 693 = Ber., no. 104).
99 A possible allusion to 1 Cor 13:13 occurs in *Marc.* 24. Cf. the comments in Rinaldi, *La Bibbia dei pagani*, vol. 11, no. 666A ad loc.
100 For the Christian background of the author cf. Kinzig, 'Neuplatoniker Porphyrius'.
101 Cf. Cook, *Old Testament*, p. 249.
102 *Gal.*, frag. 64 (Mas. = Rin., no. 153); cf. also frag. 67 (Mas. = Rin., no. 157).
103 *Gal.*, frag. 64 (Mas. = Rin., no. 225).   104 *Gal.*, frag. 19 (Mas. = Rin., no. 151).
105 *Gal.*, frag. 67 (Mas. = Rin., no. 73); cf. also frag. 68 (Mas. = Rin., no. 73A).

Plato's *Timaeus* (41a–d), a text which he considered to be significantly superior to the one penned by Moses.[106] The Genesis creation account appeared to suggest to him that, contrary to what the Christians claimed, the world had not been created out of nothing, but that God had formed the world out of pre-existent matter (a view which was shared by a majority of Platonist writers).[107] A similar problem obtains with regard to the spirit mentioned in Gen. 1:2. Where had it come from? Moses did not say whether or not it was ingenerate.[108]

Furthermore, it appeared to him implausible that the nature of things was a result of God's ordinance. Rather, the particular properties of, say, fire and earth were dependent on specific qualities inherent in their nature, an argument which Galen had earlier employed.[109] In other words, the creation process had to have been much more complex than Moses suggested in the book of Genesis.[110]

The creation of man was altogether 'fantastic'. Why was man denied the ability to distinguish between good and evil? In Genesis 'God refused to let man taste of wisdom, than which there could be nothing of more value for man.' In this respect, the serpent could even be called a 'benefactor'. Julian also discerned divine envy in the fact that God prevented man from attaining wisdom.[111] There were further inconsistencies: Eve was created as Adam's helper, but all she did was deceive him, which God, by virtue of his omniscience, must have known in advance.[112]

Julian thought little of the Jews, who to him were a nation of aliens and former slaves. He did not consider the kingdom of Israel to have been particularly important and made fun of David and Samson, whose bravery and military strength was inferior to that of the Greeks and the Egyptians, which was shown by the fact that their realm had not reached beyond the borders of Judaea.[113] The supposedly 'wise man' Solomon had been led astray by a woman to venerating other gods (1 Kings 11:4); his wisdom was inferior to that of the Greeks, as becomes clear when one compares the book of Proverbs with, for instance, the exhortations of Isocrates.[114] At the same time the emperor had a grudging respect for the God of the Jews. Thus he confessed:

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106 *Gal.*, frag. 9 (Mas. = Rin., no. 32). Cf. also frag. 6 (Mas. = Rin., nos. 146, 25).
107 *Gal.*, frag. 6 (Mas. = Rin., no. 25).   108 *Gal.*, frag. 18 (Mas. = Rin., no. 28).
109 Cf. above, n. 11.
110 *Gal.*, frag. 26 (Mas. = Rin., no. 26); cf. also frag. 5 (Mas. = Rin., no. 23B).
111 *Gal.*, frag. 16 (Mas. = Rin., no. 48[49], trans. Wright); cf. also frags. 14 (Mas. = Rin., no. 46A), 15 (Mas. = Rin., no. 58[59]), 17 (Mas. = Rin., no. 66).
112 *Gal.*, frag. 13 (Mas. = Rin., no. 49[50]).   113 *Gal.*, frag. 37 (Mas. = Rin., no. 175).
114 *Gal.*, frag. 54 (Mas. = Rin., nos. 184, 204).

I revere always the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; who being themselves Chaldaeans, of a sacred race, skilled in theurgy, had learned the practice of circumcision while they sojourned as strangers with the Egyptians. And they revered a God who was ever gracious to me and to those who worshipped him as Abraham did, for he is a very great and powerful God, but he has nothing to do with you.

Abraham's worship was similar to that of Julian and the 'Hellenes', because it included sacrifices, astrology and augury, which the Christians rejected.[115]

The Decalogue was discussed in detail. Julian considered it an unremarkable piece of legislation, since, aside from monotheism and the observance of the Sabbath, it included provisions that were also to be found among many other nations.[116] Julian criticised God for being called jealous in relation to the worship of other gods (cf. Exod. 20:5), since this implied that he was subject to human passion.[117] It also seemed to indicate that God was unable to prevent such worship.[118] So also, he quoted at length the story of Phinehas (Num. 25), which showed just how fickle and vindictive the Jewish God really was.[119]

In what followed Julian extended his criticism to the prophets who had not purified their souls by comprehensive learning and were, therefore, unable fully to open their eyes to the pure light of the truth.[120]

He finally appears to have commented on the canon of the Old Testament as a whole, accusing Ezra of having added writings to the books of Moses, but details remain unclear.[121]

In the extant fragments Julian had little to say about Christian exegesis of the Old Testament. He did, however, criticise the traditional interpretation of Gen. 49:10 in the church, thinking the text not to refer to Christ, but to the royal house of David.[122]

By contrast, his criticism of the New Testament and its theology was fairly extensive. The church had diverged from the Mosaic law and from the teachings of the prophets despite their claim to the contrary. The Christians no longer kept the Jewish dietary laws.[123] They had abandoned traditional sacrifices as taught by Moses and the ancestral laws like circumcision.[124]

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115 *Gal.*, frags. 86–8 (Mas. = Rin., no. 84), trans. Wright; cf. also frag. 43 (Mas. = Rin., no. 85).
116 *Gal.*, frag. 29 (Mas. = Rin., no. 130).   117 *Gal.*, frag. 20 (Mas. = Rin., no. 131).
118 *Gal.*, frag. 30 (Mas. = Rin., no. 709[152]).
119 *Gal.*, frags. 33, 36 (Mas. = Rin., nos. 148, 149).
120 *Ep.* 89B (p. 163.3–25 in J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Imp. Caesaris Flavii Claudii Iuliani Epistulae, leges, poematia, fragmenta varia* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1922) = Rin., no. 217C).
121 *Gal.*, frag. 34 (Mas. = Rin., no. 189).   122 *Gal.*, frag. 62 (Mas. = Rin., no. 115).
123 *Gal.*, frags. 74 (Mas. = Rin., no. 617), 77 (Mas. = Rin., no. 622).
124 *Gal.*, frags. 58, 70, 71, 83, 85, 86 (Mas. = Rin., nos. 167, 145, 142, 143, 87, 90).

Instead they had established a new law, even though Moses had decreed that the divine law ought not to be altered or added to in any way (Deut. 4:2).[125]

What was worse, the 'new law' was rife with problems. The evangelists were inconsistent in their accounts and contradicted each other. Like the pagan writers mentioned above, Julian pointed out the divergences between the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke.[126] Julian notes that, in Mark's account of the feeding of the five thousand, the crowd was said to have 'sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties' (6:40), while Luke claimed that they sat down in companies of 'about fifty each' (9:14).[127] Luke talked about an angel appearing to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (22:43), yet he could not possibly have known about it, since the disciples had all been asleep. John, therefore, did not mention the angel at all.[128] Likewise, there were contradictions between the resurrection stories.[129]

Not only did the Gospels call each other into question, they broke down on their own. Julian noted that in the account of Jesus' sojourn in Egypt (Matt. 2:15), the evangelist distorted the original meaning of Hos. 11:1, transferring the original reference from the nation of Israel to the person of Jesus.[130] The star of Bethlehem, he argued, was nothing but the morning star.[131] So also, the story of the temptation of Jesus was illogical, because Jesus was said to have been in the wilderness in one moment, and in the next to have been at the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. 4:1–11 and par. Luke 4:1–13). And, he points out, at the transfiguration of Jesus the apostles could not possibly have recognised Moses or Elijah, because they had no descriptions of their appearance.[132]

As regards the person of Jesus, he had not achieved much in his lifetime.[133] In his teaching he had failed, since the Jews did not follow him.[134] After forty days of fasting Jesus, unlike Moses and Elijah, received nothing from God.[135] Some of his teachings were repellent, such as the command 'to let the dead bury their dead' (Matt. 8:22).[136] The command to sell one's possessions and to give them to the poor (Luke 12:33) was entirely unrealistic, because if everybody did this, there would be nobody to buy anything. It was, therefore, not just ridiculous but also potentially destabilising to the state and to society

125 *Gal.*, frag. 75 (Mas. = Rin., no. 128, 150).
126 *Gal.*, frags. 62 (Mas. = Rin., no. 316[318]), 90 (Mas. = Rin., no. 319).
127 *Gal.*, fragment in Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Iul.* (Rin., no. 430).
128 *Gal.*, frag. 95 (Mas. = Rin., no. 469).   129 *Gal.*, frag. 96 (Mas. = Rin., no. 599).
130 *Gal.*, frag. 101 (Mas. = Rin., no. 282).   131 *Gal.*, frag. 91 (Mas. = Rin., no. 332).
132 *Gal.*, Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Iul.*, frag. 5 (Rin., no. 573).
133 *Gal.*, frag. 41 (Mas. = Rin., no. 307), trans. Wright.
134 *Gal.*, frag. 50 (Mas. = Rin., no. 483).   135 *Gal.*, frag. 93 (Mas. = Rin., no. 139).
136 *Gal.*, frag. 81 (Mas. = Rin., no. 355).

in general.[137] Jesus' proclamation of the forgiveness of sins was frivolous and was evidence of a lack of moral strength.[138]

Julian impugned the divinity of Jesus on the grounds that he had suffered an ignominious death.[139] So also, he pointed out that the doctrine of the Trinity contradicted the teaching of Moses. Conversely, when Moses had announced the coming of a prophet (Deut. 18:15–19; cf. Acts 3:22f.), he had meant a man like himself and not God.[140] If Christ was the 'sceptre from Judah' (Gen. 49:10), then he could not be 'God from God' and have created all things.[141] In addition, Moses certainly would have spoken of God, 'the only begotten Word', or of a son of God.[142] Likewise, Moses had insisted that only God could deliver (Deut. 32:39), wherefore Christ could not possibly be a saviour.[143] The prophet Isaiah may have mentioned a virgin birth (7:14), but he did not say that a god would be born.[144] Julian made fun of the fact that Jesus ate and drank[145] and pointed out that he broke the Sabbath.[146] Jesus was unable to perform miracles in front of Herod, although the king had specifically requested it (cf. Luke 23:8f.).

The prologue of the Gospel of John suggested to Julian that the Christians, in fact, believed in two Gods, for how else was one to understand the statement that 'the Word was with God' (1:1).[147] If Christ was God and 'dwelt among you, and ye beheld his glory' (John 1:14), why then did the Christians claim that no one had ever seen God?[148] In addition, the prophets had not mentioned that all things were made by the Word, as John claimed (John 1:3).[149]

Jesus' prophecies regarding the end of the world were unreliable, because the signs preceding the end 'have often happened and still happen'.[150] He did not behave like a god and did not even behave like a philosopher, when in the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed to be spared his execution (Luke 22:42).[151]

The servants being no greater than their master, Julian ridiculed the apostle Peter and called him a 'hypocrite', because he oscillated between following Greek and Jewish customs (Gal. 2:11–14).[152] Paul came in for some serious criticism too. As regards his views about God, Julian compared him to a polypus that changes its colours, for, on the one hand, he insisted that the

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137 *Gal.*, frag. 100 (Mas. = Rin., no. 455).
138 *Saturn.* 336B (pp. 70f. in C. Lacombrade, *Emperer Julien. Œuvres complètes. Vol. II/2: Discours de Julien* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1964; 2nd edn, 2003) = Rin., no. 463).
139 *Ep.* 90 (p. 174.21–3 in Bidez and Cumont, *Imp.*).
140 *Gal.*, frag. 62 (Mas. = Rin., no. 608[161]).   141 *Gal.*, frag. 64 (Mas. = Rin., no. 484).
142 *Gal.*, frag. 67 (Mas. = Rin., no. 120).   143 *Gal.*, frag. 65 (Mas. = Rin., no. 169).
144 *Gal.*, frag. 64 (Mas. = Rin., no. 225).   145 *Gal.*, frag. 97 (Mas. = Rin., no. 313).
146 *Gal.*, frag. 98 (Mas. = Rin., no. 567).   147 *Gal.*, frag. 64 (Mas. = Rin., no. 482).
148 *Gal.*, frags. 79, 80 (Mas. = Rin., no. 487). Julian here changes the wording of John 1:14.
149 *Gal.*, frag. 64 (Mas. = Rin., no. 225).   150 *Gal.*, frag. 92 (Mas. = Rin., no. 395).
151 *Gal.*, frag. 95 (Mas. = Rin., no. 469).   152 *Gal.*, frag. 78 (Mas. = Rin., no. 681A).

Jews alone were God's chosen people, and then again, he also called God a god of the Gentiles (Rom. 3:29). But if this was the case, the emperor asked, why were 'Moses and the oil of anointing, and the prophets and the law and the incredible and monstrous elements in their myths' given to the Jews alone?[153] When Paul declared that Christ was the 'end of the Law' (Rom. 10:4), this was contrary to Moses, who had prophesied that God's Law was to last for all time.[154] Julian also rejected Paul's teaching about the resurrection, considering it a 'mark of extreme folly'.[155] Incidentally, 1 Cor. 6:9–11 indicates that early Christians must have been a vulgar and immoral lot, 'shopkeepers, tax collectors, dancers and libertines', for otherwise Paul would not have rebuked them in such harsh words.[156]

Julian concluded from all this that the holy scriptures did not suffice for human learning and wisdom, but that the writings of the Greeks were far superior in forming wise, brave and just men. This, Julian averred, explained why the Christians themselves were forced to 'nibble at the learning of the Greeks'.[157]

The opponent in the Apocriticus of Macarius Magnes (Porphyry?)

The unknown opponent of Macarius concentrated his criticism entirely on the New Testament. (Only incidentally did he mention that he believed the Pentateuch not to be the work of Moses, but that of Ezra and his circle; the Torah must have been composed 1,180 years after Moses' lifetime, since Moses' own works had been destroyed during the burning of the temple in Jerusalem.)[158] Instead the pagan critic expended much energy on demonstrating the contradictions between the Gospels, and he claimed that many of the Gospel narratives were entirely fictitious.[159] There were, he noted, conflicting versions of the death of Christ in the Gospels, which showed that the evangelists were inventors with a predilection for theatrics, and not historians.[160] The resurrection narrative was criticised on the grounds that the risen Christ

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153 *Gal.*, frag. 20 (Mas. = Rin., no. 635), trans. Wright.
154 *Gal.*, frag. 75 (Mas. = Rin., no. 642).   155 Suidas, s.v. *apónoia* (Rin., no. 704).
156 *C. Gal.*, frag. 59 (Mas. = Rin., no. 651).   157 *Gal.*, frag. 55 (Mas. = Rin., no. 645).
158 *Apocr.* 3.3 (Rin., no. 505 = Har., no. 68 = Ber., no. 176). Cf. also the note in Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie*, vol. II ad loc.
159 *Apocr.* 3.4 (Rin., no. 429 = Har., no. 49 = Ber., no. 177), 3.6 (Rin., no. 572 = Har., no. 55 = Ber., no. 179), 3.7 (Rin., no. 400 = Har., no. 61 = Ber., no. 180).
160 *Apocr.* 2.23f.

had not appeared to Pilate or Herod or the high priest or the Roman senate, but rather to common women whose testimony was unreliable.[161]

Here too it was suggested time and again not only that there were contradictions between the Gospels, but that the Gospels were internally inconsistent, as well as being thoroughly obscure. Christ also came in for some heavy criticism. Macarius' pagan opponent claimed that Jesus was a mere man, because he had brothers.[162] His saying, 'if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me' (John 5:46), was nonsense, since the writings of Moses were no longer extant.[163] The critic ridiculed Jesus' promise that his followers would be able to perform miracles and to withstand poison (Mark 16:17f.) and mused caustically that the Christians should use poisonous drinks as a test when electing their bishops. And what of those who believed in earnest, but were unable to perform these miracles?[164] If faith could move mountains (Matt. 17:20), then those who were unable to do it ought not to be considered members of the Christian community.[165] Conversely, he noted that Jesus did not throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple at the devil's suggestion (Matt. 4:5–7), because he knew he would not survive the fall.[166] What is more, Jesus' words spoken at the last supper (John 6:53) suggested cannibalism, which was far more gruesome an endorsement than what one found in pagan tales or the practices of other nations. They could not be made acceptable even by the use of allegory.[167] Finally, he charged that Jesus proved himself to be weak, both in the Garden of Gethsemane and before Pilate.[168]

The pagan opponent of Macarius was the only writer among those reviewed here who dealt at length with the apostle Paul. Here again the metaphor of the theatre was used to denounce the apostle, who gave a wholly farcical performance when claiming that, although he was free from all men, he made himself a slave to all, that he might win the more (1 Cor. 9:19). In fact, by adapting himself to Jews and Greeks alike (cf. 1 Cor. 9:20f.), he showed himself to be unprincipled and lawless. His stance towards circumcision was similarly strange since, on the one hand, he called it a mutilation (Phil. 3:2f.), whereas, on the other hand, he himself circumcised Timothy at Lystra (Acts 16:2f.). On one occasion Paul said that he was no Jew, but a Roman (Acts 22:25–7), on another that he was a born Jew (Acts 22:3). He thus behaved like an actor,

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161 *Apocr.* 2.25.   162 *Apocr.* 2.19.5.
163 *Apocr.* 3.3 (Rin., no. 505 = Har., no. 68 = Ber., no. 176); cf. above n. 158.
164 *Apocr.* 3.16 (Rin., no. 436 = Har., no. 96 = Ber., no. 182).
165 *Apocr.* 3.17 (Rin., no. 381 = Har., no. 95 = Ber., no. 183).
166 *Apocr.* 3.18 (Rin., no. 549 = Har., no. 48 = Ber., no. 184).
167 *Apocr.* 3.15 (Rin., no. 506 = Har., no. 69 = Ber., no. 181).
168 *Apocr.* 3.1f. (Rin., nos. 585, 565 = Har., nos. 63, 62 = Ber., nos. 174, 175).

pretending to be someone he was not. At the same time he was vainglorious and greedy, living at other people's expense (cf. 1 Cor. 9:7).

As regards the Jewish Law, Paul was obscure and contradictory, since, on the one hand, he called the Law 'spiritual', 'sacred' and 'just' (Rom. 7:12, 14), whereas on the other hand, he abolished the Law. Similarly, he prohibited the eating of food offered to idols, but he also allowed Christians to enjoy all food sold on the market (1 Cor. 10:25 f.). He praised virginity (1 Tim. 4:1–3), yet denied there to be any commandments concerning virginity (1 Cor. 7:25).[169]

In book 4 of the *Apocriticus*, Christian eschatology came under scrutiny. In particular, Paul's eschatological ethics as expressed in 1 Cor. 7 and the eschatological expectations of 1 Tim. 4:15–17 were targeted. If the world was to pass away, this implied that it was imperfect, which compromised the creator himself. The eschatological events as prophesied by Paul would overturn the order and nature of the universe, which was plainly impossible. Paul also foretold that this would happen in his lifetime, yet three hundred years later it still had not come to pass.

Then again it had been said that the end would come when the Gospel of the kingdom had been preached in all the world (Matt. 24:14). Nonetheless, the pagan critique pointed out, the Gospel was indeed known all over the world, but the end had not come. Instead Paul, Peter and many other Christians had been martyred. Christ had foretold that many would come claiming to be him (Matt. 24:4f.), but that had not happened. The pagan included in his discussion eschatological passages from the Apocalypse of Peter (chapter 4 of the Ethiopic text), from Isaiah (34:4) and from Matthew (24:35) in order to reveal the absurdity of the notion that the heavens would one day pass away. The biblical images and metaphors like mustard seed (Matt. 13:31), leaven (Matt. 13:33) and pearls (Matt. 13:45) were not appropriate to describe the kingdom of heaven, and, what was worse, were unintelligible to children and simple folk. Finally, Christ's saying that the sick needed a physician and not the righteous (Luke 5:31) led to a myriad of ridiculous contradictions.[170]

The forgiveness of sins, polytheism and idolatry, and the resurrection of the dead were the themes of the final section. Paul's doctrine of baptism as expressed in 1 Cor. 6:11 promoted moral lassitude. God's monarchy presupposed that he had subjects to whom he was akin, and who could thus only be other gods. So also were there many biblical passages which positively

169 *Apocr.* 3.30–6 (Rin., nos. 663, 628[627], 661, 692, 638, 665, 708 = Har., nos. 27–33 = Ber., nos. 188–194).
170 *Apocr.* 4.1–10 (Rin., nos. 656, 705, 396, 627[626], 394, 715, 228, 368, 364, 450 = Har., nos. 34, 35, 13, 36, 60, 89, 90a, 54, 52, 87 = Ber., nos. 195–204).

affirmed the existence of other gods. Ultimately it did not matter whether they were called gods or angels, the distinction being merely a matter of nomenclature. He pointed out that idols were not identical with the gods they represented, but were set up for the sake of remembrance and as a place for prayer. In comparison to the tenets of pagan religion, the doctrine of the virgin birth was much less plausible. Finally, the idea of a bodily resurrection could be proven patently false, since many dead bodies had been eaten or mutilated to the extent that they could by no means rise again intact. Also the earth could not hold all those who were to rise again.[171]

<center>***</center>

We have little information about the context of these debates between pagans and Christians. All of these works belong to a genre of *Kontroversphilosophie* that was typical of philosophical schools and was used not only against Christians but also against rival philosophers.[172] On the surface, Hierocles' *Truth-Loving Discourse* appeared to have a protreptic purpose, trying to persuade the Christians 'with humanity and kindness' to give up their faith.[173] This may also be implied by the fact that, as governor of Bithynia, Hierocles gave a public reading from his book (which was, in fact, attended by Lactantius).[174] Still, his propaganda for the ancient religion was not simply friendly advice, but was accompanied by more drastic measures; Hierocles took part in the planning of the Diocletian persecution and tortured Lactantius' friend Donatus.[175]

Porphyry's critique may have been composed as a justification for his return to paganism, but this is uncertain.[176] In any case, the sheer size of his work suggests that it was probably only studied within an academic context.[177] Julian's book may also have been intended as a justification for the emperor's lapse from Christianity, but served, in addition, as a kind of programmatic statement for his attempt to revive paganism throughout the empire.

By way of conclusion it must be emphasised that we only have access to a very small portion of the debate about the Bible in Antiquity, and that in the main what we have comes from the pens of members of the elite who

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171 *Apocr.* 4.19–24 (Rin., nos. 652, 392, 135 in part = Har., nos. 88, 75, 76, 77, 78, 94 = Ber., nos. 205–10).
172 Details in Kinzig, 'Gattung *Pròs Héllenas*'.   173 Lactantius, *Inst.* 5.2.13.
174 Lactantius, *Inst.* 5.4.1.   175 Lactantius, *Mort.* 16.4.
176 Cf. Kinzig, 'Gattung *Pròs Héllenas*', p. 181, n. 139. It has even been suggested that *Against the Christians* was a later collective title for various anti-Christian writings; cf. Berchman, *Porphyry against the Christians*, pp. 2f., 5f.; but cf. Riedweg, 'Porphyrios über Christus'.
177 Porphyry has left us a vivid account of the kind of atmosphere in which these polemical treatises were produced and discussed in the school of Plotinus; cf. *Life of Plotinus* 18.

had a philosophical and theological schooling. It is also difficult to perceive the degree to which there was a refinement in pagan opposition to the Bible. Porphyry appears to have been the most thorough student of the biblical text, whereas in Julian's work Platonist cosmogony and cosmology are described at length as an alternative to the Judaeo-Christian account of creation. Yet in pagan writings dealing with the Bible there appears to have been very little serious discussion about the unity and diversity of the holy scriptures, or the compatibility and differences between pagan and Christian theisms, soteriologies and eschatologies. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the impact of the anti-Christian polemic was limited, because it was all too easily rebutted by the Christian theologians. Although some of the arguments put forward by the critics of Christianity were quite powerful, taken as a whole their critique failed to gain universal recognition and did not prevent or even slow the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman empire.[178]

178 For long-term effects of these polemics on philosophers of the Enlightenment, cf. Kinzig, 'Polemics Reheated?'; Schröder, 'Wiederkehr der Verfemten'.

Exegetical genres in the patristic era

MARK W. ELLIOTT

Scripture was the soul of Christian belief and practice from the beginnings of the church. What follows will first consider the homily, delivered by a sitting teacher, as the form which allowed scripture to be heard, understood and applied in a liturgical setting. Quite early in the third century a more technical exegesis, following the methods of textual study in the grammatical, rhetorical and philosophical schools of the Graeco-Roman world, led to the emergence of the biblical commentary. Although Theodore's distinction between homily and commentary was not always so neatly followed in reality, it does serve as a rough guide: 'I judge the exegete's task to be to explain words that most people find difficult; it is the preacher's task to reflect also on words that are perfectly clear and speak about them.'[1] While commentaries flowed from treatment of one verse to the next, scholia were short, discrete, detailed yet pithy explanations of selected biblical texts, with 'questions and responses' being a form of this, which dealt with verses of actual or anticipated difficulty. The perceived quality of the patristic commentary is shown by the late patristic compilation of the best of these in catenae ('chains') to produce patchwork commentaries on biblical books. The medieval *glossa* can be viewed as a shortened, more 'user-friendly' form of this.

Homilies

The homily in the first two centuries

During the second century, homilies began to replace prophetic oracles as the main channel of divine revelation in an ecclesiastical setting. In this period, it

[1] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Introduction to Commentary on John*. Cited by Maurice F. Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School', in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 489–509, at p. 491.

became increasingly common for a Christian bishop or preacher to offer an exposition (*diakrisis*) of some biblical text in the course of the liturgy. Some of the earliest cited examples of early Christian preaching practices can be found in Ignatius (*Ep. Pol.* 5.1), who describes them as 'teaching', in Justin Martyr *1 Apol. 67*, who writes of the exhortation (*nouthesia*) that follows scriptural readings (an approach epitomised by Paul in Acts 20:18–35), and in Melito, who, developing the method of narrative report practised by Stephen in Acts 7, accuses the Jews and Gnostics of failing to grasp Christianity's paradoxes.[2]

At this early stage in their development, Christian homilies were more 'a sacred retelling' of the words and works of God, 'very similar to Jewish *haggadah* in other words'.[3] As the extension of the first-century practice of reading out the apostles' letters before the Eucharist, preaching was to inspire love for Christ as much as to internalise scriptural words. Homilies, moreover, served to illumine the meaning of doctrines that underlay liturgical practices, although it would be well into the fourth century before homilies were used to validate the practices themselves. Interestingly, the term *homilia* was originally used in the Letter of Aristeas 171 to refer to a conversation between a religious leader and a group of people he knew personally. Siegert has convincingly shown how the prototype is to be sought in Hellenistic Jewish circles rather than in the styles practised in the synagogues of Palestine and further east.[4]

It would seem that homilies, or discourse with reference to scripture (including the New Testament from as early as Pseudo-Hippolytus' *In Sanctum Pascha*), were usually one-way processes from the earliest Christian times.[5] In Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 4.13 the word *homilia* is used to describe Gnostic addresses of emotive character, which expounded oracles. As early

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2 Melito, *Peri Pascha* 72–98 (ed. S. G. Hall, Oxford: Clarendon, 1979, pp 39–55). See Salzmann, *Lehren und Ermahnen*; Banniard, *Viva Voce*; Karl-Heinz Uthemann, 'Die Kunst der Beredsamkeit. Pagane Redner und christliche Prediger', in L. J. Engels and H. Hofmann (eds.), *Spätantike Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft*, vol. IV (Wiesbaden: Aula, 1997), pp. 265–320, at pp. 293f.

3 A. Stewart-Sykes, *The Lamb's High Feast* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 72. Cf. A. Beutel, 'Predigt. Zur Semantik des Begriffs', *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* 7 (2005), 45–51, 47.

4 F. Siegert, 'Homily and Panegyrical Sermon', in S. E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 BC–AD 400* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 421–43, at p. 423. Also, B. Studer, 'Die Doppelte Exegese bei Origenes', in G. Dorival and Le Boulluec (eds.), *Origeniana Sexta*, pp. 301–23, at p. 322.

5 A. Stewart-Sykes, *From Prophecy to Preaching. A Search for the Origins of the Christian Homily* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 279. Cf. K.-H. Uthemann, 'Communication in the Homilies of Severian of Gabbala', in P. Allen and M. Cunningham (eds.), *Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 139–78, who believes that Severian of Gabbala did engage in real diatribe with his congregation. But a diatribe is hardly a mutual conversation. Also, J. Hamesse and X. Hermand (eds.), *De l'homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993).

as Justin (1 *Apol.* 28.25) and Theophilus (*Ad Autolycum* 2.1), *homilia* refers to the explanation of a text. Homiletical discourses were, in sum, instructive yet informal talks that were based on texts in as much as the text served as the point of departure to clarify the meaning (not necessarily systematically or verse by verse), in a way that would also shed light on the liturgy.

If the purpose of preaching in the early church was to instruct in the Christian faith, then catechesis, or pre-baptismal instruction in the faith, can be distinguished from homilies, which were for the purpose of post-baptismal Christian instruction. While it is true that the catechisands were allowed to remain present throughout the whole of the liturgy of the Word, it would appear that they left just after it, and thus the Sunday homily was not primarily addressed to them.[6]

We see a good example of mid-second-century preaching in 2 Clement, which is really a sermon. It exhorted Christians to 'travel light', to persevere with patience, to practise purity in the flesh and church before the world, with warnings of judgement and testing (esp. chapters 11–13), backed up with quotations from the Major Prophets and dominical sayings. Such exhortation was framed with a strongly realist image of the flesh of the church where the souls of Old Testament believers are incarnate (2 Clement 14). The language of this earliest Christian sermon is far from speculative but reflects painstaking 'intermediate' teaching of young Christians. Right from the start, the homily was known for building biblical wisdom on the groundwork of basic theology and ethics.[7] In *Hom. Num.* 27, Origen writes that catechumens should read 'easier' books, such as Judith, Tobit and Wisdom, for even the Gospels held obscurities, and, in *Ep.* 39, Athanasius confirms this was older Alexandrian practice. The contents of early lectionaries are notoriously tricky to establish, but, whereas commentaries worked their way 'successively' through a whole book of scripture, homilies drew on liturgically and theologically important texts.

Origen and the development of the homily in the eastern church

By the early third century the point of preaching in the early church was both to deliver a message from the scriptures (2 Cor. 3:16) and to allow the Logos to become present in a 'sharpened' and perceptible way. This might mean

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6 Salzmann, *Lehren und Ermahnen*, pp. 462ff., 432: exceptionally, Origen, *Hom.* Luke 7, GCS 49. 46.
7 A. Hammann, 'Dogmatik und Verkündigung in der Väterzeit', *ThGl* 61 (1971), 109–40, 202–31.

replacing the Stoic Logos with Christ and refusing to reduce the particularity of Christ to a universal idea.[8] So what might be going on is an invitation to enter into a truth that is dialogical because it is Trinitarian. From at least the time of Tertullian, scripture was read prosopologically (i.e. with reference to the persons of the Trinity) rather than merely typologically (with reference to the historical figure of Christ).

After his earlier career mostly in Alexandria as catechist, apologist and 'first Christian systematic theologian', in 232 Origen arrived in Caesarea and applied himself to the bible. During his last two decades he treated the Old Testament as different from the New Testament; the latter made sense really only for the baptised, while the Old Testament gave stories and examples to back up the missionary message to those not yet wholly converted but who attended weekday morning services.[9] Yet the Old Testament could also serve to instruct the faithful in the way of post-baptismal penance – a recurrent theme in Origen's preaching in the 204 extant homilies. In *Hom. Lev.* 6.6 (SC 286, 370), he insists on the need for both study and illumination so as to receive the spiritual grace of the Holy Spirit. For only then does the outer man also come to be at God's disposal, and just as a person is important as a whole, so too the outer biblical events have much worth. This is not a message for catechumens only, although the rich diet of Old Testament preaching was intended for them first on perhaps a twice-weekly basis.

Homilies were not just simply less philologically grounded than commentaries, or composed with less leisure. Origen and those preachers of his circle or spiritual school of Christian philosophy (Gregory Thaumaturgus and Dionysius of Alexandria, and, in his Latin reception, Hilary, Ambrose and even Jerome) used the method of allegorical interpretation with the goal of leading listeners to the likeness of God via the knowledge of divine wisdom as revealed.[10] Homilies were sharp in focus and application, avoiding the really technical questions. They employed Christian terminology (in contrast with, say, Gregory Thaumaturgus' *Apology for Origen*, which avoided such vocabulary in imitation of Origen's own practice in his school teaching).[11] Thus Origen's two extant Song of Songs homilies eschewed the detail of

8 F. Siegert, *Drei hellenistisch–jüdische Predigten*, vol. ii (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), p. 317.
9 See J. Lienhard, 'Origen as Homilist', in Hunter (ed.), *Preaching in the Patristic Age*, pp. 36–52, at pp. 40f.
10 Chr. Markschies, 'Origenes und die Kommentierung des paulinischen Römerbriefs', in Gloria W. Most (ed.), *Aporemata. Kritische Studien zur Philologiegeschichte. Buch 4. Commentaries/Kommentare* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), pp. 36–52, esp. pp. 40f.
11 Adolf Knauber, 'Das Anliegen der Schule des Origenes zu Cäsarea', *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 19 (1961), 182–203, at 187–90.

a salvation-historical account, and instead presupposed knowledge of such doctrine.[12] In other words homilies, which usually finished with a doxology, were the summit of interpretation at the end of the *synaxis* ('the liturgy of the Word'). It is not the case that the homily was equivalent to the basic work of the schoolmaster (*grammaticus*) of explaining the text so that the major works of literature be known, after the manner of a Dionysius Thrax. Origen's aim in his homilies was to bring believers to a higher level of faith through grasping the deeper meaning of *all* of scripture, and he did not focus particularly on the 'grammatically tricky' parts. Torjesen's thesis that commentaries are written for the advanced, and homilies only to awaken a basic level of love, is a claim that needs qualifying.[13]

The homily as part of the *synaxis* was inextricably linked to the eucharistic part of the liturgy, for which it served as both preparation and explanation-introduction. In his *Hom. Luke* 32, Origen tells us that one is to look for wisdom in the scriptures and hence for Jesus as the embodiment of that biblical wisdom. The practice of daily preaching was perhaps maintained only in Lent, despite Origen's enthusiasm (*Hom. Gen.* 10.1: 'Christians eat the flesh of the lamb every day, that is the flesh of the word'). Otherwise Sundays, holy days and perhaps even one or two days midweek were the standard days for preaching, which highlights the connection of preaching with the Eucharist.

In a homily, not every word of the text is interpreted. Instead the sense is communicated by means of a *selective* use of texts. There is also a need for the preacher to be anointed so that the message is fresh (Origen, *Hom. Lev.* 9.2). It is his duty like a good doctor to bring the listener's soul to shake and cry; sin is defined in the homilies as ignoring the Word of God (Origen, *Hom. Jer.* 20.6).[14] One can certainly make the case that the scriptures were seen to be exalted in their authority above the preachers who made sure the scriptures were at hand (Origen, *Hom. Num.* 12.2).

The delivery and context of homilies in the later patristic period

Towards the close of the fourth century Asterius, preaching in the Antiochene region, used easily grasped earthly objects to clarify spiritual realities; he could

12 E. Junod, 'Die Homilien des Origenes', in Mühlenberg and van Oort (eds.), *Predigt in der Alten Kirche*, pp. 50–81, at p. 52.
13 A. Quacquarelli, 'Il genere omiletico in Origene. Le "Omelie su Geremia"', in M. Martin and M. Girardi (eds.), *Retorica ed esegesi biblica. Il rilievo dei contenuti attraverso le forme* (Bari: Edipuglia, 1996), pp. 31–44, at p. 40; Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure*, pp. 60f.
14 A. Hammann, 'Dogmatik und Verkündigung', 120.

interpret one word 'aesthetically' and then also 'noetically'. So the marsh or *limo* in Ps. 7:3a can be both David's human persecutor and the devil.[15] Christian preaching was not so much about 'totalising discourse' to serve church political ends, as it was about 'taking every thought captive for Christ', and expanding the range of thinking to include the cosmos and creation, as in Basil's hexaemeral sermons or Chrysostom's sermons on Genesis. These sermons are long because they are painting on a big canvas, to stress the order, scale and balance of God's work. Chrysostom rejoiced in the *akribeia* or 'precision' of scripture and paid careful attention to the exact literal sense, yet also making sure that anthropomorphic imagery was not taken too literally. In *Hom. Gen.* 58, Chrysostom shows how the condescending Logos could be reached towards by the preacher starting with exegesis, finding dogma and then showing how the application related to that dogma. So, in his *Hom. Rom.* 15 (*PG*, 60.547), Chrysostom tells his well-off congregation that God did not spare his son, so 'you' must not keep your bread from the poor.

The preaching method was almost 'psychodynamic' in that the force of the expository sermon was not altogether at the level of the intellect.[16] 'The delight of the melody he [the Psalmist] mingled with the doctrines so that by the pleasantness and softness of the sound heard we might receive without perceiving it the benefit of the words, just as wise physicians who, when giving the fastidious rather bitter drugs to drink, frequently smear the cup with honey' (Basil of Caesarea, *Sermon on Ps. 1*,1). Thus the idea was to deliver a message (*logos*) which can be easily understood, so that some structure of 'exhortation – narration – confirmation – refutation' can be discerned, yet the cross-weave of the sermon consists of scriptural metaphors which overlap and nuance each other. Some sermons look more like ancient rhetorical speeches (notably Gregory of Nazianzus' orations or the thematic sermons which remain from Tertullian and Cyprian). In his *Oration* 32 to a divided Constantinopolitan church in 379, Gregory aims to persuade his audience that their theological differences are less than the common confession of faith in Christ and the cross, with its implications for humility, reinforced by Nazianzus' argument that words cannot do justice to who God is in himself. The homily is laced with scriptural images and scenes from creation. It is simple and moving. Yet, in debating the christological and Trinitarian controversies, rhetorical skill was deemed to be a 'vital necessity', and this need afforded 'immense scope

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15 W. Kinzig, *Erbin Kirche. Die Auslegung von Psalm 5, 1 in den Psalmenhomilien des Asterius und in der Alten Kirche* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1990), pp. 24f.

16 Cf. A. Merkt, 'Mündlichkeit. Ein Problem der Hermeneutik patristischer Predigten', *Studia Patristica* 31 (1997), 76–85, at 84.

for eloquence'.[17] The church provided a forum, so the idea that preaching should be 'for a verdict' is not so far removed from the example of Cicero as mentioned by the first-century Roman Quintilian (*Inst.* 2.17, 21). To reach a mixed audience, imaginative stories are blended with theology, controversial points with protreptic admonishment. Evidence of congregational applause, which was valued by preachers, suggests a spirit of teamwork between clergy and laity.

Bishop Augustine, looking back at a life of preaching around 427, was aware of two different audiences – educated and non-educated. There were some subjects to be avoided as too difficult (*Doct. Chr.* 4.9.23), and that might be why much of the Old Testament was missed out in Augustine's preaching. For Augustine and western city bishops following him, the purpose of the homily was to communicate. The preacher should look for signs to see that the audience has comprehended his teaching before finishing the sermon or moving on to the next point (*Doct. Chr.* 4.10.25), lest the hearers neglect to follow the instructions they have received (*Doct. Chr.* 4.26.56). Augustine took preaching to be part of divine grace that comes before any human response and that builds the church through making mystery approachable (*En. Ps.* 95.2 (CCSL 39, 1343)). Christianity was much more a religion of words and books than the pagan world was used to, and these were weapons of war. Augustine did not make it an absolute priority to obey standard Latin grammar. He had learned to employ Cicero's rhetorical methods not for their own sake but to communicate scriptural truths in appropriate ways.[18] He would rather ungrammatically say *ossum meum* than say *os meum*, as the latter may be unclear, as meaning both 'bone' and 'mouth' (*Doct. Chr.* 3.3.7; cf. 4.10.24) This all has to do with being *more* precise; it is not the imprecision of the demotic. It needs to be borne in mind that preaching was for most people their main and only means of contact with scripture,[19] although Augustine may have expected his congregations to prepare by reading the set Gospel text before they came.[20] When the 'wrong' psalm had been read, Augustine felt it to be his duty, since preaching was subservient to the scripture read, to preach from that psalm (*En. Ps.* 138).

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17 A. Spira, 'The Impact of Christianity on Ancient Rhetoric', *Studia Patristica* 18:2 (1989), 137–153, at 139.
18 Banniard, *Viva Voce*, pp. 35f., 54.
19 Laurence Brottier, 'Predigt V. Alte Kirche', *TRE* 27 (1997), 244–248, at 245.
20 H.-G. Thümmel, 'Materialien zum liturgischen Ort der Predigt', in Mühlenberg and van Oort (eds.), *Predigt in der Alten Kirche*, pp. 115–22, at p. 122.

In both the East and the West, the preacher's audience contributed even unintentionally to fashion the preaching. Chrysostom complained of those who came to chat or to steal or to ogle pretty women (*Hom. Matt.* 7.3). Augustine enjoyed a more positive reaction of spewing and nose holding when preaching on the death of Lazarus (*S.* 102.III.4), and people would beat their breasts when fornicators were mentioned (*S.* 332.4; *Ep.* 29.7) and were moved to tears of regret.[21] Augustine told Donatists to come back to the true church (*En. Ps.* 36.1). Basil told workers off for talking shop at the back of the church (*Hex.* 3.1), yet he would also shorten the sermon if he had been delayed in starting the service (*Hom. Ps.* 114; FC 46:351).[22] There is quite a variety in style even within the work of one preacher. A preacher like Chrysostom would vary his style greatly depending upon the city church in which he preached.[23] Opportunities for boldness (*parrhēsia*) came with the privilege, for instance, Chrysostom's speaking out against Empress Eudokia (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.18.1–5). Preachers also emphasised the need for cooperation of the hearers through prayer (Origen, *Hom. Exod.* 1.1).

God's Word delivered through the Bible did not easily fit into pagan requirements of rhetoric, and great preachers rejoiced in the fact that the Bible was a book of mysteries much greater than words could handle. False modesty could be replaced by a true sense of unworthiness. Gregory of Nazianzus in *Oratio* 36.4 said that he would rather have the wonder-working power of 'the fishermen' than the skill of words. Ambrose modelled himself on the apostle Paul who had been more interested in the mysteries to be communicated than in the fine modes of rhetoric. Synesius of Cyrene declared: 'God does not care for divinely inspired style' (*Hom.* 1).[24] Chrysostom stressed 'helpfulness' (*opheleia*), while the Cappadocians insisted that preaching should adopt whatever styles were appropriate to the subject. Gregory of Nyssa's sermon in praise of Gregory Thaumaturgus looks and sounds very different from the Easter sermon *De tridui spatio*. If anything, Christians formed their own rhetoric and their own institutions.[25] Subordinate to the liturgy, particularly

21 Hammann, 'Dogmatik', 109f., 213.
22 R. Macmullen, 'The Preacher's Audience, (AD 350–400)', *JTS* 40 (1989), 503–11. Also, Wendy Meyer, 'John Chrysostom. Extraordinary Preacher, Ordinary Audience', in Allen and Cunningham (eds.), *Preacher and Audience*, pp. 105–37.
23 W. Mayer, 'John Chrysostom and his Audiences', *SP* 31 (1997), 70–5. P. Allen, 'John Chrysostom's Homilies on I and II Thessalonians', *SP* 31 (1997), 3–20.
24 *Hymni et opuscula*, ed. N. Terzaghi, vol. 1 (Rome: Typis Regiae Officinae Polygraphicae, 1939), p. 280.7–9.
25 Kinzig, 'Greek Christian Writers', p. 639. See also B. Studer, *Schola Christiana. Die Theologie zwischen Nizäa und Chalcedon* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998).

the Psalms as a setting for the homily,[26] preaching became formed by doctrine. It served to lead the faithful into contemplation of salvation history in eschatological expectation so that Christ would anticipate his final coming in the church's worship.

In the East, the practical, even pragmatic, nature of Syriac preaching of the third and fourth centuries can be seen in the heavy use of imagery and metaphor, often inspired by the liturgy. However, the literary pieces that are Aphrahat's homilies (*tahwitha*) in acrostic sequence would have been quite demanding on the listener.[27] Ephrem was famous for his 'sea of symbols' into which he 'fell' (*Carmina Nisibina* 39.17) and for his parallelism and repetitions building to crescendo in his homilies. Such sermonic poetry encouraged mystagogy, as in the homilies delivered by Jacob of Sarug. Jacob (450–522) included very little moral exhortation in his sermons, but focused rather on the doctrinal interest of showing that Adam was made both immortal and mortal and that the righteous are those who take hold of Christ's reuniting of free choice and the will so as to become immortal.[28] Contrast this with his contemporary Leontius of Constantinople, who was a popular preacher and whose sermons are full of dramatisations of the biblical stories.[29] Yet he had his own theological profundity, for instance, when he listed the possible meanings of 'Jesus wept' (John 11:35) in his *Hom*. 2 on Palm Sunday:

> The one who wipes away tears wept. Why did the Lord weep over the one whom he was going to raise up? Why? To give a pledge of the truth of the incarnation and to show pity and to make known the power of the Godhead. *Jesus wept*. Why? To fulfil the saying: '*Weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice*' (Rom. 12:15). *Jesus wept*. But if we have to say more accurately why *Jesus wept*, he wept not over Lazarus but over the disbelieving Jews.

Leontius tended to raise objections and then dealt with them as he preached to a lower class audience in small churches in Constantinople. He presents a dialogue between Martha and Christ (*Hom*. 2.291–321). Yet for beginners, preaching could make demands. Catechetical preaching during Lent was

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26 Cf. M.-J. Rondeau, 'L'élucidation des interlocuteurs des Psaumes et le développement dogmatique (IIIe–ve siècle)', in H. J. Becker and R. Kaczynski (eds.), *Liturgie und Dichtung. Ein interdisziplinäres Kolloquium*, vol. II (St Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1983), pp. 509–77.

27 P. Bruns (ed.), *Aphrahat. Demonstrationes – Unterweisungen*, Fontes Christiani 5:1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), p. 38.

28 Alwan, *Quatre homélies métriques*, pp. xxiif.

29 *Leontius Presbyter of Constantinople. Fourteen Homilies*, trans. P. Allen and C. Datema (Brisbane: Byzantina Australiensia, 1991), p. 16.

daily or almost daily (Cyril of Jerusalem), for a duration of three hours. The series started with Genesis and marched through the Bible (Egeria, *Travels* 46.2–4), whereas in Alexandria the series went from Esther to Numbers.

The best patristic preaching had less of a 'systematic' coolness than a keen eschatological and thus moral sense. Gregory the Great summons both monks and laity to think of the judgement, the coming dawn in the return of the Lord, promised since Old Testament times.[30] Gregory agreed with Augustine that communication mattered more than the rhetorical *Rules of Donatus* (by Jerome's grammar teacher). Bede would imitate Augustine's 'conversational' style of preaching as a means of winning over his hearers.[31] As for Gregory the Great, the start of his treatment of Ezekiel indicates that he had a mixed audience for his Ezekiel sermons.[32] He laments he has too weak a voice to reach to the back, but that is in the case of the *Homilies on the Gospel* (AD 591), which were probably even better attended. Yet there are signs that all was not well with the homily by the close of the patristic period, for instance, when the Synod of Trullo (692) had to legislate against bishops and presbyters who would not preach, or at least not preach from scripture.[33]

Commentaries

The genre and first examples

The writing of commentary marks an awareness that all that can be said about the great texts of the past has been said, but also that their meaning is not always obvious. Such texts give rise to a cultural identity whose thinkers must limit themselves to the interpretation of these.[34] Likewise, Christian commentaries, at least by the time of the golden age of commentary (roughly 350–450), began as written pieces: Hilary of Poitiers' *Commentary on Matthew* betrays no oral traces (doxologies for instance), and seems to have been *written* for advanced

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30 L. Giordano, 'L'Antico Testamento nell' Omelie sui Vangeli di Grigorio Magno', *ASE* 2 (1985), 257–68. Cf. B. Judic, 'Introduction', in R. Étaix, Ch. Morel and B. Judic (eds.), *Grégoire le Grand. Homélies sur l'Évangile*, SC 485 (Paris: Cerf, 2005), p. 40: 'La prédication s'articule autour de deux exigences, l'*expositio* et l'*admonitio*.' See also C. Dagens, 'Grégoire le Grand et le ministère de la parole', in M. Bellis (ed.), *Forma futuri. Studi in onore del cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1975), pp. 1054–73.
31 F. Dolbeau, 'Bède, lecteur des sermons d'Augustin', in his *Augustin et la prédication en Afrique* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Brepols, 2005), pp. 495–523.
32 Banniard, *Viva Voce*, p. 159.
33 A. Olivar, *La predicación*, p. 23. Cf. W. Blümer, *Rerum Eloquentia. Christliche Nutzung antiker Stilkunst bei St. Leo Magnus* (Frankfurt: Lang 1991).
34 Assmann, *Kulturelle Gedächtnis*, pp. 175f.: 'Der Kommentar macht den Text zum *Text*.'

'brothers'/his presbyters to read.[35] Gregory of Nyssa's exegesis of the Song is made up of *logoi* (*orationes*), but has a literary character. A commentary seems to presuppose a sense of a text as a piece rather than as a collection of oracles, laws or poems for discrete interpretation (*scholia*). This reflects the belief that the running order or *akolouthia* of the text matters (Origen had used this concept and Theodore of Mopsuestia insisted on it if one were to understand Pss. 45 and 75 correctly). The commentary is not only primarily applicative but also philological and argumentative. If a typical homily ends with a doxology, a commentary should start with some discussion of the origin, the chief idea and the division of the text.

As for the origins of commentary writing, it seems more likely that the form if not the content of the Christian commentary was borrowed from the Greeks, in part via Philo. The term *hypomnēma* has the base meaning of 'remembrance or presence to the memory' and by extension signifies 'the means of helping the memory to recall' a lecture. It denotes registers, lists of persons, things, protocols, aides-mémoire, jottings for a speech, even a sort of diary not for publication (*Phaidr* 276d).[36] It may even bear the connotation of 'memorable things' in the sense of an autobiography (Aristoxenos, Callimachus), but from Hellenistic times onwards usually meant a report of a speech.

As for the first to produce an example of this genre, Basilides compiled 'twenty-four books on the gospel' (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.7), but these are not likely to have been commentaries. Heracleon reputedly approached John's Gospel with short lemmata and philological clarifications, yet had much less interest in textual criticism than in the facts behind the text (*historikon*), as well as including observations on style.[37] The extant Hippolytan commentary on Daniel is not quite a verse-by-verse account, but those on the Song of Songs and on David and Goliath are more so.[38]

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35 A. Bastit, 'Conception du commentaire et tradition exégètique dans les *In Matthaeum* d'Origène et d'Hilaire de Poitiers', in Dorival and Le Boulluec (eds.), *Origeniana Sexta*, pp. 675–92.

36 Studer, *Schola Christiana*, p. 204; Franco Montanari, '*Hypomnema*', in H. Cancik and H. Schneider, *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, 16 vols. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996–2003), vol. v, pp. 813–15, with reference to Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.44.2 and 4.126.1; cf. R. A. Kaster, 'Kommentar', in Cancik and Schneider (eds.), *Der Neue Pauly*, pp. 680–2.

37 Fladerer and Börner-Klein, 'Kommentar', 311; Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus*, pp. 100f.

38 G. Garitte, *Traités d'Hippolyte sur David et Goliath, sur le Cantique des Cantiques, et sur l'Antéchrist*, CSCO 263, 264 (Louvain: Peeters, 1965). Jerome's *De viris illustribus* refers to Hippolytan commentaries on ten biblical books.

Origen and the technique of the commentary

For Origen, text criticism (*diorthôtikon*) was an important preliminary for the fuller range of possible meanings. The next step of explanation (*exegetikon*) comprised (i) *glossematikon* – that is, the meaning of words in everyday and biblical usage, and defining concepts with the help of unknown dictionaries; thus *doron* is not *thusis* (on Lev. 1:2) and *thumos* is not *orgé* (on Ps. 2:5); (ii) *historikon* (matters of nature or history which might clarify the text) and *technikon*, that is, grammar in service of exegetical points (e.g. in John 1:1 the significance of the anarthrous *theos* is 'the Logos is God', not 'God is the Logos', or, in John 1:21, Jesus is *the* prophet, John only 'prophet'). Finally came (iii) the clarification of figures of speech. The Bible is not meant to be lofty, since Plato and Paul were agreed that truth needed no varnishing, though Origen enjoyed using rhetoric himself and certainly appreciated that the Bible was ordered in such a way as to facilitate the communication of its message (*Contra Celsum* 6.1–2; SC 189, 458–60).

In his Caesarean period, Origen used the commentary prologue to discuss *topos* (theme), *taxis* (both how it fitted into the Bible as a whole and the ordering of the book) and the question of authenticity, although this amount of similarity to prologues to commentaries on Greek philosophical works seems to apply only to his *Old* Testament commentaries. True, the Rufinus-translated Song of Songs commentary prologue reduces this to a discussion of *dramatis personae*, the place of the book among those of Solomon (and among the Songs of scripture) and the author's intention or thrust of the book (*skopos*) which is love. This indicates a general changing of the rules for prologue writing as the Christians took them over from the pagan philosophical schools.[39] Both of these seem more technical than Ephrem's apology for writing and the reason for the writing of the biblical book and the spirit in which it should be understood in the preface to his Genesis commentary.

Of course sustained commentaries,[40] such as those of Origen on John, Romans and the Song of Songs, allowed theological ideas to be developed, not least by scripture interpreting scripture (*sygkrisis*). There might have been in the earlier Origen a general understanding of scripture as a law book, not a historical one. By the time of the later *Commentary on Matthew*, he was

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39 I. Hadot, 'Les introductions aux commentaires exégétiques chez les auteurs néoplatoniciens et les auteurs chrétiens', in Tardieu (ed.), *Les règles de l'interprétation*, pp. 99–122.
40 Markschies, 'Origenes und die Kommentierung', 71. See also L. Perrone, 'Continuité et innovation dans les commentaires d'Origène', in M.-O. Goulet-Cazé (éd.), *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2000), pp. 183–97.

keen to allow the text to flow into his comments and is less 'thematic' in his approach. The historical and the human became extremely important to him, especially in the New Testament commentaries, and it is in the *historikon* stage of exegesis that real history, grasped from the methodological first step of explaining names and places in the story, not myth, is foregrounded. Yet the exegete must go further, digging deeper to find the true *skopos* or aim of the text (*Philocalia* 13). The commentator is to interpret the text's apparent sense in light of the whole of the fuller divine intention, so that preachers can encourage application and internalising of that law above all (*Comm. Matt.* 16.12; GCS 10.512). Origen was very careful not to over-harmonise or emend the text. The various meanings of *nomos* in Romans could be confusing simply because there are many senses behind that word. The point is for hearers to get at least the main point – the *simplex intellectus* (*Comm. Song.* 77.23) – which does not necessarily but can sometimes mean the simple literal sense (*On First Principles* 4.2.6; *Comm. 2 Rom.*, 230–2). Origen rejoiced in the difference of detail between John and the Synoptics (such as Matt. 3:11 and John 1:27, where the former has 'suitable' and 'sandals', the latter 'worthy' and 'sandal') before going on to mock Heracleon for allegorising 'sandal' as the cosmos (SC 120, 264–80). On Matthew he is prepared to spend three chapters on one verse (Matt. 13:44 on the parable of the treasure) and then include many observations on varieties of pearls in the different oceans before getting on to the matter of their significance – but this is to show that the all-knowing saviour (13:45) would have known that not all pearls are prized ('*kalous*'; SC 162, 260–8).

The whole Bible is the object of theological interpretation (*Philocalia* 5), yet some books deserve a 'full commentary' treatment or *sêmeiôsis* (*Philocalia* 1.27), even though this did not mean, in the case of John, making it to the last verse of that Gospel. The hearer progresses in the knowledge of the Logos through participation in the spiritual progress of another – of the bride, or the psalmist, or Israel. Any difference in the degree of the direct presence of the Logos presupposed in the discourse lies between homilies and commentaries, not between Old Testament and New Testament treatments.[41] Although Athanasius may have distanced himself from 'academic exegetical enterprise' he is clear that commentary on each verse of scripture must pay attention to the time, person and events (*Against the Arians* 1:54), and to where the narrative of scripture as a whole points, not least in his Psalms commentary. His close ally Didymus the Blind seems to have used his commentaries as groundwork

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41 Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure*; see especially appendix G, pp. 166–8.

for what he would say about the Holy Spirit in his dogmatic work bearing that name.

The development of the Christian commentary

The Cappadocian fathers in the mid-fourth century put together the *Philocalia*, drawn mainly from Origen's exegetical works, as a kind of 'reader' in biblical commentary, especially on the subject of 'free will'.[42] Something of the Origenian heritage can also be found in Gregory of Nyssa's instructions on *akolouthia* (the train of thought of the passage; cf. the Latin *enarratio*). The prologue to the the Song of Songs commentary shows that Gregory was prepared to accept allegorical reading quite apart from any mention of the author's intention or *skopos*. What matters is the purification by reading of the flesh – that is, the scripture reading's practical usefulness (the Greek *opheleia* and its cognates appear six times in the first pages). It is this spiritual efficacy that matters, not giving names such as 'allegorical' or 'tropological'. The law (Rom. 7:14) is spiritual, following Origen's interpretation, *ergo* all of scripture is, and not just the Gospel and the New Testament, since the historical Old Testament is useful for training in the knowledge of the mysteries. The claim that in scripture the most holy is known best through the most reprehensible is made with an appeal to the incarnational analogy. Scripture is a storehouse of images and little conundra, and so much of the Old Testament is obviously metaphorical (*In Canticum Canticorum*, GNO 6.13.3–10). Gregory is partly feeding this *eros* for spiritual knowledge in a quasi-monastic community, aiming at other things he thinks are needful, in all discharging a pastoral duty, perhaps correcting wrong interpretations suggested by 'super-spiritual' Origenian/Messalian (radical pneumatological) readings. On Cant. 1:6 (GNO 6.53) Gregory says that because Hebrew is the true language of inspiration and the Septuagint is only a translation, it is all the more important not to follow a false surface *akolouthia* but to dwell long and deep on the meaning. It is interesting that, behind this 'surface' interpretation (the 'brothers who fought in me, the soul'), Gregory sees the specious dualism of a Messalian type and insists the correct meaning is suggested by a text that says 'the brothers fought *against* me, the soul'. Gregory need not have read any Hebrew, for Symmachus has the reading *diemachêsanto moi* (fought against me).[43]

The principle of *akolouthia* is something more readily identifiable in the case of the *Life of Moses*, although the genre of this is more like a homiletic

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42 See Harl and de Lange, *Philocalie*, 1–20., introduction, especially pp. 27–51.
43 F. Field, *Origenis Hexapla*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), p. 412.

retelling of the story than a commentary. Gregory thinks that in a story like that of the *Life of Moses*, where the succession of chronological events in the first five books of Moses fits with a spiritual development, progressively going into deeper matters is one thing; it is another in the case of the Psalms (or other poetic texts) since the spiritual development in Pss. 1–151 is not chronologically arranged. In the case of the psalms' sequence it could be that we are meant to be confused so as to be 'converted'.[44] There is an inner logic to a text that binds all its parts together to effect something which only God knows completely and which the advanced Christian understands.

Antiochene commentary writing

The school of exegesis at Antioch in the late fourth century believed that the Spirit is the same in the Old Testament as in the New Testament, in creation as in redemption, but is known in a fuller and different way in the latter (Theodoret, *Comm. Ezek.* 34:15; *PG*, 81.1157) – this underlay both Antiochene christology and exegesis. Diodore and Theodore alike paid little attention to matters of textual criticism (i.e. the contribution of Origen's *Hexapla*) but that might be because they were confident in the text they had. Theodore's radical literalism is explained somewhat by his abandoning the monastery and his attempted return to life in the rational world.[45] Eustathius of Antioch's opinion, that every word of scripture is not to be understood as a divine oracle (*On the Witch of Endor* 7–9) but within the flow of the biblical book and of salvation history from creation to resurrection, was also a strong influence on Theodore. *Theoria*, the divine vision, can look well ahead, and the reader of scripture is to follow that gaze as it fits the inspired author's 'movement of thought' (*akolouthia*), in which the germ of the idea of a biblical writer unfolds or flowers as the text proceeds.[46] 'To the end' at the head of Pss. 19 and 20 LXX simply means that David was able to prophesy about Hezekiah. Ps. 22 is not applicable to Jesus Christ since it has 'the words of my failings are far from saving me'.[47]

Diodore did not use the term *skopos* (the range of intention of warning, foreseeing and teaching) but does classify psalms according to different types: *êthikoi*, *dogmatikoi*, *diégmatikoi*. He then deals with the question of order (*taxis*),

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44 J. Daniélou, *Être et temps chez Grégoire de Nysse* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 37; cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, trans. Ronald Heine, (Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford University Press, 1995).
45 Schäublin, *Untersuchungen*, p. 12, n. 5.
46 G. Dorival, 'Exégèse juive et exégèse chrétienne', in Geerlings and Schulze (eds.), *Kommentar*, pp. 131–50, at p. 135. Also, Young, 'The Fourth Century Reaction'.
47 Diodore of Tarsus, *Comm. Pss. 1–51*, trans. R. C. Hill (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2005).

and claims to show the *taxis* has been disturbed and the epigraphs are not original, for Ezra had to gather the psalms up after their exilic scattering. Authorship of the psalms is an open question. Diodore as the leader of the school (*asketerion*) saw Ps. 44 (45) as necessarily about a figure that is more than human, as against the Jewish interpretation, which refers it to Solomon. This might be because here the figure is a glorified, not a suffering one.[48] Diodore claims that what Paul meant by allegory was *theoria*, which did not despise or distort the historical sense. Like Jerome, he enjoys giving a range of possibilities; the companions of Ps. 44 could be the prophets or they could be the apostles.

It is also worth noting, in passing, that the great Alexandrian Athanasius in his Psalms prologue deals with this series of topics: *taxis*–*gnesion* (authorship)–*skopos*. That might make us pause to claim that method alone can account for the radical results of Diodore's pupil Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428), for one part of the church 'the Interpreter', to the other larger part, simply anathema. One senses that Theodore tried to use his knowledge of Syriac to reach the Hebrew, even though it must bow to the LXX most of the time.[49] Theodore had a tendency to interpret things that were naturally unlikely (as at Joel 3:4 and Habakkuk 3:11) as metaphorical.[50] Real history did interest him, and he used Herodotus and Josephus, just as Diodore had written a world history (*Chronicon*). In the slogan 'we value the historical much more than the allegorical', Diodore and Theodore were agreed that this meant a restriction of the prophecy's direct reference to Christ and his church. They traced the Old Testament prophetic experience from Moses to the Maccabees (*Prefaces in Hosea and Joel*). Theodore, using the principle of characterisation (*êthopoiiai*), claimed in his *hypothesis* (introduction) to Ps. 67 that David expressed in the Psalms the future experience of the people in exile as well as of those back home, and even spoke on behalf of Moses and Joshua.[51] Also, just as 'Homer must be interpreted by Homer', so too, since the Old Testament had a cultural *ethos* of its own, it could not be interpreted through pagan writings nor even through the New Testament. In a few limited cases, a prophecy that was really a typology of events was the only way of making connections between the Testaments, all in order to give a moral lesson for the church. Even in the case of Ps. 44, it was hardly a 'prophecy' of Christ.

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48 J.-M. Olivier (eds.), *Commentarii in Psalmos I–L, CCG 6* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1980), p. 268.
49 H. N. Sprenger (ed.), *Theodori Mopsuesteri commentarius in XII Prophetas, Göttingen Orient-forschungen, Biblica et Patristica 1* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977), 1077. 283–4.
50 Schaüblin, *Untersuchungen*, p. 37.   51 Schaüblin, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 86ff.

On the Psalms, Theodore's prologue is missing, but with Theodoret's the three main elements are establishing what is useful (again, *opheleia*), finding the essence of prophecy to include the whole *skopos* of each psalm (although in the commentary by *skopos* he means the particular intention of David at one point) and, third, the authorship of the texts: most are by David and the epigraphs to the psalms are genuine. There is a keen interest in history, the *pragmata* or events without which the words of the text are worthless.

Theodoret was able to trace the logical flow of ideas even in prophetic texts.[52] On Ps. 71:1, whereas Theodore had ridiculed those who said the psalm was about Christ and said that it was about Solomon and 'all men', Theodoret objected that psalms were not about 'anthropology' but part of the saving history of God. Also, while Theodore only recognised Zerubbabel as a type of Christ because of Acts 15:13–18 (James' address), here Theodoret was even more determined to refuse Zerubbabel any part in the reference of Amos 9:11f., which he saw as directly concerning Christ. And even Zech. 9:10 was about the apostles. Yet in place of a representative grasp of key people in sacred history he shows a fascination for marginal figures, such as Sennacherib's lieutenant Rabshakeh and Jonathan's treasonous son Mephibosheth, as in Pss. 25, 31 and 52. It is probably right to observe that the Antiochenes used their commentaries not to promote doctrinal topics, but to work out the history of the salvation which was a doctrine's substructure. Theodore, who would not be dictated to by a septuagintal psalm title such as 'to the end', thought that the Old Testament people did not know the Spirit as a person or *hypostasis*, according to an eschatological reservation of true knowledge of God, which meant the *theoria* of the Old Testament text could not look too far forward. Theodoret was quite different in noting that Christ's divine–human person and work exerted its influence back into the spirit of the Old Testament writers themselves, and he traced the soteriological *oikonomia* for the community of faith in both Testaments (rather than, as Didymus did with Zechariah, drawing universal moral teaching for the Christian life since readers could draw it for themselves). Crucial is Theodoret's three-step pattern of 'Israel–church–life to come' (SC 315, 238).

The commentary in the western church

By the late 300s something very much like Christian schools stood at a self-conscious distance from their pagan equivalents. Yet in the West there is insufficient evidence to be able to delineate formal schools, and one must

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52 J.-N. Guinot, *L'exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995), p. 140.

be contented with observing differences of approach to commentary in individual exegetes. Hilary worked in a detailed way to dislodge Arian readings of Matthew's Gospel. Augustine resisted moralising in his commenting on Galatians except when Paul does, and he was concerned to give his reader an account of Paul's theological intention. Tyconius paid attention to historical context, intention, content, genre, method and audience, to see how the eschatological struggle already played out within the church, and to come to the meaning of the matter through yet beyond the words. The chronologically non-sequential reading (*Entsequentialisierung*) would, of course, make its mark on the approach of Augustine who, like M. Victorinus a generation earlier, was keen to get to the message. Also important for western exegesis and its tendency towards a middle way between the literal and the spiritual senses in the 390s was Ambrosiaster.[53] His commentary on Romans was a commentary in the strong sense of the word, in the tradition of pagan rhetoric (*lectio–emendatio–explanatio–iudicium*), philological, flowing rather than atomistic, and with confidence that much of scripture was clear enough.

It should be admitted that the prologue of the patristic commentary, giving an overall message of a book, served as a licence to be as detailed as possible in the body of the commentary. Jerome the commentator believed in singling out the *Leitidee* of a text.[54] However, Jerome's definition in the introduction to the Jonah commentary (SC 323, 162) does not mean that in his commentaries we should expect to find a single thread running all the way through. The primary intention was to clarify the text, including giving a number of competing interpretations in such a way that the reader could see which was soundest (*Adv. Ruf.* 1.16; *PL*, 23.409c–410a). This was all in the service of passing over that which was clear in order to deal with what was obscure (*Comm. Zech.*; *PL*, 25.1462c). Humbly aware of his debt to Jewish and Christian exegetes, Jerome took trouble to pay attention to the Hebrew text, illuminated at times by Jewish interpretation. Giving voice to both the Hebrew letter and the tropology of Greek–Christian interpretation would be Jerome's contribution by dint of his linguistic capability. He disliked those who gave too much attention to detail such as Origen, who 'rabbinically' too often lost the sense of context. A flowing commentary was important, as it respected the *enchaînement* of scripture (*Comm. Matt.* 25.13; *PL*, 26.186ab). So Jerome in

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53 W. Geerlings, 'Der Ambrosiaster. Ein Pauluskommentator des vierten Jahrhunderts', in Geerlings and Schulze (eds.), *Kommentar*, pp. 213–23.

54 W. Geerlings, 'Die lateinisch-patristischen Kommentare', in Geerlings and Schulze (eds.), *Kommentar*, pp. 1–14, at p. 5: 'Die Herausstellung einer Leitidee, die etwa Hieronymus für den Kommentar fordert.'

Ep. 58.10 insists on commentary using a *lectio continua* method.[55] One can see a call for allegory which steps from the historical to lofty thoughts in the preface to Olympiodorus' Job commentary (*c.* 520).

Scholia

Scholia are short and discontinuous entries written in a column parallel to the biblical text.[56] Scholia can also approximate to paraphrases which are apologetic (i.e. the biblical truth is to be used against those who preach this or that heresy). [57] Origen's *sêmeiôseis* provided notes giving theological explanations of Bible verses. Most have not survived, but there is an example at *Philocalia* 27 on Exodus (SC 226, 286). They were possibly written as preliminaries to a commentary.[58] The earliest attestation of Christian scholia in the technical sense comes in the late 300s, possibly with Pseudo-Athanasius, but definitely by the 390s with Evagrius, not to mention Hesychius of Jerusalem (*c.* 440). Evagrius relates them to the 'chapters' offering pithy wisdom, with often a pastiche of Proverbs in the use of enigmas and parallelism. He tended to think that each verse had only one meaning, so that it is exceptional when he writes in *Scholia* 183 on Proverbs, that the *oligopsychos anêr* ('faint-hearted man') can mean Christ or the devil (SC 340, 287). Usually there is an attempt to define a word, to explain symbolic words, resulting in something like a glossary of terms. This genre developed to be intended no longer merely for apologetic aims but also for the expression of scholarly delight in the Bible.

Erotapokriseis ('questions and answers'): a special kind of scholia

The pagan 'question and answer' genre, given its associations with oracles, was soon adapted for the Bible. Philo had composed *Questions on Genesis and Exodus*. In the second century, many decades before the appearance of the Christian commentary, there was an embryonic form in the text-critical *diorthôsis* of (for instance) Papias and the *problemata* of Tatian and then Clement of Alexandria. These provided solutions to puzzling inconsistencies in the text (*aporiai*), such as in the Transfiguration accounts, with help from

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55 J. Doignon, *Hilaire de Poitiers sur Matthieu*, SC 254 (Lyon: Cerf, 1978), introduction, p. 20.
56 G. Dorival, *Les chaînes exégétiques sur les Psaumes*, vol. II (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), pp. 2–3.
57 A. Géhin, *Evagre le Pontique. Scholes aux Proverbes*, SC 340 (Lyon: Cerf 1987), pp. 15 16f.
58 E. Junod, 'Que savons-nous des "scholies" (σχολία – σημειώσεις) d'Origène?', in Dorival and Le Boulluec (eds.), *Origeniana Sexta*, pp. 135–49, at p. 140. Cf. B. Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*.

other scriptural passages. This happened at the same time as apocryphal acts were retelling Gospel stories in a theologically interpretive way.[59] In terms of *full* texts of such a genre, Eusebius of Caesarea (and his pupil Acacius) stands at the headwaters of this tradition with his questions and answers on the Gospels.[60] Concentrating on the infancy and resurrection of Jesus, he asks why the Matthean and Lucan genealogies differ. Although not of a pure 'question and answer' genre, Gregory of Nyssa's *Catechetical Oration* is a template for catechists to help them answer the objections of 'seekers', and proceeds from point to point of doctrine. With Ambrosiaster, the form gained a certain apologetic character with the appearance of studied academic attachment: God in Gen. 15:16 points out the four generations that were born in Egypt, but Moses in Exod. 13:8 adds the generation out of which they have their origin, so as to make five generations. This is more straightforward than Jerome's solution: 'if two things seem to be contrary in scripture, they are in fact both true, since they are different things'; so, the fourth is for Levites, the fifth for all tribes of Judah (*Ep.* 36.10). Jerome wrote his *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, and Augustine attempted to find solutions to numerous apparent contradictions in scripture, sometimes on a range of issues (*De diversis quaestionibus*) or on theological questions arising from Romans (sin, grace, election) and Kings (spirits, prophecy, prescience; *De diversis questionibus ad Simplicianum*). Eucherius of Lyon abbreviated the Latin tradition for textbook purposes. With Isidore of Seville, the method produced a schoolbook along the lines of Eucherius' model, on the way to a lexicon. The earlier church fathers were mentioned with their answers, and this encouraged the collection of catenae. One can see how with this genre we have something catechetical, yet of a more advanced sort, as when Isidore of Seville asks: 'Tell me, what is between [*inter*] the New and the Old Testaments?' Answer: 'The old is the sin of Adam . . . the New is Christ born of the Virgin.'[61]

But the fuller form of the genre seems to have been inherited in eastern monastic circles, most of them to answer the question 'how should I be saved?' In the case of Basil's questions and answers for monks in his *Asketikon* (*PG*, 31.1051), all answers are derived from scripture and a third of the questions are

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59 See Scholten, 'Ein Unerkanntner Quaestioneskommentar'.

60 Cf. Giuseppina Geraci, 'L'utilizzazione dell'Antico testamento nelle *Quaestiones et responsiones* di Eusebio di Cesarea', *ASE* 2 (1985), 251–5. Also C. Zamagni, 'Existe-t-il une terminologie technique dans les *Questions d'Eusèbe de Césarée*?', in Volgers and Zamagni (eds.), *Erotapokriseis*, pp. 81–98.

61 Antonio Garzya, 'Appunti sulle Erotapokriseis', in his *Percorsi e tramiti di cultura tardoantica e bizantina con una giunta sulla tradizione degli studi classici* (Naples: D'Auria, 1997), pp. 143–52, at p. 144.

about exegesis. Maximus the Confessor in *Ad Thalassium* dealt with contradictory scriptural passages (e.g. 1 John 4:18 versus Ps. 33:10 on 'the fear of God'), though his '79 questions' are less tied to scripture, as are those of Anastasius of Sinai, although often informed by scripture.

Antiochenes from Eusebius of Emesa through to Diodore seem to have made this problematising of texts an offensive rather than a merely defensive genre. Theodoret, to whom Photius refers as a master of the genre,[62] would allow only pious questions and was inclined to carry over this harmonising tendency even into his commentaries (e.g. on Isa. 56.10f. in *Comm. Isa.* 18.103–8) while in Pseudo-Athanasius (*c.* 520) there was a mix of dogmatic, exegetical (parables of Jesus, Genesis, Psalms and Pauline Epistles) and spiritual matters. Overall, there was a belief that pushing through apparent contradictions was the way to the fuller truth, perhaps by analogy with some incarnational principle. Following on from the strong Antiochene tradition, the 'questions and answers' genre was popular in Nestorian circles from the sixth century on. Bar Koni's scholia, with their sophisticated theological interests, represent the flowering of this genre. 'If angels were present at creation, why are they not mentioned by Moses?' 'Is Gen. 1:2 about the Holy Spirit or the wind?' (This had already been asked by Ambrosiaster.) 'Why did Jacob not bless Simeon?' And at Gen. 36:24: 'Who is the Anah who found springs in the desert?'[63] In the Syriac literature, common questions are raised, such as 'Did God create the primordial natures by day or by night?' There is quite a range, from Num. 12:1 'Why did Miriam and Aaron rebel?' to 'Why did the eunuch in Joseph's story have a wife?' (Answer: as a housekeeper!) In this genre, from its beginnings with Eusebius to its flowering with the Nestorians, the integrity of the text was the issue, and spiritualising the meaning of the text was no valid solution.[64]

Catenae

Catenae, which began to appear in the late fifth century, were 'chains' of interpretations by 'classic' exegetes (not least Origen), made to follow verses or passages of scripture so as to make a commentary up from a patchwork of interpretations. These were excerpts from full commentaries and 'running'

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62 Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. R. Henry, 8 vols. (Paris: CNRS, 1959–77), vol. III, p. 103.
63 C. Molenberg, 'The Interpreter Interpreted. Iso Bar Nun's Selected Questions on the Old Testament', unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Groningen (1990).
64 Bas ter Haar Romeny, 'Question-and-Answer Collections in Syriac Literature', in Volgers and Zamagni (eds.), *Erotapokriseis*, pp. 146–63, at p. 151.

homilies rather than from short ready-made scholia, although these too could be included. Catenae often served the apologetic purpose of making sure that all the verses of scripture were supplied with commentary in places where enemies could easily misinterpret. They were printed within manuscripts of the Bible, and focused on historical books more than anything else.[65] The anonymous Chain on Genesis and the Octateuch epitome of Procopius stood out as being less *problēmata* (puzzling things to which an unbeliever could object) and more *zētēmata* ('questions' that could be answered quickly, such as in the *Collectio Coisliniana* which supplemented Theodoret's *Questiones in Octateuchum*). These chains were not theologically neutral or 'academic' (one example being John Philoponus outgunning Cosmas Indicopleustes with appeals to the *Hexapla* on Genesis). In classifying, one should consider the content as well as the titles. In the case of Severian of Gabbala (*c.* 400), whether his sermons were part of a liturgy or not (which given references to textual matters would be surprising), the actual commentary on the text is surrounded by opening and closing addresses of a non-exegetical sort. Christian teaching was more like 'school' teaching than we tend to think: even Anastasius of Sinai's *Logoi* are more like treatises, or dogmatic interest-free commentaries, than sermons.[66] Procopius himself, the father of catenae editing, was able to forge an ecumenical biblical theology which transcended dogmatic divisions.

Conclusion

Homilies were the church's way of going beyond reading scripture and applying it to the congregation; scholia and questions and answers were respectively positive and defensive ways of asserting the truth of scripture in a more scientific manner; commentaries went further by weaving a web of scriptural truth to form the minds of preachers, and catenae were attempts to counteract repetition and reinforce important scriptural truths by presenting the best of the commentaries of the fathers. All shared the task of taking captive whatever part of the receiver's mind remained resistant to Christian truth; they

65 F. Petit, 'La chaîne grecque sur la Genèse, miroir de l'exégèse ancienne', in G. Schöllgen and C. Scholten (eds.), *Stimuli. Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 23 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1996), pp. 243–54, at pp. 252f.
66 Clemens Scholten, 'Titel-Gattung-Sitz im Leben. Probleme der Klassifizierung antiker Bibelauslegung am Beispiel der griechischen Hexaemeronschriften', in Schöllgen and Scholten (eds.), *Stimuli*, pp. 254–69, at p. 269.

employed rhetorical and dialectical training, although a reluctance to reduce the Christian mystery to Quintilian-type *claritas* meant that the form as well as the content of these interpretations mirrored scripture with its enigmas, such that the reader was forced to seek the *res* (realities) in order then to find clarity in the words.

The Bible in doctrinal development and Christian councils

THOMAS GRAUMANN

From the earliest generations, Christians explored the significance of the person, life and work of Jesus Christ in the light of scripture. In the second century, the understanding of scripture and how it related to the revelation in Christ was central to the initial formation of a sense of 'orthodox' teaching, and its demarcation over against alternative, erroneous conceptualisations of the Christian message. In the literature confronting, and refuting, such 'heresies', we find variously phrased formulas, called 'rule of faith' or 'canon of truth', which seek to summarise the core message of the Old and the emergent New Testaments. They aim to outline in particular the overall design of God's economy and to demonstrate the coherence of the biblical revelation. As such, these formularies derived from the engagement with scripture and intended to provide the theological framework within which any authentically 'Christian' reading of scripture could reasonably operate. They are the work of individual authors and respond to specific questions and challenges. There is no institutional framework or mechanism to authorise them on a wider ecclesiastical scale. The church historian Eusebius reports on sporadic meetings of churchmen to settle various controversial points in the later part of the century – in some cases, the historicity of these meetings is doubtful. He imagines these as synods as they manifested themselves in his own time.[1] However, there is nothing to suggest the institutional authority of these meetings.

During the third century, the frequency of such activity gradually increased, and the shape of a synodal format began to emerge. A number of occasions gave reason to convene meetings on a larger, regional scale. Doctrinal definition was not normally at the forefront of those meetings, and the piecemeal evidence available to us makes any assessment of the likely factors guiding

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1 Discussion of individual instances in Fischer and Lumpe, *Die Synoden*.

the deliberations on the various occasions perilous. Of the surviving documents of the time, the collection of verdicts cast by bishops in synod in Carthage in AD 256 is particularly interesting.[2] The synod under the guidance and spiritual leadership of Cyprian confirmed, once again, the already conventional North African position on the (re-?)baptism of heretics over against the practice advocated by the Roman bishop Stephen. To the participants the matter was of eminent doctrinal import and not just one of different baptismal practice. For this reason, the synod may serve to illustrate the part biblical considerations played in arguing a doctrinal position. Cyprian's letter to Iubianus (*Ep. 73*), which was read to the assembled bishops, included a number of biblical quotations and consisted for the most part of exegetical discussion of biblical verses justifying, in his view, the African practice and outlining its doctrinal implications. These exegetical considerations are likely to have resonated with the synodal audience and guided their judgement, as can be inferred form the numerous quotations of, and allusions to, biblical verses in the bishops' *sententiae*. One bishop explicitly notes the exegetical character of Cyprian's letter and refers to its arguments in his statement.[3] Several others base their judgement on biblical authority in a more general way, and several more include a biblical quotation in their – often brief – sentences. The only lengthy, substantive statement by one bishop, Nemesianus of Thubanus, is almost entirely a patchwork of biblical references interlaced with short exegetical remarks.[4] While not all the scriptural quotations make a substantial point, they reveal an atmosphere steeped in a scriptural 'culture' of thought and language which defined the overall spirit of discussion as much as it provided specific exegetical arguments on which to decide the matter in hand.

While probably not the record of a formal synod, the protocol of a discussion between the eminent theologian Origen and a bishop by the name of Heracleides, held in the presence of other bishops (before AD 244?), may provide further insight.[5] It shows the constant appeal to scripture as the norm by which to decide any doctrinal problem. At the very beginning, Heracleides, whose faith had apparently been cast into doubt by the assembled bishops,

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2 *Sententiae episcoporum*, in *Cypriani Opera*, ed. G. Hartel, CSEL 3:1 (Wien: Gerold, 1868), pp. 435–61.
3 *Sent.* 8, p. 441.
4 *Sent.* 5, p. 438–440. A number of Cyprian's letters from a series of councils (conducted in subsequent years between AD 251 and 254) about the problem of *lapsi* and disciplinary issues arising in the context indicate a similar recourse to scripture in the deliberations; cf. *Ep.* 55.6 (CSEL 3:2, p. 627); *Ep.* 67.
5 *Entretien d'Origène avec Héraclide*, ed. Jean Scherer, SC 67 (Paris: Cerf, 1960).

opens his defence by confessing to 'believe the very things the divine scriptures say', quoting John 1:1–3.[6] The subsequent discussion refers to specific scriptural texts repeatedly, so much so that the debate is almost entirely concerned with scriptural interpretation. The Bible is the unquestionable norm against which any teaching is measured and from which the answers to any disputed question are expected.[7] The dialogue may illustrate the kind of reasoning we can expect at other, formal, synods with Origen as a learned disputant.[8]

Another instance of synodal decision-making, the trial of Paul of Samosata (Antioch, AD 268), would come to have doctrinal significance through its reception and heresiological usage in the controversies of the fourth century. However, it provides no conclusive evidence for the usage of the Bible in doctrinal deliberation. The report of the decisive meeting in Eusebius' *Church History* gives no precise indication even of the errors of Paul's teaching, let alone of any substantial discussion of scriptural evidence in discerning the doctrinal charges against him. Rather, we learn of an adversarial debate (disputation), which was won by the rhetorical and dialectical persuasiveness of Paul's opponent.[9] The fragments of a record of the disputation are probably not authentic (*CPG*, no. 1706).

From all we know, scripture played the decisive role in the formation of Christian teaching and in arbitrating doctrinal controversy in the third century. However, based on the surviving evidence, we cannot assume any established formal standard or procedural convention in the application of scripture in conciliar decision-making. There can, however, be little doubt that the emerging ecclesiastical culture steeped in scriptural reading exercised a formative influence in the development of conciliar theology as well.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, the period characterised by the main ecumenical councils – and many more synods in between – that established the central doctrines of the Trinity and of christology, the role of scripture in the development of doctrine comes into sharper relief.[10] Starting with the doctrinal work of the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), questions of the authority and functioning of the Bible in doctrinal development, in particular at the level of synodal interaction, take on a new dimension. The Nicene Creed specifically

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6 *Entretien* 1.5, p. 52.   7 See e.g. *Entretien* 6.21, p. 68; 8.7f., p. 72; 25.5, p. 102.

8 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.33.1–3, 6.37. In both cases Eusebius gives no further information about the arguments employed.

9 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.27–30, especially 29.2 and the letter of the synod, 30.2–17. If an earlier letter by members of the synod is genuine (*CPG*, no. 1705), it provides further evidence for a chiefly exegetical discussion and definition of faith.

10 For the corresponding usage of the Bible in the conciliar canons and legislative work (in the West), see J. Gaudemet, 'La Bible dans les conciles'; and Andresen, 'Die Bibel im konziliaren'.

marks the inception of the protracted endeavour to distil scriptural teaching into binding doctrinal formularies, or creeds. At the same time, these creeds witness to the almost constant struggle to balance language and piety inspired by scripture with technical, philosophical terminology and discussion.

The esteem in which scripture was held in principle and its unrivalled role in defining the identities of all those involved in these conciliar meetings are symbolically enacted by the enthronement of the Gospel at the opening of synods. We learn of this practice specifically at the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. It is certain to have become a standard feature in the ceremonial opening of synodal assemblies towards the end of the period under consideration, but may have had earlier precedent.[11] Primarily the enthronement of the Gospels signifies the presidency of the Lord Jesus Christ over his church and over the assembly. At the same time, the prominent display of the Gospel book undoubtedly reminded those present of the scriptures as ultimate norm of their decision-making.

Whether this esteem translated directly into the techniques and forms of doctrinal deliberation and decision-making, and how the ostensible appeal to scripture balanced out over against other influential factors, is a different question altogether. It correlates to the interpretation of the theological rationales and intentions of the various sides and the bishops and theologians embroiled in the ensuing doctrinal conflicts commonly called the 'Arian controversy'; current scholarship still debates the relative importance – compared to philosophical leanings and other theological preoccupations – of exegetical and hermeneutical differences for the origin and main motivation of the dispute. It is not possible here to attempt to rewrite the Arian controversy as a history of conflicting interpretations of scripture or to reassess the opposing theologies for their biblical credentials. Rather more modestly, we shall attempt to take stock of what can be gleaned about the usage of the Bible in the discussions and the drafting of documents at the various synods of the time. In addition, the question will be asked as to whether such practice also brought about some theoretical reflection of the way in which 'theology' might make use of scripture for doctrinal purposes.

What exactly initiated the conflict between the Alexandrian presbyter Arius and his bishop Alexander, and which theological and intellectual traditions informed their views, is still a matter of dispute. Exegetical factors certainly played a part, even if the traditional juxtaposition between the so-called

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11 For Ephesus, see *ACO* 1.1.3, p. 4; for Chalcedon *ACO* 2.1.1, p. 65; further evidence and some discussion of iconography in R. de Maio, *Das Evangelienbuch*.

Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of scriptural interpretation is highly problematic and fails to explain the differences between the two. In particular, the connection of Arius to Lucian of Antioch, on which much of this reconstruction rests, is at best tenuous and in itself not sufficient to place him in the purported camp of 'Antiochene' literal scriptural interpretation. Differing exegesis, nevertheless, is a feature in the debate from our earliest surviving documents. Epiphanius even claims that the contested explanation of Prov. 8:22 was the origin of the quarrel (*Panarion* 69.12.1). Whether or not this is accurate is difficult to discern; the text in question was certainly one of the major exegetical battlegrounds later on.[12]

On a textual level, some kind of appeal to scripture in support of a particular proposition, or of discussion of biblical passages with a doctrinal question in mind, can be found on virtually every page of the relevant literature from the inception of the debate. It is against this backdrop that the discussions at the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea (AD 325), in which the confrontation reached an early climax, must be interpreted. The precise contribution of scriptural reasoning to the council's doctrinal work is difficult to discern from the surviving sources. In the creed promulgated by the council, allusions to biblical language and vocabulary are manifold: the designations of Jesus Christ as Son of God and *monogenes* (John 1:18), reference to his incarnation (*sarkothenta*; Joh 1:14) and the brief summary of his salvific mission all directly reflect scriptural narrative and teaching. However, the defining terms by which 'Nicene' orthodoxy came to be identified for later generations, namely the phrase 'from the essence [*ousia*] of the father', and in particular the all-encapsulating catchphrase declaring the Son to be *homoousios* (consubstantial) with the Father, lack biblical credentials. This alone suggests that the formation of the creed was not simply a matter of scriptural engagement.

What the Nicene Creed fails to reveal in detail can perhaps be illuminated by comparison with near-contemporary efforts in credal definition. In fact a few months before the Nicene council, a synod in Antioch (early AD 325?) had already debated the issues arising from Arius' teaching. The bishops issued a lengthy and at times rather convoluted statement, which uses the basic pattern of a creed in trying to delineate the proper relationship between God the Father and his Son. It foreshadows the Nicene formulary, but makes no use of the contested technical terms yet. In contrast to the rather more dense and concise Nicene Creed, it lays out some of the reasoning entering into defining

12 See M. Simonetti, 'Sul' interpretazione patristica di Proverbi 8,22', in his *Studi sull Arianesimo*, Verba Seniorum, NS 5 (Rome: Editrice Studium, 1965), pp. 9–87.

the doctrinal position advocated. The Antiochene statement expressly justifies the proposed understanding of God and the Son with recourse to scripture on several occasions. In one instance the text quotes Matt. 11:27 ('No one knows the Father but the Son, nor the Son but the Father') as proof for the 'unknowable' character of the Son's generation which defies precise definition. In another, calling him alone the 'express image' of the Father is related as scriptural teaching (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4). And subsequently scriptural usage in general is claimed for the understanding of the Son as 'validly and truly begotten as Son', in order to distinguish his sonship from one by adoption or according to God's will, which might apply to humans in general. While no quotation is used to bolster this assertion, the motive of human 'sonship' underpinning this important clarification can be found in numerous contexts, including John 1:12; Rom. 8:14–17; Gal. 4:4–7. Equally the language and metaphors used in what follows are imbued with biblical assonance, such as the 'true light' (John 1:9), 'righteousness' (1 Cor. 1:24) and, again, 'image' (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4) – evident, it seems, to an audience of bishops without needing to be pointed out. The Antiochene statement, thus, allows us to glimpse the way in which the Bible was used in an early synodal discussion about Arius' teaching.

Two partisan, and in many aspects very different, accounts of the genesis of the Nicene Creed can be read in part against this background; both include references to scriptural arguments, but do so in very different contexts and forms.

Athanasius' treatise on the Nicene definitions (*De decretis Nicaenae synodis*) is part of his anti-'Arian' polemic of the 350s. It answers opposition to the Nicene Creed of the time, attacking its use of unbiblical language as incompatible with attempts to define the church's teaching. The polemical context explains the emphasis Athanasius places on the exegetical considerations of the fathers which led to the creed's eventual phrasing. With this cautionary note in mind, it may nevertheless shed light on the kind of scriptural reasoning and the exegetical techniques possibly already underpinning the phrasing of the creed, but certainly employed subsequently in its interpretation and justification.

Athanasius, in recalling the discussions, takes great pains to emphasise that, after the 'Arian' views had already been rejected by the council (*Decr.* 3), the 'orthodox' intended to use biblical language in setting out a positive statement of faith (*Decr.* 19). For example, they wanted to use the phrase 'from God' to describe the Son's origin, but had to realise that it was open to an interpretation which took it to mean something common to all creation and humanity. Such a view could be based on 1 Cor. 8:6 ('one God from whom are all things') and 2 Cor. 5:18 ('all this is from God'). Athanasius claims these and other

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biblical passages provided the Eusebians with convenient excuses to dilute and subvert the intended meaning, and to agree the suggested terms without renouncing their erroneous views. So to avoid such (mis)interpretation and evasiveness, the 'orthodox' inserted 'from the essence [*ousia*] of the Father' as a (purportedly) clarifying remark.[13] Similarly, 'the bishops . . . found it necessary to gather together . . . the sense of the scriptures and to speak more clearly the things they had said before, and to write, "the Son is *homoousios* with the Father"' (*Decr.* 20); 'even if the words are not as such in the scripture, yet, . . . they contain the sense [*dianoia*] of the scriptures and they express this sense and communicate it to those who have ears that are whole and hearken to piety' (*Decr.* 21).

Athanasius, with the benefit of hindsight, identified one main technical and procedural problem: the words used for the Word of God in various scriptural contexts and therefore suggested by the council fathers to define his ontological status, were also applied in other scriptural contexts to various created subjects. Thus, scriptural usage of these terms did not lead to an unequivocal doctrinal formulation safeguarding the full divinity of Christ. The most important theological lesson Athanasius learned from this difficulty – clearly a fruit of his reflection on the problem in, and up to, the 350s, not an insight gained at the council – was that in order to preserve the sense or overall message of scripture one might have to digress from its language. The implicit rejection of a narrow biblicism only based on a reading of the Bible at its textual, linguistic level, as well as his insistence on the participants' effort to grasp the biblical message in its comprehensive and conceptual sense, echoes the main insights espoused in his treatises after the council. What *De decretis* portrays as the bishops' thinking guiding the genesis of the creed can, and perhaps should, be construed as Athanasius' own reasoning as it evolved in the process of interpreting it.

The other surviving account about the genesis of the creed, in a letter written by Eusebius of Caesarea, is markedly different from what we learn from Athanasius. Eusebius' aim is to justify his signing of it; he points out his own contribution and his critical examination of the work of a drafting commission. The work of a commission behind the scenes precludes any assumptions that the creed might have been composed phrase by phrase as a result of exegetical discussion. We must not infer a plenary debate or 'seminar'

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13 Athanasius, *Decr.* 20, provides a similar discussion of the term 'likeness' and its biblical background (see Athanasius of Alexandria, *Werke*, vol. II.1, ed. H.-G. Opitz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1934–), p. 197).

on scriptural texts and problems from Athanasius' narrative. Undoubtedly, if the creed was presented to the assembly in its entirety any subsequent inquiry would have started from this text. In judging whether its statements were tenable and appropriate, the participants likely applied the criterion of scriptural agreement and considered the biblical usage of the words and images in question to identify the meaning and theological implications of the formulary. However, for the two crucial and later much-contested phrases, *homoousios* and *ek tês ousias tou patros*, such an undertaking was futile from the outset, as these concepts did not derive from biblical language. Still, in some sense Eusebius' interpretation of the phrase *ek tês ousias tou patros* is the very reversal of Athanasius' interpretation of the intentions of the fathers of the council. Athanasius insists that the 'unbiblical' insertion talking of the *ousia* of the Father meant to overcome the potential ambiguity of simply affirming in biblical language that the Son was 'from God'. Yet Eusebius convinced himself – and claims to have been assured explicitly before he signed – that the phrase in fact meant simply that and nothing more.[14] Similarly, his discussion of the meaning of *homoousios* emphasises that all his worries over potentially harmful conceptual implications of the word had been met; yet there seems to be no obvious scriptural dimension to this discussion. Eusebius' letter does not enter into any detailed discussion of the potential exegetical background of his assertions, but it seems more than likely that his associates let their understanding, based on scriptural reading, guide their acceptance of the technical terms, rather than allowing these to instruct and correct their reading of scripture. The relative paucity of precedent for the usage of this terminology in a doctrinal context and in ecclesiastical literature more generally left sufficient room for interpretation. Nevertheless, Eusebius allowed himself to perceive the synod's work as ultimately informed by scripture in a way he was happy to endorse. For he considered the anathemas appended to the creed, which banned specific tenets and formulas by Arius,[15] acceptable as an effort to rule out unscriptural language whose introduction had caused the entire problem.[16] It was only later that his successors and pupils levied this very accusation against the wording of the Nicene Creed. And it is this

14 Eusebius, *Epistula ad ecclesiam Caesariensem*, Urkunde 22.9 (in Athanasius, *Werke*, vol. III.1, ed. H.-G. Opitz and H. C. Brennecke, p. 45.7–9).
15 Any acceptance of the anathemas implied distancing himself clearly from Arius and left no room for the kind of surreptitious manoeuvring Athanasius alleges – however subtle. Eusebius, in *D. E.* 5.1.14f. and *Eccl. theol.* 3.2.8, in fact plainly rejects the assertion the Son had been from nothing.
16 Eusebius, *Epistula ad ecclesiam Caesariensem*, Urkunde 22.15 (in Athanasius, *Werke*, vol. III.1, p. 46.10–12).

accusation that explains why Athanasius tried to convince his audience of the fundamentally exegetical character of the decision-making process.

With the accusations of using 'unbiblical' language brought against Nicaea which prompted Athanasius to write *De decretis* in the late 350s, we have already anticipated some elements of the discussion following the council. The decades of further controversy are also a period of intense synodical activity, and of repeated attempts in creed-making.

All sides used biblical stock phrases as proof texts for their assertions and were able to uphold and claim the ultimate normative authority of scripture in this way. Those who advocated the ontological equality of the Son with the Father referred to verses like John 10:30 ('The Father and I are one'). Those arguing for a differentiation that implied subordination pointed to verses like John 14:28 ('The Father is greater than I').[17] Athanasius and much of the controversial literature of the time demonstrate the struggle over the proper dogmatic interpretation of a number of similar biblical verses, and the difficulty in reconciling their potentially contradictory implications.[18] Occasionally there are glimpses of an insight that problems could not be solved by simply pitching scriptural verses and their rival interpretations against each other. What was needed was an overarching conceptual reading of the biblical message of God and his relation to man. The closest we come to a self-conscious expression of such hermeneutical awareness is a statement by Athanasius:

> Therefore the intention [*skopos*] and characteristic feature (*charactēr*) of the holy scripture ... is its twofold proclamation of the saviour: that he was always Son and God, as being the Father's Word, Radiance, and Wisdom, and that afterwards he took flesh from Mary, the Virgin and Mother of God, for our sake and became a human being. And this sense can be found signified throughout the whole God-inspired scripture.[19]

This twofold message of scripture demands the crucial distinction between predications about Christ before and after the incarnation. This distinction in turn precludes an 'Arian' interpretation that uses predications of Christ that entail human, creaturely limitations as proof for the purported ontological

17 The many verses repeatedly used in this way can be easily traced through the scriptural indexes of R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988).
18 A convenient introduction and bibliography to the exegetical literature of the time is now available in Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, vol. II.
19 Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 3.29.1f. (in Athanasius, *Werke*, vol. 1.1.3, ed. M. Tetz et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), p. 340.1–4).

inferiority of the Son to the Father, when applied to identify divinity. This theological, 'incarnational', hermeneutic informs Athanasius' discussion of individual scriptural texts.[20] It seems he had come to realise that it was only within a conceptual reading of scripture that the impasse of the exegetical debate over certain texts could be overcome. The underlying difficulty was, of course, not new, nor was the attempt to give a considered hermeneutical response. Athanasius' attempts resemble earlier efforts to guide the interpretation of scripture by a distinct theological perspective set out in the 'rule of faith'. Hermeneutical reflections such as are found in the fourth book of Origen's *On First Principles* also sought to uncover the decisive characteristics of scriptural language and teaching in order to open it up for a coherent, systematic, understanding. The reflections about scripture and tradition which we find in Athanasius' younger contemporary Basil of Caesarea, or the altercations between the Cappadocians and Eunomius about scriptural language, may all be seen to follow in a similar vein. We may assume that such reflections fed back into conciliar contexts, representing contemporary debates in a microcosm, even if it is difficult to witness the actual conduct of exegetical and hermeneutical debate on these occasions.

The practical, and at times express, commitment to normative scriptural authority, which is the driving force behind much of the literature of the time, is equally characteristic of many of the synods conducted in the decades between Nicaea and Constantinople. The Dedication Council of Antioch (AD 341) is the best example for this overall spirit, in particular since it is not openly polemical towards Nicaea. The lengthy synodal creed breathes the atmosphere of a deeply traditional biblicism. The second, christological article consists of a long list of descriptive biblical phrases and titles. It calls Christ, among other things, 'Word', 'Wisdom', 'true Light', 'Way', 'Resurrection', 'Shepherd', 'Door' and 'exact Image of the Godhead' (Col. 1:15).[21] Listing such titles, especially those taken from the Gospel of John, reflected very much a concept of biblical titles as *epinoiai* advanced by Origen – names revealing different aspects of the person. The same long paragraph furthermore explicitly quotes John 1:1 ('according to the saying in the Gospel "and the Word was God"') and John 10 ('he says "I came down from heaven, not to do my

20 For Athanasius' 'incarnational' hermeneutic, see also *Ep. Serap.* 2.7 (Athanasius, *Werke*, vol. 1.1.4, ed. D. Wyrwa (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 546–7). There is now a wide consensus that the passage quoted marks the linchpin around which Athanasius' scriptural interpretation revolves: see Sieben, 'Herméneutique de l'exégèse'.
21 Athanasius, *De decretis* – written long after the Dedication Council! – tells us that these titles were already found insufficient in Nicaea. The Dedication Creed uses the *epinoiai* without any kind of 'incarnational' distinction of the kind Athanasius advocates.

own will but the will of him who sent me"'). Later the baptismal command at Matt. 28:19 is quoted and given an interpretation that underlines the separate subsistence of three hypostases. Thus the whole creed is decidedly biblical, and even exegetical in character. The final paragraph, which anathematises a number of assertions, states this fundamental inspiration forcibly twice over. The condemnations are introduced by the phrase 'if anyone teaches contrary to the sound and right faith of the Scriptures'. And finally, in the conclusion of the entire creed, the bishops state their fundamental conviction: 'For all that has been handed down to us in the divine scriptures, whether by prophets or apostles, we do truly and reverently believe and follow.'[22]

Like this, several other synodal documents drawn up in the 340s and 350s expand on the credal format with explanatory paragraphs, or append long lists of condemnations. It is usually in such passages that we find explicit engagement with biblical testimony and quotations in support of specific tenets. The so-called 'Long-Lined Creed' used by a delegation of bishops to explain the theology of the eastern churches to their colleagues at a synod in Milan in 345 contains a number of such quotations. Interestingly, it even provides an exegetical passage explaining in some detail the understanding of Prov. 8:22.[23] In a similar vein, several of the condemnations appended to the First Sirmian Formula (AD 351) address the exegesis of biblical verses, outlawing purportedly incorrect interpretations and usage of Isa. 44:6; John 1:14; Gen. 1:26 and 19:24.[24]

The infamous *homoean* creed denounced by its opponents as the 'Blasphemy of Sirmium' (AD 357)[25] also displays an attempt in scriptural argumentation and interpretation through a number of quotations woven into the statement. The text is, however, notorious for its frontal attack on the usage of the term *ousia* and its derivatives in doctrinal debate and definition.[26] The main reason given for banning these words is that they are not found in scripture. The prohibition is repeated in a number of closely related creeds, which ultimately came to define the official state-sponsored expression of orthodoxy in the empire of Constantius II promulgated in Constantinople in AD 360. In one

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22 Athanasius, *Synod*. 23; English translation Kelly, *Creeds*, pp. 268–70.
23 'Ekthesis Macrostichos' 8, in Athanasius, *Synod*. 26.
24 First Sirmian Creed in Athanasius, *Synod*. 27, anathemas 11, 12, 14, 17. Anathemas 15 and 16 also address exegetical questions. They condemn in a more roundabout way any interpretation of the theophanies to Abraham and Jacob which does not ascribe them only to the Son. Anathema 21 uses a quotation of John 14:16 as proof for the separate subsistence of the Paraclete.
25 The Latin version in Hilary, *De synodis* 11.
26 The transmitted text forbids the use of *ousia*, along with both *homoousios* and *homoeousios*. There is, however, a strong likelihood that this is an interpolation.

of them, the decisive passage about exclusively scriptural usage in doctrinal deliberation reads,

> But whereas the term 'substance' has been adopted by the Fathers in simplicity, but being unknown by the people gives offence, because neither do the scriptures contain it, it has seemed good to remove it, that there should be no further mention of 'substance' in regard to God, because the divine scriptures nowhere refer to the 'substance' of the Father or the Son. But we say that the Son is like the Father in all things, as the Holy scriptures themselves declare and teach.[27]

The Sirmian Creed and related *homoean* formularies condemned the use of technical, philosophical terminology and appealed for an exclusively scriptural definition of the relationship of God the Father and the Word, hoping to quell further discussion on arguably the smallest common denominator. In effect, the phrase 'like the Father, in accordance with the scriptures', was devoid of any clear dogmatic distinction. Unsurprisingly Athanasius and his allies rejected it and spurned it as heretical masquerading.[28]

While this appeal to scripture seemed intent on stifling any constructive theorising, another group, the Anhomoeans or Eunomians, so called after their leading theorist Eunomius, arrived at a very specific, extreme, systematic conceptualisation through a peculiar blend of philosophy and scripture. They taught the radical difference between the Father, who was the only God in a strict sense, and the Son. Their stark distinction arose from the confident belief that one could know and express God's very being through the philosophical notion of divine ingenerateness. But, as Eunomius commented, knowing it did not mean fully understanding it. However, their epistemology rested on a highly sophisticated language theory, for which the scriptural usage of words provided the key. Their work of philosophical distinction, which was to produce, ultimately, the one signifier that expressed the divine as distinct from anything else, started from the premise that scripture was the original revelation of the proper signification of language terms. The scriptural revelation of authentic, original language safeguards against the conceptualisation of language as purely conventional. Thus, in a peculiar way, their radical philosophical metaphysics is hedged round by scriptural hermeneutics, and the philosophical reading of scripture which emerges from this leads them to denounce efforts to establish any kind of ontological similarity between

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27 Fourth Sirmian Creed, in Athanasius, *Synod.* 8.
28 Such accusations prompted Athanasius to set out the robust defence of the scriptural credentials of the creed and the exegetical intentions of its authors discussed earlier.

God and the Son/Word.[29] The intellectual challenge to Trinitarian theology posed by this thinking made it the main target of such eminent writers as Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa and exercised lasting influence over the attempts to balance apophaticism, mysticism and intricate propositional doctrinal definition.

Basil is also a good example of the way in which scriptural argumentation as the key to doctrinal clarification was confronted with two paradoxically intertwined challenges. At times exegetical, even grammatical, precision could seem to overreach itself, having to support too much; at times the insistence on 'scriptural' phraseology alone allowed for too little and had a crippling effect on constructive theological thinking. The latter in particular demanded a wider interpretation of the 'biblical' character of speculative teaching, and a tentative balancing with the potential import of 'tradition'. In his treatise *On the Holy Spirit* Basil met both challenges. In the earlier chapters, he forcefully refutes the subordination of the Spirit – and the Son – on the grounds of what has been called the 'metaphysics of prepositions'. Anhomoean theology noted the difference in the prepositions used in describing the work of the divine hypostases (for example 1 Cor. 8:6: 'One God the Father, *from whom* are all things . . . one Lord Jesus Christ *through whom* are all things') and, from this, inferred ontological difference. Detailed analysis of scriptural usage allowed Basil to discredit the very concept together with its purported result of an ontological gradation. Rather than establishing firm differentiation, he demonstrated scriptural usage of prepositions to be interchangeable and suggestive of the cooperation and coordination of the three divine hypostases.[30] While it was possible in this way for him to refute the radical Anhomoean position on purely biblical grounds and with the help of a technical, grammatical approach to biblical language, the quest for a positive teaching about the Spirit met with the difficulty that there were few direct statements indicative of his ontological status. In this context, Basil came to consider the potential role of the church's liturgical practice in doctrinal deliberation. Basil detects elements of constructive theology implicit in ecclesiastical practice, particularly in the liturgy. The idea is relevant to the question of the role of the Bible in doctrinal development, because, to him, this practice reveals, and at the

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29 For Eunomius, see R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2000), which also provides a useful appendix of scriptural passages invoked in anti-Nicene argument, pp. 383–95. See also, especially for his language theory, L. Abramowsky, 'Eunomios', *RAC* 6 (1966), 936–47.

30 Basil, *Spir.* 4–6 and 7–12, refutes in principle the logic behind this argument. *Spir.* 13–21 demonstrates its failure with respect to the Son's position, and *Spir.* 56–64 proves the consequences of the purported subordination of the Holy Spirit wrong.

same time symbolically conceals, theological propositions in a way not dissimilar to the allegorical veiling of doctrine in scripture. The liturgical practice is imbued with scripture, and the indirect teaching tradition encapsulated in this practice can be explanatory of scripture; both intertwine in such a way that the 'exegesis' of liturgy and the interpretation of scripture illuminate one another, and instruct intricate, technical, theological deliberation. In practice, however, much of the liturgical usage that Basil claims as traditional is informed by recent theological reflection, specifically on the Holy Spirit.

Such examples in the controversial literature of the fourth century, which evidence the tentative searching for the hermeneutical interrelation of church practice, scriptural reading and constructive theology, feed back into conciliar modes of doctrinal deliberation, even if they are not always straightforwardly identifiable.

The Council of Constantinople in AD 381, which has come to be accepted as the second ecumenical council, and the imperial legislation surrounding it, eventually formally established Nicene orthodoxy, 'ratifying', according to the church historian Socrates, the Nicene Creed. It did not end the debate and could not quell the various dissenting groups, or heresies, immediately. Yet the framework for any future search for Trinitarian definition and theology was irreversibly determined to be 'Nicene' after that point. Of the council, no acts survive and the potential conduct of any doctrinal deliberations cannot be reconstructed with any confidence. The short summary of a (lost) doctrinal tome concentrates only on the clarification of the contested philosophical terminology. What scriptural reasoning might have contributed, if anything, cannot be inferred. The only remaining, indirect, source for the likely role of scriptural reasoning in the doctrinal work of the council, is the creed known by scholars as the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, and used in modern liturgies as the 'Nicene Creed'. How exactly this creed is linked to the council of AD 381 is still a matter of some controversy. It contains a number of alterations and additions to the second article (on Christ) of the creed of AD 325. Of these the concluding phrase 'of whose [sc. Christ's] kingdom there will be no end' is a verbatim quotation of Luke 1:33 (directed against the alleged teaching of the opposite by Marcellus of Ancyra). More importantly, however, the creed takes further the terse mention of the Holy Spirit in the creed of 325. The teaching about the Holy Spirit is arguably its main dogmatic achievement and answers the recent controversies with the so-called 'Spirit-fighters' (Pneumatomachi). Not everybody will have been happy at the time that it shied away from calling the Spirit *homoousios* in the same way as the Son. Rather, the passage devoted to the Holy Spirit uses titles and describes

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his ministry with particularly strong biblical resonance, but makes no use of controversial philosophical terminology: 'and [we believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is together worshipped and together glorified, who spoke through the prophets'.[31]

The Spirit is called 'Lord' in 2 Cor. 3:17f.; he is 'Spirit of Life' in Rom. 8:2 (cf. also 2 Cor. 3:6 and John 6:63 for his 'life-giving' activity); and even his proceeding from God can be linked, with only slight variation, to John 15:26.[32] Whether the creed was meant as a basis for compromise and unity with those weary of asserting the Spirit's equality with the Father and the Son, or whether it simply took into account wider-spread hesitations over the language of consubstantiality and essence, resorting to language well supported by biblical phrases was deemed best suited to express the most controversial doctrinal issue of the time. The equally clear reflection of concepts of shared glorification and worship, promoted by Basil of Caesarea and others to express the equality of the Spirit, is, as we have seen, linked specifically to the worship and liturgical life of the church, which Basil understood to be a way of interpreting scripture itself. Inspired by his theology, the formula can be said to be overwhelmingly biblical in style and phraseology.

With the Arian controversy reaching at least some sort of doctrinal conclusion with the Council of Constantinople in the East, the Council of Aquileia, which met in the autumn of the same year, is often interpreted as its western counterpart and regarded as the definitive settling of the Arian controversy in the West. However, it is quite different from the council at Constantinople both in scope and in intent. It may have been planned as a general council of East and West initially, and with the intention to discuss doctrinal differences and to achieve a peaceful settlement over Trinitarian doctrine. After the council of Constantinople had effectively settled the affairs of the eastern churches, the western Emperor Gratian reluctantly had to be satisfied with a much smaller meeting, which under the guidance of the bishop of Milan, Ambrose, took on a quite different format. Rather than conducting an open-ended debate on doctrine, he turned it into an investigation and tribunal against two allegedly 'Arian' bishops and a presbyter in their entourage. A substantial amount of minutes of this trial survives. The records give a clear indication both of the contribution and of the limits of scripture in identifying and condemning alleged 'heresy', and thus by implication in deciding doctrinal

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31 Greek text and English translation in Kelly, *Creeds*, pp. 297f.
32 For the language used, cf. Kelly, *Creeds*, pp. 341f.

questions. Crucially, the defendant is not challenged over the doctrinal inter-
pretation of scriptural passages or asked to expound his views exegetically;
his demands for such a discussion are explicitly denied. Rather, he is asked
to condemn phrase by phrase a document authored by Arius, or to defend
its teaching from scripture. Scripture thus in principle operates as the ulti-
mate norm against which to judge any theological proposition. Yet an open
exegetical discussion was apparently deemed to be unsuited to the task of
arriving at the intended condemnation of an 'Arian'. In fact the few occasions
when the defendant manages to raise his own questions and to argue his
case on the basis of select biblical passages confirm the difficulty. The 'Arian'
bishop Palladius refers to some of the stock proof-texts for subordination
used in the controversy, and Ambrose struggles to deal with them effectively
on an exegetical basis. He ultimately brushes his opponent's efforts at rea-
soning from scripture aside as a mere dialectical ploy and deception. To pin
his opponent down, Ambrose constantly needed to come back to the letter
written by Arius, and used Palladius' refusal to condemn it as evidence for
his 'heresy'.[33]

Thus in these exchanges we witness the dilemma of scriptural reasoning
evident throughout the controversy. All parties professed scripture to be the
ultimate norm of any doctrinal proposition. All parties found apparent scrip-
tural support for their positions and quoted proof-texts from scripture to this
effect. Unless there was a deeper consensus about the aims and principles
of God's relation with creation and history with mankind, and unless such a
general theological conceptualisation was employed in the interpretation of
individual scriptural contexts and even verses, reading the scriptures for dog-
matic purposes could not effectively settle doctrinal differences. The required
overarching theological and soteriological perspective, in turn, built on pre-
vious engagement with scripture in what looks like a circular hermeneutical
movement to modern eyes, but which Origen, a century earlier, had already
outlined as something rather more akin to a helix, gradually ascending to a
better understanding by the incessant meditative reading and interpretation
of scripture.

When Ambrose tried to link his opponent firmly to the exact words of
Arius rather than debate biblical texts afresh, he not only tried to make the
heresy label stick more easily. His efforts also underline the fact that all parties
either needed to resort to technical language for the subtler distinctions in

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33 For the scriptural background of the indicted phrases and Palladius' arguments, see also
Peretto, 'L'autorità della scrittura'.

doctrine, or else were seen to disavow such language and take refuge in the language of scripture, not so much from pious restraint, but in what seemed a ploy secretly to uphold heterodox notions. Synods found it very difficult to condemn 'heresy' or to set out positive statements defining 'orthodoxy' by simply measuring their teaching against scripture and employing exclusively biblical language.

In a period which is characterised to a large extent by attempts at 'creed-making', we witness the tentative negotiation of fundamental problems of creating theological norms and forms of argumentation, a fact which is reminiscent of many and much later controversies including the Reformation. The balance between ever-new direct scriptural engagement and a guiding systematic theological framework – whether conceived of as tradition or seen as established authoritative church teaching – needed constant negotiation. Creeds and similar formulas aimed to crystallise the fluidity of biblical teaching into unchanging propositional truths. Gradually, the appeal, in theological argument, to existing creeds and to theological precedent ('the fathers') in general, came to play a significant part in this precarious balancing act. As a very specific way to muster 'tradition', it became more prominent in the councils of the early fifth century, to which we now turn.

The next two ecumenical councils, held in Ephesus in AD 431 and in Chalcedon AD 451, in their dogmatic work dealt with christological teaching properly speaking, that is with the understanding of the incarnation and the way in which the divine and the human were present in the person of the incarnate Christ. The theme is evidently and immediately one of scriptural interpretation; it touches upon the very centre of the Gospel message. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the interpretation of key texts, for example the incarnation references in the Johannine prologue (John 1), the *kenosis* motive in the Philippian hymn (Phil. 2) and the many passages concerning the body and humanity of Christ in the Gospels, formed a major bone of contention in the controversial literature produced at the time. To name but one striking example, Bishop Cyril of Alexandria, in a treatise written to the ladies of the imperial household, not only elaborately discussed the exegetical problems and perceived systematic implications of many scriptural passages, but also appended to his main argument a collection of more than two hundred biblical extracts from both Testaments in support of his case.[34] However, no different from the earlier Trinitarian controversy, the decisive conceptual tools and short-hand formulas, which both rallied support and attracted the wrath of opponents,

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34 Cyril, *Or. dom.* (*ACO* 1.1.5, pp. 62–118).

were non-scriptural slogans and philosophical phraseology. One such catch-word in particular triggered the earliest confrontations surrounding Bishop Nestorius of Constantinople, and provided Cyril and his allies with a banner to rally around: *Theotokos*, Mother of God. Arguably rooted in piety and not uncommon in the writing of some fathers, calling Mary 'Mother of God' – or refusing to do so, as was the case with Nestorius and his hard-line support – summarised, and simplified conveniently for polemical purposes, the clashing of two rather more complex emphases in the understanding of the interrela-tion of the human and the divine in Jesus Christ. Those opposing the term did not fail to point out that it had no scriptural precedent.[35] However, the decisive confrontation at the Council of Ephesus was not in any immediate sense a struggle over the biblical interpretations of either side. Moreover, the council did not decree any doctrinal definition at all. Rather, in a very personal attack, Cyril managed to have his rival Nestorius condemned and deposed. The many procedural irregularities and the failure to accommodate a large group of Antiochene bishops, who had arrived late, left the council and the church deeply split. The parties did not even come together to exchange any substantial theological argument. The proceeding of Cyril's part-council is nevertheless informative for the very limited, and at best indirect, role that the appeal to scripture had in the process of condemning Nestorius and his thinking. For his theology was measured against the Nicene Creed as the norm of orthodoxy – not scripture. The assembly accepted one of Cyril's letters to Nestorius as the authentic interpretation of the christological import of the creed, and consequently condemned the letter written by Nestorius in response. Implicitly these letters provide some evidence for the – limited – extent to which biblical reading shaped the controversy. Both letters take the interpretation of the Nicene Creed as their starting point. Cyril formally refers to scripture only occasionally, citing for example John 1:14 as direct proof for his understanding of the incarnation.[36] Nestorius, on the other hand, refutes Cyril's reading of the creed and advocates his own interpretation in stronger exegetical terms. To him, the phrase 'Lord Jesus Christ', as the grammat-ical subject of the Nicene statements, always refers to both natures of the one incarnate person. This insight, he claims, is directly derived from the

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35 Cyril, *Ep*. 1.5 (*ACO* 1.1.1, p. 12).
36 Cyril, *Ep*. 4.7 (*ACO* 1.1.1, p. 28). This specific emphasis does obviously not undermine Cyril's thinking as such; his many christological treatises are replete with scriptural discussion and interpretation, as has already been illustrated. For the exegetical differences between Cyril and Nestorius, reflected indirectly in the council's decision on their respective documents, see H. J. Vogt, 'Die Bibel auf dem Konzil von Ephesus', *AHC* 18 (1986), 31–40.

usage of Paul in Phil. 2:8–9. It is also confirmed by numerous passages in the Gospels which speak specifically of Christ's human characteristics, and suggest their careful distinction from his divinity.[37] Nestorius' reading of the creed, in other words, is purposefully deduced from scriptural interpretation, and the grammatical analysis of biblical usage.

The assembled bishops were asked whether each document conformed to the creed. A small number of the votes glossed – very much in passing and in very general terms – their consent to Cyril's letter with the claim that it was in accord with scripture as well.[38] However, there was no discernibly substantial engagement with the theological or exegetical detail of either Cyril's or Nestorius' position on the occasion,[39] so that it would be precarious to accredit such remarks with any specific exegetical or hermeneutical insight. The most particular element of conflict over scriptural interpretation surfaces in one of the anathemas appended to Cyril's third letter to Nestorius. It is inserted in the acts of the session which condemned Nestorius and attracted the ferocious criticism of the bishops from the diocese of Oriens who arrived belatedly. Whatever the purpose of that letter in the meeting may have been historically, to them its inclusion in the acts amounted to an act of formal approbation. The fourth anathema states: 'If anyone interprets the sayings in the Gospel and apostolic writings, or the things said about Christ by the saints, or the things he says about himself, as referring to two prosopa or hypostases . . . let him be anathema.'[40]

The 'doctrinal' achievement for which Ephesus was most fervently remembered lay in its formal decision that the Nicene Creed was the unassailable norm and final expression of Christian orthodoxy; in future, no further creeds were to be produced![41] The decree created substantial difficulties for the

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37 Nestorius, *Ep. Cyr.*, *passim* (*ACO* 1.1.1, pp. 29–32). A set of extracts from Nestorius' works, which were also examined by the council (*ACO* 1.1.2, pp. 45–64), show his frequent engagement with scriptural texts.
38 Cf. votes nos. 5, 6 and 12 (*ACO* 1.1.2, pp. 14, 15, 16).
39 The excerpts collected from various writings and sermons by Nestorius and introduced in evidence against him in the acts of the session (*ACO* 1.1.2, pp. 45–52) reveal a thorough engagement with a number of biblical passages by Nestorius, and thus testify to the exegetical dimension of the conflict generally, but it is not clear, and perhaps unlikely, that any of these were discussed by the bishops during the meeting; for a discussion of this part of the meeting, see T. Graumann, *Die Kirche der Väter, Vätertheologie und Väterbeweis in den Kirchen des Ostens bis zum Konzil von Ephesus (431)*, BHT 118 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2002), pp. 385–93.
40 Cyril, *Ep.* 17 (*ACO* 1.1.1, pp. 33–42, at p. 41). Anathema 10 further addresses the interpretation specifically of Heb. 3:1 and Eph. 5:2. The entire letter is much more specifically concerned with scriptural testimony about Christ than *Ep.* 2.
41 We need not concern ourselves here with the question of whether this was the original intention of the decision. What matters is that it was later commonly understood in this way.

Council of Chalcedon, which was, ultimately, to proclaim a new formula defining acceptable christological teaching. The problem of doctrinal authority, principally in balancing the Bible, the (Nicene) Creed and previous theological writing (the fathers), is crucial to this process. Here, the main focus had shifted from the direct engagement with scripture to the interpretation of the creed and the guidance provided, in so doing, by certain theological treatises sanctioned by earlier councils. The normative role of the Bible was not discussed, and certainly taken for granted. A scene from an earlier confrontation illustrates the main difficulty. In the events eventually leading to the council, the Archimandrite Eutyches was accused before the resident synod in Constantinople in AD 448 and pressed to accept the phrasing that Christ was 'in two natures', and 'consubstantial with us' or 'with man' in his incarnation. Using the Ephesine prohibition as a convenient justification, he refused to enter into the discussion of the finer points of Christ's divine and human nature(s) and to subscribe to a specific formulation. He defended his reluctance to accept the proposed ideas first by asking for scriptural precedent for the teaching of 'two natures'. Interestingly, the 'unscriptural' provenance of *homoousios* in the Nicene Creed was held up to counter his objection. When pressed further, Eutyches was

> ready to assent to the expositions of the holy fathers who held a council at Nicaea and at Ephesus, and promised to subscribe to their interpretations, while if there happened to be some mistake or error on their part in certain expressions, this he would neither criticise nor embrace, but examine only the scriptures as being more reliable than the exposition of the fathers.[42]

Eutyches thus entered into a potentially very damning juxtaposition of scripture and fathers. His evident aim was to reserve judgement over the contested terminology, in the knowledge that it could not be demonstrated directly as scriptural usage. This allowed him specifically to disown the conciliatory letter written by Cyril to John of Antioch, which contained the kind of language he rejected. Still, holding up his adherence to scripture or the fathers as a potential alternative ran counter to the prevailing spirit of theological discourse at the time. This sense is expressed well by the presbyter Mamas who referred him to the 'holy fathers, who understood Scripture devoutly and expounded it

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42 *Concilium Chalcedonense*, session 1, no. 359 (*ACO* 2.1.1, p. 124.24–6); cf. no. 648 (p. 244). May, 'Das Lehrverfahren gegen Eutyches im November des Jahres 448. Zur Vorgeschichte des Konzils von Chalcedon', *AHC* 21 (1989), 1–61, at 17f., and Sieben, *Konzilsidee*, pp. 246f., discuss the doctrinal norms which formed the basis for trying Eutyches. It is evident that appealing to scripture alone – or just to the Nicene Creed – was not considered satisfactory to conform to contemporary orthodoxy.

faithfully', as the sources of both the Nicene *homoousios* and the phrases under consideration.[43] The authority of the fathers is thus derived from scripture and defined by their position as faithful interpreters of scripture. At the same time scriptural reading is tied firmly to the trajectory provided by the fathers' interpretation, and assent to this interpretation, and even specific wording, can be demanded as the only suitable assurance of orthodoxy. While the notion of fathers in Mamas' statement, and in much of what Eutyches has to say, is initially synonymous with the Nicene Creed, the express codification of the Nicene Creed at Ephesus demanded a further layering of documents written by subsequent theological writers who had sought to interpret it. Otherwise contemporary doctrinal questions would have to remain unanswered – which is what Eutyches was trying to achieve.

The council of Chalcedon reviewed Eutyches' trial and the hearing of his appeal at the subsequent second council of Ephesus – the so-called Robber Synod of AD 449. The relevant documents and the discussions of Eutyches' remarks were read several times from the acts of the various occasions and enter into the discussion of the Council of Chalcedon in this way. Apart from the doctrinal statements in question, it is evident that the primary concern with Eutyches' stance on all these occasions was his attitude not to scripture but to 'the fathers', because only their writings provided the specific interpretation and technical terminological clarity sought for. The council's own doctrinal work made use of exactly this technique in combining and sanctioning a range of documents as expressions of orthodoxy – as we shall see.

In addition to the elaborate scrutiny of Eutyches' assertions, the acts of the council present us with hardly any recorded substantial doctrinal debate that might allow for an assessment of the role of the Bible in its doctrinal work. The dogmatic formula eventually pronounced was drafted behind closed doors. In the overall doctrinal work, however, much of the debate centred around the validity of documents eventually accepted by the council, in particular letters of Cyril and Pope Leo.[44] This kind of interest does not make any independent exegetical inquiry, on the council's initiative, likely. As the documents read out

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43 *Concilium Chalcedonense*, session 1 no. 456 (*ACO* 2.1.1, p. 137.4–6), cf. no. 451 (p. 136).

44 Session 2, which brings up the question of defining 'the faith' for the first time, is largely taken up by the reading of such documents. The bishops even refused to contemplate drafting a fresh dogmatic formula so that it appears consistent that there is no substantive discussion. Leo's letter has strong biblical resonances chiefly in denouncing the heretical leanings of Eutyches in what is a stereotypical depiction of a 'heretic'. Eutyches is blamed for not listening to the scriptures and accused of disobeying their authority. A number of verses that Eutyches should have turned to are quoted later in the same letter (*Ep. Flav.*, originally of 13 June 449).

aloud often also concerned themselves with scripture and the interpretation of particular verses in advocating their understanding of the incarnation and the nature(s) of Christ, one might want to concede an indirect engagement with scriptural teaching at the meetings. However, these remain at best implicit and even the lauded documents cannot be described as primarily exegetical in character. Nor do the controversial details lend themselves to scriptural phrasing. Only in one instance, in the context of emphasising Christ's real humanity, described as consubstantial with us, is a biblical verse used in the final document proclaimed by the council: '[the Lord Jesus Christ is] "like us in all things apart from sin"' (Heb. 4:15).[45] The dogmatic formula itself, in its decisive passage, shows no immediate scriptural resonance. The specific difficulty of the council, not wanting to be seen to add to the formally conclusive teaching of Nicaea, sanctioned at Ephesus, as much as the general theological self-awareness of the time, demanded reflection primarily on the way it related to the tradition of 'fathers'. That the text, in its final line, also claims to teach in consonance with scripture is almost a cliché.[46] It was self-evident to presuppose that any meaningful theological statement had to conform to scripture. That this fundamental conviction had any practical influence over the discussions at Chalcedon is hard to imagine. In the absence, however, of records about the theological discussions behind closed doors, this can be no more than a hypothesis.

The theological debates that shaped the teaching about the Trinity and christology in the early church, and the councils that summed up these discussions in doctrinal, credal, definition, aspired to express the essence of scriptural teaching on the subjects. The modes of deliberation and decision-making reflect this central desire in different ways. Not always is the recourse to scripture explicit, nor is it reasonable to assume for the major councils a format of theological reflection that is dominated by exegetical inquiry. The

45 The lengthy introduction to the creed mentions, and rejects, the notion that the incarnate brought down his body from heaven – an alleged Apollinarian teaching. The idea is introduced as a misunderstanding of the 'form of the servant' (Phil. 2:7). This text had also played a central part in Nestorius' argument against Cyril.
46 The formula concludes 'even as the prophets from the beginning spoke concerning him [Jesus Christ], and our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us'. It is only in this final remark that scriptural authority is invoked. Yet the text seems not so much interested in asserting the biblical foundation of its teaching than in the continuity of the Christian understanding of Christ from the Old Testament up to the present, or rather the immediate past, represented by the fathers (*Concilium Chalcedonense, actio* 5.30–4; see also *actio* 6.8, *ACO* 2.1.2, pp. 126–30, 141).

demonstrative appeal to the all-surpassing authority of scripture in the definition of theological propositions could even equate to the refusal, couched in biblicism, to engage with the finer points of dogmatic distinction, or – as opponents would phrase it – be used to conceal heterodoxy. It is perhaps not surprising against this background that even the 'orthodoxy' that eventually prevailed cannot be explained simply as a convenient summary of scriptural teaching, nor is the genesis of the decisive formulas of faith a straightforward result of meticulous biblical study. The main creeds of the Late Antique church are not the summaries of exegetical seminars of well-intentioned bishops. The surviving acts and documents of these meetings convey a sobering picture, in that they present us with very little evidence for open biblical deliberation in the process of decision-making. However, there are so many biblical reminiscences in the formulas that it is equally unimaginable that those decisions came to pass without any substantive engagement with scripture. The literature written in the run-up to the councils provides ample evidence for the kind of discussions that paved the way for the eventual definitions, and the works written in the wake of such meetings demonstrate how the reception of their achievement constantly involved an attempt to interpret them in the context of the ongoing process of reading the Bible. The many examples of public preaching witness even more clearly to the dissemination of dogmatic definition in the everyday life of the church, and specifically into the settings of the liturgy, decidedly framed by and imbued with the reading of scripture. It is easy to overlook that the councils themselves, often drawn out over many weeks, did not lack the occasions for this rather ordinary, unspectacular engagement with scripture. The recorded formal sessions may frequently show little explicit engagement with scripture. Yet there were also many informal preparatory meetings, private conversations, the normal liturgical celebrations of the week and group or communal worship. Whatever else the participants of these meetings did in their time outside the official sessions, they certainly also engaged in and listened to the reading and preaching of scripture. It is hard to conceive that this was without effect on their technical theological deliberations and decisions. The question of the role scripture had to play in the conciliar theology of the time should not be answered exclusively by way of analysis of the language and content of their official declarations. The councils and the controversies over doctrine in general were part of the church's efforts to forge the institutional, theological and social framework of Christianity in the late Roman empire. Their doctrinal achievement is inextricably intertwined with the wider process of interpreting and appropriating

the foundational writings of the church in the intellectual, cultural and social contexts of the time. They were just as much an integral part of the life of the church, which in various ways constantly reflected upon scripture, as they were an attempt to answer the intellectual challenges posed in expounding coherently the biblical vision of God and of mankind.

The Bible in liturgy

GERARD ROUWHORST

Throughout the centuries, the Bible has been considered by Christian communities as both the centre and the heart of their liturgical celebrations and meetings. The first six centuries of Christianity, during which the basic patterns of the major Christian rituals were developed, are no exception to this view.

Although there cannot be any doubt that the Bible for (Christian) liturgy played a pivotal role in early Christian communities and especially in their liturgical meetings, it is difficult to construct a clear and accurate picture of the relationship between the Bible and early Christian liturgy. This is in part due to the diversity of early Christian liturgical traditions as well as to the complex nature of Christianity's origins and earliest development. The idea of a unified origin of Christian liturgy followed by a gradual process of diversification was for a long time current among liturgical historians, but it has been questioned and demystified by recent scholarship.[1] Early Christian worship practices have turned out to be much more varied than was believed until recently by most scholars.

Moreover, it should be noted that our views of the pre-Christian, especially the Jewish, background to early Christianity and of early Christian forms of worship have undergone considerable revision. Obviously, the emergence and further evolution of early Christian liturgy did not take place in a historical vacuum, but was profoundly affected by interactions with non-Christian, in particular Jewish and Hellenistic, rituals. Yet the processes of interaction with the non-Christian environment were more complicated than was suggested by much previous scholarship which was primarily concerned with the search for the Jewish origins of Christian liturgy. Focusing too exclusively upon the Jewish background of early Christian rituals, one risks overlooking the fact

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1 See for the following especially: Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*; Rouwhorst, 'Christlicher Gottesdienst', pp. 501–13.

that both Jews and Christians were part of the Graeco-Roman world and were influenced by its cultural as well as its religious traditions and customs. Further, recent scholarship has emphasised that the standardisation of the liturgy of the synagogue was the result of an age-long process. This should make us wary of *uncritically* using Jewish sources of a later period, such as the Mishnah, Tosefta and Talmud, to elucidate earlier periods of Jewish worship. Similar caution should also be shown in tracing early Christian liturgical practices back to Jewish liturgical traditions that are only attested by sources derived from later periods, for instance, the end of Antiquity or even during the Middle Ages. For the rest, the overriding concern with 'roots' should be considered as one-sided and problematic. Instead of only searching for roots, it appears more fruitful to study processes of interaction and transformation. What transformations did non-Christian traditions, whether Jewish, Greek or Roman, undergo in early Christianity? How were they appropriated by early Christian communities? Finally, while trying to answer these questions one will meet an old problem with which the study of early Christian liturgy had to wrestle from its very inception, but which has not always sufficiently been taken into account: the scarcity and the fragmentary character of the sources available. The information we can gain about early Christian worship, especially in the first three centuries, has come down to us in bits and pieces. All we can do is try to assemble them to the best of our ability.

Apart from these problems raised by research on early Christian liturgy in general, there is another reason more specifically connected with the liturgical reading of the Bible that makes charting the relationship between the Bible and early Christian liturgy a difficult task. From the very beginning of Christianity, there was an ongoing mutual interaction between liturgy and the Bible.[2] On the one hand, liturgy can be considered as the cradle of the (Christian) Bible, as from the very beginning biblical books were read during the (liturgical) gatherings of early Christian communities. The Bible did not only and certainly not in the first place function as a book to be studied by individual believers or scholars. It was primarily a liturgical book that was read, chanted and explained by communities in liturgical settings. This implied an appropriation, that is a Christian appropriation, by these communities. The way in which the Bible was used was significantly affected by the liturgical settings in which communities functioned, and by the beliefs and convictions of the celebrating communities. These were reflected, for instance, in the selection of the lections and the books from which they were taken, in

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2 See for the complex relation between the Bible and liturgy: Jörns, 'Liturgy. Cradle of Scripture?'

their way of being combined with other biblical and non-biblical texts and non-verbal elements such as music, symbolic actions, gestures. On the other hand, the Bible was considered as the foundation of Christian liturgy, and deeply influenced its development. Biblical traditions – in particular the ritual practices described in the Old and the New Testaments – served as models for Christian liturgical celebrations and were also used to legitimise these celebrations.

It will not be possible here to address all the facets of the relationship between the Bible and liturgy. Thus, I shall not address the question of the role played by liturgy in the composition of biblical books and in the formation and demarcation of the biblical canon. It is obvious that it has played a role, but there is not sufficient evidence to support reliable and convincing conclusions that go beyond this statement. Further, it is not feasible to deal exhaustively with several aspects of liturgical intertextuality, with the 'dialogues' that take place within the liturgy between all sorts of biblical fragments, with forms of centonisation or biblical allusions made in prayers and songs.[3] Finally, the whole field of homiletics, the way in which the Bible was explained and interpreted in sermons, is dealt with elsewhere in this volume.

In the following, I shall limit myself to two major issues. First, I shall deal with the use of biblical texts in various liturgical settings and frameworks and with the effects this had upon these texts. While doing so, I shall focus upon the recitation or reading of larger biblical text units, basically biblical lectionaries and psalms. More specifically, I shall pay attention to the various ways in which they were selected and combined in various types of liturgical celebrations and to the hermeneutical principles underlying the selection and combination of these texts units. In the second part, I shall give some examples of the increasing impact biblical traditions had upon the growth and development of early Christian feasts and rituals.

The liturgical reading of the Bible

The reading of scripture at liturgical gatherings is not a Christian invention. There were clear precedents for this practice in Judaism, which have doubtless left traces in early Christianity. This is all the more likely since Christianity received a substantial part of its Bible from Judaism. At the same time, the degree of continuity or discontinuity between Judaism and early Christianity

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3 See for this issue A. Gerhards and B. Kranemann, *Einführung in die Liturgiewissenschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), pp. 164–6.

on this point is a matter of ongoing dispute. To clarify this question, it is of primary importance to have an exact idea, based upon reliable sources, about the reading of the Bible in Judaism at the beginning of the Common Era. We shall briefly examine the data provided by these sources.

Reading of scripture in temple and synagogue

The reading of biblical texts played a very marginal role in the rituals and celebrations that took place in the temple in Jerusalem.[4] Worship in the First and Second Temple periods mainly consisted of sacrifices and (vegetal) offerings. The sole biblical texts that were recited in this basically sacrificial cult on a regular basis were psalms, some of which must have already been used and may have even originated in the First Temple period. Information about the singing of psalms in the Second Temple period is provided by the Mishna tractate *Tamid* (7:3; cf. Sir. 50:16–18). A *baraita* (legal ruling) appended to this Mishna tractate lists the psalms that were sung by the Levites each day of the week after the daily sacrifices (m. Tam 7:4). Moreover, at the big festivals, the Hallel psalms (113–18) were sung. The reading of other biblical passages remained limited to some special occasions, more precisely to the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) and to the Feast of Tabernacles (once in seven years, chapters from the Torah were read on this feast).

By contrast, the regular reading of scripture had from the very beginning a very central place in the synagogues. Most probably, the oldest nucleus of the meetings in the synagogues was constituted by the reading and the study of passages from the Torah on the Sabbath, the communal reciting of the daily prayers having possibly been added after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.[5] The antiquity of this custom remains disputed, but there can be no doubt that it existed at the beginning of the Common Era, certainly in the diaspora and in the regions that did not belong to the direct surroundings of Jerusalem where the temple stood. Furthermore, the synagogue, and as a result also the regular reading from the Torah and the Prophets, quickly and increasingly gained momentum after the fall of the temple. This being said, we remain in the dark about many aspects of those meetings.[6] All we know for

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4 Cf. for the following: S. Safrai, 'The Temple', in S. Safrai and M. Stern, with D. Flusser and W. van Unnik, *The Jewish People in the First Century*, Compendium Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 1:2, 2nd edn (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1987), pp. 865–907; Rouwhorst, 'Christlicher Gottesdienst', p. 523.

5 See for the question of the origins and the earliest history of the synagogue and its liturgy: Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*; Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, pp. 53–78.

6 See for the reading of scripture in the synagogue: Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 135–51, 506–10; Perrot, 'Reading of the Bible'; Stemberger, 'Schriftlesung II'.

sure is that the books of the Torah were read and explained on the Sabbaths and that the reading of a passage from the Torah was followed by a *haftarah*, a pericope taken from the Prophets (the earliest source which definitely attests the existence of this custom is Acts 13:15, and it is very probable that Luke 4:16–21 refers to it too; see also 2 Cor. 3:15). Furthermore, it may be safely assumed that, from an early period and probably from the very beginning, the principle of *lectio continua* was followed, that is, the entire five books of the Torah were read within a certain period, for instance within a year or within three years. Still, more detailed information about the structures of the reading systems is lacking and there is no solid basis for the various attempts that have been made to reconstruct annual or triennial cycles that would have been practised in the first centuries CE. Earlier forms of the reading cycles that are attested by later sources may have already existed in the period in which Christianity emerged, but to what extent this was the case remains a matter of conjecture. Furthermore, we do not have precise information about the development of the festal pericopes that were read during the great Jewish festivals and were not part of the continuous reading of the Torah and Sabbath. The Mishnah (m. Meg. 3.4–6) indicates fixed lections for the major festivals. Some of these pericopes may go back to the period of the Second Temple, but the reading of these biblical passages may also have been introduced into the synagogue service after the fall of the Second Temple. These festal pericopes, most of which describe temple rituals which could no longer be performed, might have been considered as alternatives to those rituals and as means of keeping the memory of the period of the temple alive.

Finally, it has to be observed that originally psalms played hardly any role in the liturgy of the synagogue.[7] The oldest examples of psalms being recited in the synagogue on a regular basis are the Hallel psalms (at the great festivals), Ps. 92 (the Sabbath Psalm) and Ps. 100 (which is read during the morning prayer). Most probably, these psalms were taken over from the temple cult (after the destruction of the Second Temple). Most of the psalms that are now to be found in Jewish prayer books entered the synagogue at a much later date. Their recitation originated as a sort of preparation by pious Jews for the morning and evening prayer. From a certain period onwards (early Middle Ages), they were considered as belonging to the services themselves.

The picture I have sketched of the reading of the Bible in the temple and synagogue is much less complete and more fragmentary than the

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7 See for this question: Maier, 'Zur Verwendung der Psalmen'.

surveys encountered in several older publications suggest.[8] Obviously, this will have implications for the reconstruction of the reading of scripture in early Christianity. It of course does not mean that any form of continuity between Judaism and Christianity on this point has categorically to be denied. Nor should we discount ongoing interaction between Judaism and Christianity in this later period.[9] Still, it implies that many traditional views about the (Jewish) origin of early Christian tradition concerning the reading of the Bible have to be rejected, or at least revised. I hope that the rest of this contribution will make clear to what degree and when this will be the case.

Reading of scripture in the New Testament period

The questions that arise with regard to the reading of the Bible in the New Testament period relate to two major issues. (i) The liturgical reading of the Jewish Bible, the Old Testament: did early Christian communities in their liturgical meetings read from the Old Testament on a regular basis? And if they did so, to what degree did they continue traditions which existed in the synagogue(s)? (ii) The transmission of early Christian oral traditions and written texts that later became incorporated into the New Testament canon: what role did liturgical meetings play in this process?

To start with the first issue, it is necessary to take into account the complex character and diversity of early Christianity. It was composed of different groups and communities, whose character was to a considerable degree determined by the provenance of their members. Were all or most of them of Jewish origin and were they therefore familiar with the Jewish traditions of their time, or did all or most of them come from paganism? It goes without saying that this fact affected the role which the reading of scripture played in these communities.[10]

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8 See A. Baumstark, *Vom geschichtlichen Werden der Liturgie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1923), pp. 15–17; English translation by F. West: *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011); A. Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée* (Chevetogne: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1953), pp. 49–51; G. Dix, *The Shape of Liturgy* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 36; J. Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia*, 3rd edn (Vienna: Herder, 1952), pp. 25–6; 501–2.

9 The widespread idea of a 'parting of the ways' which is fixed at a certain period (for instance at 70 or 135 CE) is misleading. Interactions between Judaism and Christianity continued occurring throughout Antiquity (and also in later periods). See, in this connection: A. Becker and A. Y. Reed (eds.), *The Ways that Never Parted*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 95 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), and the sometimes bold but inspiring publications of D. Boyarin (see his book, *Border Lines* and his article 'Semantic Differences, or "Judaism"/"Christianity"', published in Becker and Reed (eds.), *The Ways that Never Parted*, pp. 65–86).

10 Cf. for the following my articles 'Reading of Scripture' and 'The Oldest Greek Biblical Manuscripts'.

The communities which were predominantly or exclusively Jewish in origin no doubt continued the customs that were current in the synagogues they frequented (together with other Jews, at least during some decades). It clearly emerges from several passages in the book of Acts that they held the reading from the Torah and the Prophets on the Sabbaths in high esteem. According to Acts 15:21, James, representative and spokesman of the Jewish Christians, states that 'in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every Sabbath in the synagogues'. A comparison of this passage with Acts 13:15 makes it clear that the expression 'Moses being read in the synagogues' refers to the reading of 'the Law and the Prophets'.

Matters must have been different in those communities which consisted (mainly) of Christians from paganism. This certainly was the case with the meetings described by Paul in 1 Cor. 11–14. The most prominent elements that are mentioned there – prophecy, singing of hymns – have no direct parallel in the synagogue meetings. 1 Cor. 11–14 implies a structure similar to that of a Graeco-Roman 'symposium', which consisted of a communal banquet held in the evening and followed by a session which involved the drinking of wine (hence the name 'symposium', drinking party). This session might include entertainment, but also discussion about philosophical or religious issues as well as singing of religious hymns.[11] Whatever the case, whether the meetings described by Paul are considered as Christian symposia or not, the most characteristic features of synagogue meetings – the reading from the Torah and the Prophets – are not mentioned.

Still, it would be premature to draw from this fact the conclusion that the community of Corinth did not read during their liturgical meetings from the Old Testament at all. There is even less reason to apply such a view to all forms of Gentile Christianity. In circumstances in which many Gentile Christians were not familiar with readings from the Old Testament, they must have become so rather soon. How would they otherwise have obtained knowledge of the content of this book which played an important role in the development of the earliest forms of Christian theological thought? In this connection, it is important to note that the post-Pauline letters to Timothy make mention of divinely inspired scripture (2 Tim. 3:15–16) and equally of books, especially

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11 See for the symposia and their impact upon the liturgical meetings described in 1 Cor. 11–14 and upon other early Christian communal meals: M. Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft. Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern* (Tübingen and Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996); D. E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist. The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2003); V. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering. Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 102 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

parchments (2 Tim. 4:13). Moreover, 1 Tim. 4:13 calls Christians to give atten-
tion to 'reading [anagnosis], admonition and instruction' (cf. also 2 Tim. 3:16).
It is obvious that the divinely inspired scripture refers to the Old Testament,
and it is natural to assume that it was read during the meetings (possibly in
combination with other writings, for instance letters of Paul) and also served
as a basis for the exhortation and instruction mentioned.

As for the writings that would become incorporated in the New Testament
canon, it may first of all be observed that the text of the letters of Paul and
of the book of Revelation indicates that they were meant to be read out in
Christian assemblies and definitely were.[12] Still, there are no indications of a
liturgical, in the sense of a *repeated* or *ritualised*, reading of these texts taking
place in the New Testament period. The situation is even less clear with
regard to the stories about Jesus' life, death and resurrection that formed the
basis of the written Gospels. It is generally agreed that they were handed
on in early Christian meetings, but we remain in the dark as to how this
occurred. Anyway, attempts that have been made to infer developed liturgies
from the New Testament have to be dismissed as fanciful speculation. This
holds in particular for the varying theories that have tried to establish links
between the composition of the Gospels and an annual or triennial reading
of the Torah and the Prophets which would have been taken over by early
Christian communities from Judaism.[13]

The situation is perhaps somewhat different with regard to the various ver-
sions of the passion narrative. On the one hand, the traditional view according
to which the institution narratives of the Synoptic Gospels were recited dur-
ing the Eucharistic celebrations has been abandoned by the majority of the
liturgical scholars. Actually, the earliest hard evidence for a Eucharistic cel-
ebration containing an institution narrative dates to the end of the third or
even the second half of the fourth century.[14] On the other hand, it has been
suggested by some scholars that the passion narrative in its entirety might

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12 See Alikin, *The Earliest History*, pp. 158–68.

13 See A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960); M. Goulder,
Midrash and Lection in Matthew (London: SPCK, 1974); M. Goulder, *The Evangelist's Calendar*
(London: SPCK, 1978). All these theories have been severely criticised for their highly speculative
character (see Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, pp. 48–9).

14 See R. Taft, 'Mass without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist
between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October
2001', *Centro pro Unione. Semi-Annual Bulletin* 63 (spring 2003), 15–27 (also in *Worship* 77 (2003),
482–509); P. Bradshaw, 'Did Jesus Institute the Eucharist at the Last Supper?', in M. E. Johnson
(ed.), *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West. Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis*
(Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), pp. 1–19 (also in P. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early
Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2009), pp. 3–19).

have been handed on in the liturgical setting of the yearly celebration of the early Christian (Quartodeciman) Passover that was celebrated in the night from 14 to 15 Nisan to commemorate the passion of the Lord and his victory over death and was concluded by a celebration of the Eucharist.[15]

Multiple forms of liturgical reading of scripture after the New Testament period

The history of the liturgical reading of scripture in the period following the composition of the New Testament writings until the end of Antiquity is a complicated process. It involved the gradual crystallisation of an initially almost infinite diversity of flexible and local practices into a limited number of eastern and western traditions, the outlines of which became visible at a rather early period, at least from the fourth century onwards. The best way to create some order in the seeming chaos of customs is to distinguish between the various types of liturgical celebrations which existed in early Christianity and to see what place the reading of scripture occupied in each of them. While doing so, we shall focus on two major questions: the selection of the pericopes and their way of being combined within these various types of celebration.

Early Christian meals

Recent research on the history of early Christian liturgy has highlighted the importance of early Christian meals, which are considered by an increasing number of scholars as Christian varieties of Graeco-Roman symposia, as already noted.[16] A clear distinction was for a long time made between 'ordinary meals', or agape meals, and Eucharists held in commemoration of the death of the Lord and preceded by a service of the Word, but this distinction has been questioned as far as the first three centuries are concerned. It is posited by an increasing number of scholars that the classical form of the Eucharist developed only gradually within the setting of the Christian symposia, and that the contours of the former became visible only in the course of the third and fourth centuries. If this is indeed the case, we cannot avoid asking what we can know about the reading of scripture during early Christian communal meals that were not preceded by a service of the Word.

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15 See in particular R. Feneberg, *Eine biblisch-hermeneutische Untersuchung der neutestamentlichen Einsetzungsberichte* (Munich: Kösel Verlag, 1971), pp. 111–39; G. Rouwhorst, 'La célébration de l'eucharistie dans l'Église primitive', *Questions liturgiques* 74 (1993), 89–112. For the Quartodeciman Passover, see Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, pp. 39–59.
16 See for the following especially Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*.

The oldest document that contains data concerning early Christian (Eucharistic) meals, the Didache, does not mention any form of scripture reading. It refers exclusively to prayers of thanksgiving and – according to some scholars – hymns. How to account for that fact? Did the author or redactor present a rather incomplete picture of the Eucharistic meals, and did he omit mentioning the reading of scripture (although it was part of those meals)? Or was this element rather reserved for something like a separate service of the Word? The latter possibility cannot be ruled out, all the more so since the majority of the Christians belonging to this community must have had a Jewish background, though this remains conjectural.

Relevant data from Tertullian's writing are hardly more conclusive. While giving a description of the supper celebrated by the Christian community,[17] Tertullian writes in his *Apologeticum* that everybody is invited to 'sing from the holy scriptures or from their own composition' (39.18). It seems clear that the psalms are meant here (see also *De ieiunio* 13), and that they could apparently alternate with (non-biblical) hymns. However, what about the other parts of the Bible? Elsewhere, Tertullian indicates that passages from other scriptures (*Apologeticum* 22.3) – especially from the works of the prophets (*Apologeticum* 22.9) and from the apostles (*Praescriptio* 36) – were read during liturgical meetings, but it does not become clear whether this happened during the supper mentioned or during a different type of liturgical service.

Finally, communal meals and suppers appear at several places in the many versions and translations and other witnesses of the enigmatic text known as the *Apostolic Tradition*. It is no easy task to reconstruct the meal practices underlying these versions, yet the question of whether they would have involved the reading of scripture can be dealt with briefly. The sole passage that refers to it is only attested in the Ethiopic version (chapter 25).[18] It is part of a description of a supper which begins with the bringing in of, and the thanksgiving for, the light and is followed by the offering of a cup and the recitation of a number of psalms. The provenance and date of origin of this passage are too much in question to allow us to draw any conclusion from it concerning the reading of scripture during early Christian meals.

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17 This supper, which is called a 'dilectio' ('affection', chapter 16), has often been considered an agape meal, but according to some it was a Eucharistic celebration (Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, p. 99; A. McGowan, 'Rethinking Agape and Eucharist in Early North African Christianity, *Studia Liturgica* 34 (2004), 165–76).

18 That is, chapter 29C of the translation published by P. Bradshaw, M. Johnson and L. Philips, *The Apostolic Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002), pp. 156–60.

Separate services of the Word

The earliest – and rather extensive – evidence for the existence of separate services of the Word is provided by the homilies of Origen. A large number of these homilies were originally delivered at Caesarea on weekdays in the setting of a sort of liturgical service, the core of which was formed by the (semi-) continuous reading of entire liturgical books, the majority of them being part of the Old Testament. The homilies followed the text of the biblical books rather closely. Contrary to what has been suggested by Pierre Nautin,[19] these liturgical services were not meant for catechumens, but for (a select audience of) baptised Christians who wanted to deepen their insight in the meaning of scripture.[20]

The reading and explanation of scripture also formed the heart of services of the Word which, at least from the fourth century onwards, were held in certain regions on weekdays during the period of Lent. The existence of this practice is most clearly attested by several sources derived from Antioch and Jerusalem. Thus, we know on the basis of a series of homilies on Genesis delivered by John Chrysostom at Antioch (see *PG*, 53.21–384, 54.581–620) that it was customary in this city to read in the continuous manner the book of Genesis during this period in afternoon services.[21] As for Jerusalem, the so-called Armenian lectionary[22] – which represents the situation of the liturgy in that city and its surrounding area at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century – attests a continuous reading (from the first chapter onwards, without gaps between the lections, but not continuing till the end) of the following books: Exodus, 1 Kings, Proverbs, Jeremiah and Joel. In addition, parts of Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Job were read in a semi-continuous way (with smaller or greater gaps between the pericopes selected).

The reading of scripture in the first part of the Eucharist

Until recently, it was generally assumed that the so-called classical type of Eucharist, which was characterised by a bipartite structure – the Eucharistic part being preceded by a service of the Word – and was celebrated in the morning instead of the evening, had gained general acceptance everywhere from the middle of the second century at the latest. This conviction determined the perspective from which the history of the Eucharist in the first three

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19 Nautin, *Origène*, p. 395.   20 See Salzmann, *Lehren und Ermahnen*, pp. 433–4.
21 See Zerfaß, *Die Schriftlesung*, pp. 133–7.   22 Renoux, *Le codex arménien*.

centuries was approached and this also had implications for the study of the liturgical reading of scripture in that period.

However, a careful study of the sources available makes plain that the evidence for this type of Eucharist – and all the more so for the reading of the Bible in the first part of it – in this period is very scanty.[23] The earliest source to attest this practice is Justin Martyr's often quoted and discussed description of the Sunday Eucharist (*1 Apol.* 65–7). Justin makes mention of a reading from the 'memories of the apostles or the writings of the prophets as long as the time permits' (*1 Apol.* 66). The fact that the reading from either book, the Old or the New Testament, is apparently considered as self-evident is a remarkable thing. Noteworthy is also the use of the word 'prophets', which most probably refers to the entire Old Testament and understands it as a book containing prophecies of Christ and the church. However, further details concerning the selection and combination of pericopes are lacking. It is clear that the greatest possible flexibility existed in this respect. Besides Justin, the only pre-Nicene author who in his writings gives evidence of being familiar with the bipartite type of Eucharist was Cyprian.[24] However, he does not give many details about the lections that were selected. The only thing that becomes clear is that the reading of the Gospel had a prominent place.[25]

We find ourselves on more solid ground in the fourth and fifth centuries. Several patristic and liturgical sources deriving from various regions inform us about the pericopes that were read in the first part of the Eucharist on Sundays (and sometimes also on weekdays). What practically all the systems have in common is that they contain two New Testament readings, the first one being taken from the letters of Paul – probably with the exception of some systems that seem to have been customary in the Syriac-speaking region – and the other from the Gospels. However, a great diversity exists with regard to the selection of the Old Testament pericopes, which are always read before the lections derived from the New Testament. One may distinguish three major traditions:[26]

1. In the regions east of Antioch where a large part of the Christians spoke Syriac, the two New Testament readings were preceded by two or some- times even more pericopes derived from the Old Testament, with at least

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23 Cf. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*.   24 Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, pp. 108–14.
25 See V. Saxer, *Vie liturgique et quotidienne à Carthage vers le milieu du IIIᵉ siècle* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1969), pp. 218–19.
26 Cf. for the following: Rouwhorst, 'Reading of Scripture', pp. 325–30; Rouwhorst, 'The Oldest Greek Biblical Manuscripts'; Martimort, 'À propos'.

one being taken from the Law and one from the Prophets. This practice perfectly fits in with a commandment ascribed to the apostles and preserved in the Syriac *Doctrine of the Apostles* (fourth century) which states that on the *bema* (podium) of the church nothing should be read except the 'Old Testament, the Prophets, the Gospel and the Acts of the triumphs of the Apostles' (note the absence of any reference to the letters of Paul!).[27] Moreover, the custom of reading at least one pericope from the Pentateuch and one from the Prophets – in combination with a lection taken from the Epistles and one from the Gospel – has been preserved by the Christians following the east Syrian rite as well as the west Syrian liturgical traditions.[28] The practice must be in one way or the other related to that of the synagogue and clearly betrays contact with Jewish traditions, either in an early or in a later phase of the history of Syriac Christianity. Incidentally, there are no direct parallels to be found with Jewish liturgical reading systems known from the sources available.

2. In some traditions – especially in Gaul, Spain and in fourth-century Antioch (according to the Antiochene writings of John Chrysostom) – only one Old Testament passage was read during the Eucharist (before the two New Testament lessons), which as a rule was taken from the Prophets and not from the Law (Pentateuch). Obviously, this practice betrays a specific Christian understanding of the Old Testament as a prophetic book containing types and prophecies pointing to Christ.

3. In several traditions – including some which had a great impact upon the further development of eastern and western liturgies – during the Eucharist there were only two New Testament readings and none which was taken from the Old Testament. Thus in the so-called Armenian lectionary, one of the most important witnesses of the tradition of Jerusalem, the reading of Old Testament passages was reserved for special occasions, such as the commemorations of Old Testament saints or vigils that were concluded by a celebration of the Eucharist (for vigils, see the next section). Next, it is striking that the earliest sources containing information about the reading of the Bible in the Eucharist celebrated at Rome usually indicate only two New Testament readings. It appears that Augustine was familiar

27 See W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864; reprinted Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2005, p. 27; A. Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, CSCO 401/402 (Leuven: CSCO, 1979), p. 44 (38).

28 Cf. for the liturgical reading of the Bible in the east and west Syrian traditions: Rouwhorst, 'Les lectionnaires syriaques', in Amphoux and Bouhot (eds.), *La lecture liturgique*, pp. 105–40. See also Baumstark, *Nichtevangelische syrische Perikopenordnungen*.

with a similar pattern and that, perhaps apart from the (Constantinopolitan) homilies of John Chrysostom which are difficult to locate and to interpret, this was also followed in Constantinople. In the past, it was often assumed that the Eucharist in Rome, Constantinople and Africa once included a reading from the Old Testament.[29] Theoretically, it might have done so, but in that case this custom is not visible in the sources that have been preserved.

Apart from the biblical readings in the usual sense of the word, the Eucharist of the fourth and fifth centuries features another noteworthy phenomenon: the regular singing of biblical psalms that were inserted at specific points in the service.[30] The most widely and earliest attested case is that of the responsorial psalm(s) sung between the readings. This custom is to be found in all the eastern and western rites. Other favourite places where psalms were inserted were the entrance of the bishop at the beginning of the liturgy (the introit of the Roman liturgy), the entrance with the gifts, before the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer, and the distribution of communion. Contrary to what was long generally assumed – especially with regard to the responsorial psalm between the readings – there is no direct historical continuity with the customs of the synagogue. The inclusion of psalms in the Eucharist is connected with a more general phenomenon that was characterised by James McKinnon as the 'great wave of enthusiasm for the Old Testament psalms which swept from east to west in the second half of the fourth century'.[31] This development is at the same time due to the inner dynamics of Christian liturgical celebrations, in particular the Eucharist, which called for an alternation of spoken texts and forms of singing (by the community, supported by choirs or soloists).

Vigils and feasts

Biblical readings hold a very prominent place in a type of Christian ritual which is often combined with a Eucharist – or with another type of celebration, such as an evening or morning prayer – but nonetheless deserves to be dealt with separately: the vigils that were held on the eve of, or in the night before, a Christian feast. The presence of a special theme related to the character of the feast, in conjunction with the length of the vigil, leads to a peculiar way of selecting and combining biblical passages that recalls a collage. Texts drawn from a considerable number of varying biblical books are selected because

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29 This hypothesis is rejected by Martimort, 'À propos', 42–3.
30 See Gelston, *The Psalms in Christian Worship*, pp. 17–20.
31 McKinnon, 'The Fourth Century Origin of the Gradual', especially 98.

they evoke associations with the major festal theme and this again contributes to widening and enriching the festal vigil.

The origin of this process was no doubt the Passover vigil, which started with a reading and typological explanation of Exod. 12. Early evidence of it is provided by Melito's *Paschal Homily* and Origen's treatise *On Pascha*. Exod. 12 must have attracted other biblical texts, for instance a passion narrative, but also Old Testament prophecies pointing to the death and resurrection of Christ, the true Passover Lamb.[32] This resulted in vigils consisting of twelve or even more pericopes. Thus, the aforementioned Armenian lectionary indicates that, at the end of the fourth century, in Jerusalem twelve lections were read during the Easter vigil, ten being drawn from the Old and two from the New Testament.[33] Constantinople even had fifteen readings. Moreover, the Easter vigil served as a model for other festal vigils and occasionally also for celebrations held during the day. The Armenian lectionary has a vigil, also containing twelve lections, at Epiphany – celebrated on 6 January to commemorate the birth of Christ – and a celebration on Good Friday during which the relic of the cross is venerated and eight psalms, eight readings from the prophets, eight readings from the apostles and four passages from the Gospels are recited. Numerous other examples derived from various traditions might be added, varying from full-blown all-night vigils to shorter celebrations held on special nights or days to commemorate a special event or to venerate a specific saint.

The liturgy of the hours

The reading of scripture, finally, fulfilled an important, but also peculiar, role in the liturgy of the hours or the Divine Office, that is, the services held at fixed times during the day (and the night).

Two remarks are in order with regard to these services.[34] First, they had their origins in early Christian custom of praying at set times, which itself had its roots in Jewish traditions. This custom was not limited to specific categories of Christians, for instance ascetics or monks. The communal morning and evening prayers which formed the nucleus of the so-called 'cathedral office' were public services attended by laity as well as clergy. It was only after the

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32 See for the development of the paschal vigil in early Christianity: H. auf der Maur, *Die Osterfeier in der alten Kirche aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von R. Messner und W. Schöpf mit einem Beitrag von Clemens Leonhard* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003), pp. 32–110.
33 Auf der Maur, *Osterfeier*, p. 189.
34 See, for the liturgy of the hours, Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours*.

rise of monasticism in the fourth century that the liturgy of the hours became increasingly affected by monastic traditions and practices. Second, what is of particular importance in relation to our issue is that, probably with the exception of Egypt,[35] the (cathedral) liturgy of the hours originally did not include scripture readings (other than psalms).[36] Evening and morning prayer were just times for praying, that is of praise and intercession. The incorporation of readings into these services occurred at a later stage. Tellingly, biblical readings are almost completely lacking in the east Syrian rite, which is known for having preserved many ancient traditions.

The first biblical texts to obtain a place in the liturgy of the hours were psalms, more specifically some that could easily be linked with the rhythm of day and night. Thus we know that, at the latest in the fourth century, the evening Ps. 141, which refers to the evening sacrifice (verse 2), and the morning Ps. 63 (cf. verse 6) were part of the evening and morning prayer of the 'cathedral' rites. In the monastic types of the Divine Office which developed from the fourth century onwards, both the number of services held during the day and the night and the number of psalms increased considerably. Typical of the monastic way of selecting psalms is that the number, rather than the specific themes, became important. Thus a certain number of psalms was recited during a service, during a day or night, or within a week, without taking into consideration the contents of the particular texts.

Two factors played a role in the incorporation of other biblical texts in the liturgy of the hours. First, the various hours merged with services that were linked with the festal calendar, especially with vigils held on the eve of feasts and with services of the Word during Lent. A clear example is provided by the vespers of the Byzantine rite celebrated on the eve of festivals and on the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent (when the vespers are combined with a communion service, forming together the liturgy of the presanctified). The (predominantly Old Testament) readings of the festal vespers are derived from ancient vigils and those of the liturgy of the presanctified from (originally separate) Lenten services of the Word. Apart from this development, it became customary in monasteries to read during the services, especially during the night, large portions of the Bible. The passages might be taken from the book of Psalms, but also from other biblical books. This practice existed in the Pachomian monasteries of Upper Egypt and the monastic communities of Lower Egypt described by John Cassian's *Institutes*, and furthermore it is

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35 Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 35–6.   36 See for the following Zerfaß, *Die Schriftlesung*.

prescribed by the *Regula magistri*, the old monastic office of Rome and the Rule of St Benedict.[37]

Lectio continua and festal pericopes

One may distinguish two basic ways of selecting biblical pericopes. One may either take as one's guiding principle the unity of a specific biblical book and read it through either in its entirety or in part, but anyway consecutively within a certain period of time (*lectio continua* or semi-*continua*), or one may start from the calendar and look for texts that fit in best with the theme of a special feast or time of the year. Each of these principles underlies a particular approach to the biblical texts. Continuous reading tends to give priority to the biblical books, to consider them in their own right. It may also lead to a systematic exegetical interpretation. But the recitation of an entire book or the reading of a long text without any further explanation may also function as an ascetical exercise or as a meditation technique. On the other hand, when a text is placed within the setting of a feast, it tends to be affected by its festal setting and to be interpreted from the perspective of this setting.

In the period when the liturgical year was still in its infancy, the number of festal pericopes was very limited and the principle of the *lectio continua* was probably followed very frequently. We have already mentioned Origen's homilies, but series of sermons delivered by other church fathers, for instance, John Chrysostom and Augustine, equally presuppose that the same custom was practised. This raises the question of whether a certain system was underlying these practices or whether the books were freely selected by the leaders of the communities, for instance, by the homilist. One gets the impression that, at least in the first four centuries, fixed rules did not exist. Incidentally, there are no indications that early Christians followed systems of continuous reading that were borrowed from the synagogue.

From the fourth century onwards, one may discern a twofold tendency. First, the number of feasts and, as a corollary, of festal pericopes, increases spectacularly. At the same time, the systems of continuous reading become more and more fixed and connected with specific periods during the liturgical year. Still, a great variety exists between the various traditions. Thus, the east Syrian reading system, which was probably standardised around the sixth century, betrayed a strong predilection for continuous reading. This also holds – although to a lesser degree – for the reading systems that developed in

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37 See Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 57–73, 93–120.

Jerusalem and in the Saturday and Sunday Eucharists of the Byzantine rite. By contrast, *lectio continua* hardly occurs in the Coptic rite.[38]

One can note another remarkable phenomenon. Continuous reading of the Gospels and the Epistles is much more frequent than *lectio continua* of the Old Testament. Moreover, the latter is practically limited to monastic services, a very remarkable case being the liturgical tradition of Rome as well as of Benedictine monasteries: whereas the Eucharist of Roman tradition as a rule only comprised two New Testament lections, the monastic nocturns of the matins office containing from the end of Antiquity a continuous reading of the entire Bible, including the entire Old Testament (within one year).[39] This implies that only monks and the clergy got access to the Old Testament and that the laity, which usually only attended the Eucharist, hardly became familiar with it. It also shows the rather subordinate place that, in the Roman as well as in other traditions, was accorded to the Old Testament compared to the New Testament.

Christian appropriation of the biblical psalms

As was stated at the beginning of this contribution, the liturgical reading of the Bible by Christian communities implies an appropriation (as does any reading of any piece of literature by any reader or any reading community).[40] This holds for all the parts of the Bible that were read in early Christian liturgy, even when the principle of continuous reading was followed. However, the clearest example of Christian appropriation is without doubt provided by the liturgical reading and chanting of the psalms which, at least from the fourth century onwards (see above), played a very prominent role in Christian liturgy, both in the Eucharist and in the Divine Office (but also in other rituals, such as the funeral rites). The appropriation of these texts did not just consist in the fact that they were used in a Christian liturgical setting, that they were interpreted in sermons from a (Christian) hermeneutical perspective or employed to accompany specific rituals, such as the offering of bread and wine during the Eucharist. What contributed in a particular way to their Christian appropriation was that the texts themselves were combined and interwoven – in a manner which did not happen to any other category of biblical texts used in liturgical settings – with other biblical and non-biblical textual elements.

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38 Cf. for the differences between the various rites on this point: Brakmann, 'Der christlichen Bibel erster Teil'.
39 See for further details P. Salmon, *L'office divin* (Paris: Cerf, 1959), pp. 135–42.
40 See in particular M. de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien. Vol. 1: Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), who describes reading as a kind of 'poaching' ('braconnage'), pp. 239–55.

Here one can mention the typically Christian usage of concluding psalms with doxologies. However, a fact that affected the psalms used in Christian liturgy even more profoundly is that they were combined with poetic elements, such as refrains, responds, antiphons or *troparia*, which were often inserted between the verses and in many cases led to suppression of the psalm verses. Psalms became inundated with poetical elements. To use a metaphor that was first employed by Anton Baumstark: psalms sometimes became covered with the ivy of liturgical poetry[41] – a form of appropriation which, in some cases, made the text of the psalms practically invisible.

The Bible as the foundation of liturgy

The fact that the Bible is used in liturgy implies that it is taken out of its original context and placed in a different setting which necessarily affects it. However, one may also discern an opposite tendency in the history of Christian liturgy, which implies that liturgical rituals are based on biblical models and patterns. One might adduce numerous examples of this phenomenon. I shall limit myself to two remarkable cases.

The first example is provided by the increasing importance of the institution narrative(s) which gradually assumed an authoritative character for the celebration of the Eucharist and was incorporated in the Eucharistic prayer. The process took place in various stages.[42] At the beginning, the tradition transmitted by the stories about Jesus' last meal determined the character of the Eucharistic meals, which probably followed the pattern of Graeco-Roman symposia, only in an indirect way. In so far as it played a role in the celebration of the Eucharist by the church and served as its foundation, as a model to be followed (as, for instance is the case in 1 Cor. 11 and in Justin's *1 Apol.* 66),[43] it was not explicitly referred to during the celebration itself. A next phase is to be found in the oldest core of the Syriac *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*. The ancient nucleus of this anaphora, which probably dates from the third or fourth century, does not quote an institution narrative, but nonetheless makes an allusion to this.[44] The next step consisted of inserting a version of the narrative in the text of the Eucharistic prayer. The earliest evidence for

41 Baumstark, *Vom geschichtlichen Werden der Liturgie*, pp. 103–15.
42 See Taft, 'Mass without the Consecration?', and Bradshaw, 'Did Jesus Institute the Eucharist?'
43 It is doubtful whether this was always and everywhere the case (see Bradshaw, 'Did Jesus Institute').
44 The text mentions the offering in commemoration of the body and blood of Christ, which is made as Christ has taught us (to do so). See A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), pp. 51–2.

it is provided by the anaphora of the so-called *Apostolic Tradition* (Chapter 4), a composite work that was probably redacted in the second part of the third or even in the fourth century (the institution narrative and perhaps even the entire anaphora belongs to the most recent, rather than to the oldest, strata of the text).[45] Once inserted in the Eucharistic prayer, it came to be considered as the high point – or at least as one of the hight points – of the prayer and in the Middle Ages became a major focal point in theological discussions about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Another illustrative example of the increasingly foundational character of the Bible for the development of liturgy is the development of Easter and Holy Week. It is generally accepted now that the Quartodeciman Passover, celebrated during the night from 14 to 15 Nisan, is the oldest Christian paschal celebration, the origin of which goes back to the first century CE. Its biblical starting point is the story of the first Passover celebrated in Egypt and the liberation of the Jewish people from Egypt, as described in Exod. 12.[46] This story is explained in a typological way as prefiguring the death of Jesus and his victory in the underworld, Hades. These events serve as the rationale for the Christian Passover, but they do not directly affect its ritual shape. That is to say, no attempt is made to synchronise in some way the time and the structure of the liturgical celebration with the chronology of the Gospels. The date is simply that of the Jewish festival and the weekdays do not play any role in its calculation. In the course of the second and third centuries, this gradually changes. As the Gospels received canonical status, the chronology of the passion encountered in these texts became the norm for the fixation of the Easter date: the Christian Passover was moved from the Jewish date to the Friday, Saturday and Sunday after that festival. This process of synchronisation continued in the third and fourth centuries and led to the emergence of Holy Week, each day of this week corresponding to a certain moment or phase of the passion of the Lord. It reached a point of culmination in Jerusalem in the fourth and fifth centuries when pilgrims who had travelled from various regions and countries to the Holy City commemorated the various moments of the Lord exactly on the spot and at the times that are described in the Gospels, with the result that they spent the night from Maundy Thursday to Good Friday on the Mount of Olives and celebrated the resurrection on

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45 Cf. Bradshaw et al., *The Apostolic Tradition*, pp. 37–48.

46 See especially Melito's *Paschal Homily* and Origen's tractate *On Pascha*. Cf. G. Rouwhorst, 'The Quartodeciman Passover and the Jewish Pesach', *Questions liturgiques* 77 (1996), 152–73; auf der Maur, *Osterfeier*, pp. 58–87.

the exact place where Jesus's tomb was located.[47] The liturgical traditions of Jerusalem and Palestine, for their part, had a far-reaching impact upon the development of Holy Week, and the entire liturgical year for that matter, in other eastern and western Christian churches who were eager to imitate the customs of the Holy City and the Holy Land.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have only glimpsed the fascinating forms of interaction between the Bible and liturgy which occurred in the first six centuries of Christianity. The picture sketched is far from complete. Many more examples could have been given, and the historical background of these interactions could have been further explored (and it will be a challenge to future research to do so).

It will, however, have become clear that, as a result of historical processes which are often difficult to grasp, in the first three centuries specific choices were made and traditions were established which would for centuries profoundly affect the relationship between Bible and liturgy in both eastern and western Christianity.

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47 See for instance K. Stevenson, *Jerusalem Revisited* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1988); Talley, *Origins*, pp. 37–57.

The Bible in popular and non-literary culture

LUCY GRIG

This chapter, rather than looking at the Bible from the perspective of ancient expert interpreters, attempts to look at the Bible as it was experienced by a much broader range of people in Antiquity. The Bible was not just a series of texts to be read, or to be listened to as part of the liturgy in the church (or synagogue). In fact people could encounter this series of texts, sometimes quite open-ended or shifting, in a whole range of ways. In order to understand this we need to place the ancient Bible firmly in its Graeco-Roman cultural context. We need to think in terms of a culture that was highly visual and in which orality and literacy existed in a close interdependence, rather than sharp opposition. The ancient experience of the Bible, therefore, was bound to be 'multi-media'. Moreover, ancient Jews and Christians did not exist in cultural vacuums, immune from broader trends of ancient practice and belief, and hence patterns of behaviour and ritual which are sometimes described as 'magical' or 'superstitious' also played their part in the use of the Bible in Antiquity. Trying to delineate separate zones of 'elite' and 'popular' behaviour is not helpful: as we shall see, these patterns of usage and ritual can in fact be traced across the range of society.[1]

So how are we to trace this broader ancient experience of the Bible? Methodology here is a vexed issue: generations of scholars have discovered the difficulties of trying to use normative and prescriptive religious sources in order to investigate broader patterns of religious behaviour. By necessity, we tend to identify practices and rituals from often disapproving literature, such as sermons and the canons of ecclesiastical councils, and need to exercise caution in order not to take the ideological premises of these texts at face

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1 On the problems of analysing 'popular culture' see P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), especially pp. xvi–xxii. On 'popular religion' see, among a whole wealth of material, for Late Antiquity in particular P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 12–22; and A. Momigliano 'Popular Religious Beliefs and the Late Roman Historians', *SCH* 8 (1971), 1–18.

value. Happily, this is not the only source material available: there is also an abundant archaeological and visual record, though even here problems of survival and conflicting traditions of interpretation can inhibit our full understanding.

This chapter will aim to delineate the experience of the Bible as a series of texts born out of, and part of, ancient culture. Therefore we shall consider it as the 'oral' Bible, the 'visual' Bible, even the 'magical' Bible, though we shall see how all such terms ultimately serve to limit a rich cultural context.

As a starting point the Bible, as a written text, needs to be put in the context of a largely illiterate society, one where literacy should be placed at around only 10–20 per cent.[2] Nonetheless, Christianity was of course a religion with a striking predilection for the written word, as even outsiders noted. For instance in Lucian's satirical account the religious opportunist Peregrinus is depicted as ingratiating himself with the local Christian community by making use of their written culture: according to Lucian 'he interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many'. Furthermore, when Peregrinus is in prison the community visit him and read aloud their sacred books (*logoi ieroi*) (Lucian, *Peregrinus* 11–12). More seriously, the widely perceived importance of holy writings to Christians is demonstrated by the fact that during the Diocletianic persecutions the state authorities demanded that Christian communities hand over their sacred texts.[3]

Despite the crucial importance of the written Bible to early Christianity, there is no reason to suppose that levels of literacy among ancient Christians would have been any higher than among other subgroups of the population.[4] If anything, evidence suggests a Late Antique decline in literacy overall, and the most recent authority on ancient literacy declares it to be an 'illusion that Christianity was spread mainly by means of the written word'.[5] Nonetheless, even accepting a modest estimate of ancient literacy, there is no need to take an excessively pessimistic position regarding its consequences. What is crucial is that even the semi-literate and the illiterate could *participate* in 'literate' culture, as in other societies where levels of literacy were/are low. In such societies the literate few, tend/ed, whether in a professional capacity or not,

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2 Estimates are of course just that, and levels would have varied widely from region to region and over time: see here Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, and, for a more varied picture, the collection of essays in *Literacy in the Roman World*, ed. J. Humphrey, JRA Supplementary Series 3 (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, 1991).
3 See here, for instance, Lactantius, *Mort.* 12.1.
4 For the implications of this see M. K. Hopkins, 'Christian Number and Its Implications', *JECS* 6 (1998), 185–226, especially 207–13.
5 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, p. 299.

to act as interpreters of literate culture for the illiterate: reading inscriptions, writing official documents and interpreting sacred texts. Furthermore, as we shall see, to quote a recent work, 'The illiterate Christian found in the public reading of Christian texts as least as large and probably a more consistent opportunity than his pagan counterpart to participate in literacy and become familiar with texts.'[6]

The sacred texts of Christianity could be, and were, spread by the spoken world. At the heart of this practice of course lay the regular readings of biblical texts, which took place as part of the liturgy. We should probably not underestimate how effective this reading could be in familiarising even an uneducated congregation with biblical texts. Glimpses of this process can be found in patristic sermons: Augustine, for instance, refers both to his congregations' familiarity with certain readings and to the need, for some of them at least, to have passages read aloud several times in order to understand them properly.[7]

In order to understand this, again we need to place Bible reading in the broader cultural context of the classical world. It is well known that both reading and writing were generally done 'aloud' in the Roman world, that is, that even elite intellectuals read aloud, listened to the reading aloud of others and dictated their own writings to scribes. More crucially, classical culture put a premium on memorisation: schoolchildren would have spent a large part of their education learning to memorise chunks of classics, as Augustine recalls.[8] These pupils had of course been taught to read these texts for themselves, as well as to memorise them. However classical texts would also have been communicated, in some form, to the illiterate majority. Theatre, pantomime and art were all important means of transmission, but, looking deeper into the muddier waters of ancient 'popular culture' we can postulate a whole world of popular poetry, song and chant, made familiar through repetition and easily memorisable due to a strongly rhythmic character.[9] These methods were familiar from secular culture and Late Antique Christian bishops, themselves largely the product of classical education, could take advantage of them. The prime example here is the doggerel, but highly rhythmical, 'Psalm against the Donatists' written by Augustine, the writing of which he explained thus: 'I wanted the [anti-]Donatist cause to reach the knowledge of the very humblest folk, of the inexpert, of the simple, and, as far as I

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6 Gamble, *Books and Readers*, p. 9.   7 Augustine, *S.* 136.1, 163.5, 229K.1.
8 E.g. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 1.3; see too on great feats of memorisation Augustine, *De anim.* 4.7.9.
9 See here N. Horsfall, *The Culture of the Roman Plebs* (London: Duckworth, 2003), especially chapters 1, 4 and 5.

could, to stick in their memory' (*Retract.* 1.19). The Graeco-Roman world was a culture where literacy and orality were closely interconnected, and one in which memory played a far more important role than in modern western culture.

Nonetheless, this ancient culture was also profoundly visual, and therefore it is no surprise that key tenets of ancient Christianity, as with classical myth and religion, were also, as a matter of course, communicated visually. The 'visual Bible', as we shall see, could be found not just in large-scale iconographic programmes in churches and catacombs, but also on a whole range of objects, whereby the Bible can really be said to have become part of everyday life.

When seen from the perspective of the dominant Graeco-Roman culture from which it emerged, it is not surprising that ancient Christianity became such an intensely visual religion. Nonetheless, generations of modern scholars took it as axiomatic that earliest Christianity was aniconic, even iconophobic. They maintained that orthodox Christians condemned the use of figurative art, based on a rigorist interpretation of the second commandment – 'You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below' (Exod. 20:4) – as well the inheritance of an aniconic Jewish tradition.[10] Recent scholarship and archaeological finds, however, have mounted a serious challenge to such presuppositions.

The discovery of the stunning painted decoration of the Jewish synagogue and Christian baptistery at Dura Europus in Syria, beginning in 1932, was one of the most spectacular archaeological discoveries of the twentieth century. The synagogue wall paintings, dating from the 240s CE, with their vivid scenes from Old Testament narrative, present a rich, programmatic scheme of decoration.[11] There is considerable scholarly debate regarding the artistic origins of these wall paintings,[12] but it is clear that the scheme illustrates an

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10 The bibliography here is voluminous, but H. Koch, *Die altchristliche Bilderfrage nach den literarischen Quellen*, (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 27 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1917)), is fundamental though Koch's assumptions continued to be shared in more recent work, such as T. Klauser, 'Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst I–IX', *JAC* 1–10 (1958–67), 20–51; for a useful summary see Finney, *Invisible God*, chapter 1.

11 The synagogue paintings are now in the National Museum, Damascus, while those from the baptistery were transferred to the Yale University Art Museum, where they disintegrated and can hence no longer be seen.

12 See for instance K. Weitzmann and H. L. Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), proposing to seek the origin of the frescoes in manuscript illustration, while J. Gutmann, 'The Dura Europus Synagogue Paintings. The State of Research', in L. I. Levine (ed.), *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987), pp. 61–72, argues that we should instead look to Roman narrative art as the key antecedent.

advanced state of artistic development, firmly suggesting that it would be naive to take Dura as an isolated example of synagogue decoration, and of a figural iconographic tradition. Moreover, though the Dura paintings remain the most striking and complete example, there are plenty of other extant examples testifying to a developed Jewish visual and material culture in Late Antiquity: figural iconography is also found on floor mosaics, sculpture and household objects from across the Roman empire.[13] We certainly cannot envisage a single, monolithic, 'Jewish' interpretation of the second commandment that was unambiguously anti-iconic.

In the case of the early church, similarly, there was no blanket condemnation of figural iconography. However, later Byzantine and Reformation debates influenced subsequent scholarly understanding. Christian apologists did, repeatedly, attack Greek art: indeed Tertullian dedicated a whole treatise to the subject: *De idolatria* (*On Idolatry*). Nevertheless, this polemic has to be understood as part of a rhetorical strategy, as part of an attack on Graeco-Roman culture in general, as well as a concern with the particular problem of idolatry. We need not understand all apologetic attacks as targeting figural imagery in its own right. The notion that the development of Christian iconography can be explained as a development that flew in the face of orthodox ecclesiastical opinion can and should be laid to rest.[14]

Nonetheless, a distinctive Christian art was slow to develop. While it can be dangerous to assume that the surviving archaeological record is entirely representative (discoveries like Dura Europus demonstrate, after all, what surprises can lie in store for the unsuspecting scholar), most scholars concur that no recognisable Christian art as such can be identified before *c*. 200 CE in the West, and *c*. 240 in the East. While this 'late' development was once put down to an innate Christian aniconicity, recent scholarship takes a different approach. Most persuasively, Paul Finney has suggested that we must look to the failure of the small Christian community to develop an identifiable and visible Christian cultural identity hitherto.[15] We need to envisage Christians prior to 200 simply making use of the material and visual culture available to them, appropriating and adapting when necessary. A much cited example here is the advice given by Clement of Alexandria in the late second/early third century: Clement sought to advise as to which types of signet rings

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13 See here Levine and Weiss, *Dura to Sephoris*.
14 See here Murray, 'Art and the Early Church'.
15 Finney, *Invisible God*, especially chapter 5; comparisons with the case of Jewish material culture can be instructive: see here L. V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome. Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), especially chapter 2.

available on the market were suitable for wear by a Christian (*Paid.* 3.59.2–3.60.1):

> Our seals should be a dove or a fish or a ship running in a fair wind or a musical lyre such as the one Polycrates used or a ship's anchor such as the one Seleucus had engraved on his seal stone. And if someone is fishing he will call to mind the apostle [Peter] and the children [i.e. those being baptised] drawn up out of the water. We who are forbidden to attach ourselves to idols must not engrave the face of idols, or the sword, or the bow, since we follow the path of peace, or drinking cups, since we are sober.

While Christians lacked their own distinctive iconography, or rather, their own visual and material culture, the traditional iconography available to them could, for the initiate viewer, reveal new Christian meaning, based on knowledge of scripture and doctrine.

Around 200 this situation changed. Much of our evidence for Christian art during this period comes from the city of Rome, and it is of course no coincidence that this is the time when we can see the church acquiring property for the first time, as in the case of the Catacomb of Callistus.[16] Even then a wholly 'original' Christian iconography is slow to develop out of the broader cultural context, and we should not be surprised that the first images chosen by Christians came from a repertoire familiar across the Graeco-Roman world.[17] The first depictions of biblical scenes and characters, therefore, were introduced by something akin to a process of osmosis, making use of traditional themes and motifs. The first depictions also tend to be extremely compressed and summary, and are often referred to in scholarship as 'abbreviated' or as 'signitive', though we should not entirely deny a narrative function to this iconography.[18]

One of the most familiar images in early Christian art, to be seen in paintings and sculpture, on lamps and glassware, is the figure of the shepherd, as seen here on a sarcophagus from Rome (refashioned into a statuette) and a finger ring (see Figs. 37.1 and 37.2). The biblical resonance of the figure of

16 See now E. Rebillard, 'L'Église de Rome et le développement des catacombes. À propos de l'origine des cimetières chrétiens', *MÉFRA* 109 (1997), 741–63.
17 See on the period of adaptation C. Murray, *Rebirth and Afterlife. A Study of the Transmutation of Some Pagan Imagery in Early Christian Funerary Art*, BAR International Series 100 (Oxford: BAR, 1981); see also on the conservatism of the workshop tradition J. B. Ward-Perkins, 'The Role of Craftsmanship in the Formation of Early Christian Art', *Atti del IX congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana* (Vatican City: Pontificio Instituto di archeologia Cristiana, 1978), pp. 637–52.
18 See for instance E. Kitzinger, 'Christian Imagery. Growth and Impact', in Weitzmann (ed.), *Age of Spirituality. A Symposium*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 142, describing the signitive image working as 'a pictograph, a shorthand cipher for a concept'.

Fig. 37.1 Statuette of the good shepherd

the shepherd is well known: first from Old Testament texts (Ezek. 34:23; Isa. 40:11), but especially from Gospel parables (Luke 15, John 10), most famously in Jesus' claim that 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep' (John 10:11). However, the figure of the shepherd, or

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Fig. 37.2 Finger ring depicting the good shepherd

ram-bearer, the *kriophoros*, was far from being a uniquely Christian image, but was ancient and widespread,[19] and would have been familiar to people from all religious backgrounds. The shepherd, therefore, was an iconographic motif that was ripe for adaptation by Christians: a familiar subject, which could take on a new, specifically Christian, significance for initiated viewers.[20]

19 See for a useful summary T. Klauser, 'Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst I', *JAC* I (1958), 20–51.
20 See, albeit in a polemical context, Tertullian's attack on the Catholic use of cups decorated with images of the shepherd: *De pudicitia* 7, 10.

Though we should still be wary of reading Christian significance into every possible representation, we shall see that early Christian funerary art provides a number of similar examples of such 'adaptation'.

Funerary art is the single largest category of surviving early Christian art, much of this material originating in the Roman catacombs. Of course here we must contend with accidents of survival.[21] Rome was not the fount of all Christian art, and nor was the funerary realm its only context. However, catacomb wall paintings, as well as sarcophagi, inscriptions and objects buried with the deceased or used to decorate their tombs, provide us with a vast treasure house from which to study biblical iconography. When looking at the biblical stories depicted, it is clear that the spread of subjects chosen is far from even, and shows considerable development over time. It is also evident that we are not dealing with a direct transmission from biblical text to visual image. That is, we need to think about the relationship between biblical text and visual image not just as a simple transaction from the written page to the picture, from literary to visual culture: the relationship is more complex and considerably more interesting.

A number of biblical episodes, largely from the Old Testament dominate pre-Constantinian art to quite a striking degree. These images include episodes which can be encapsulated in single images, such as Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:1–14), Moses' miraculous striking of the rock in the desert (Exod. 17:1–6 and Num. 20:1–11) and the story of Noah's ark (Gen. 6–9). They also include single episodes that nevertheless formed part of the tradition relating to Daniel, including not only the story of Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 6), but also those of three Hebrews flung into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3), and of Susanna and the Elders (from the book of Susanna, in the Theodotion and Septuagint editions). While the Susanna narrative often constituted a whole mini-cycle of its own, the most popular cycle of all, especially in pre-Constantinian art, was the story of the prophet Jonah.

The Jonah story is to be found depicted in paintings, sculpture and glass, generally taking a common form. Here we can see the cycle as depicted on a domestic object from the fourth century, a fragmentary glass bowl from

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21 Even within the city of Rome itself this is obvious: the discovery of the paintings of the Via Latina catacomb in 1955 forced scholars to change their views about the pictorial vocabulary of early Christian art, as these ensembles included new scenes, new methods of combination, and a new level of detail. See A. Ferrua, *The Unknown Catacomb. A Unique Discovery of Early Christian Art* (New Lanark: Daedalus Books, 1991); and W. Tronzo, *The Via Latina Catacomb. Imitation and Discontinuity in Fourth-Century Roman Painting* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986).

Fig. 37.3 Gold glass bowl from Cologne depicting the Jonah cycle

Cologne, now in the British Museum (see Fig. 37.3). The clear glass bowl is decorated with a series of small medallions, on which figures are marked in gold leaf, including both individual scenes and cycles, four pictures of which tell the story of Jonah. We see the ship in the sea with the whale (looking more like a veritable sea monster!) alongside; we see the sea monster swallowing Jonah (only his legs are visible!), then we see the beast degorging him again; finally we see the prophet sulking beneath the gourd.

Even at first glance, the popularity of this cycle seems understandable. The story is exciting and dramatic, while the inclusion of the whale gives the narrative a high recognisability factor. Moreover, the story of Jonah of course gained extra spiritual significance due to the typological association made between Jonah's time spent in the belly of the whale, and Christ's three days in the tomb, one made by Christ himself (Matt. 12:40). However, a further 'layer' to the story and its significance comes from the process whereby Christian images were adapted from traditional Roman iconography. Why

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is Jonah depicted sleeping under the gourd as a languorous, naked youth? The answer lies in the repertoire of Roman funerary art: Jonah is based on the figure of the sleeping Endymion, a favoured motif on Roman sarcophagi. Endymion's sleep (during which he fathered many children on his beloved, Selene) was used as a metaphor for death as a happy sleep; therefore this image had an added allegorical layer of meaning for the early Christian viewer, that went beyond even the level of meaning provided by exegetical readings of the scriptures.

The Cologne glass bowl places Jonah alongside some of the other most popular biblical subjects. We can also see Susanna in the garden, and two out of the three Hebrews amid the flames (the third was presumably depicted on one of the missing pieces), while single scenes depict Abraham sacrificing Isaac, Adam and Eve, and a figure with a rod or wand who could be Moses, Peter or indeed Christ (we shall return to this figure in due course). These Old Testament scenes were very popular, as noted above, both individually and in combination. Why these particular scenes? Quite apart from their dramatic narratives the images had something else in common: they can all be related to various forms of an early prayer, probably Jewish in origin, that would later become known as the *Ordo commendationis animae*.[22] This prayer consisted of a series of petitions to God asking for the salvation of the departed: these petitions referred back to the Lord's deliverance of a series of biblical characters: 'Deliver . . . Lord, as you delivered . . . ' The connection between the prayers and images is beautifully made on a Late Antique glass vessel, a dish from Dalmatia, generally known as the Podgoritza cup, now in the Hermitage Museum (see Fig. 37.4).[23]

On this cup, each (now familiar) scene is accompanied by a badly spelt inscription[24] which gives lines from a prayer: there is *Diunan de vent/re queti liberatus est* (Jonah freed from the belly of the whale), *Abram etet Evam* (Adam and Eve), *Domns/Laiarum rescucit/at* (the resurrection of Lazarus), *Petrus uirga perq/uouset/fontes ciperunt quore/re* (Peter striking the rock), *Daniel de laco/leonis* (Daniel from the lion's den), *Tris pueri de ecne/cami(ne)* (the three boys from the flames), *Susana/de falso cre/mine* (Susanna from false accusation), while the central image is constituted by Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (this time without an identifying inscription). The cup clearly shows the

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22 The fundamental work here remains K. Michel, *Gebet und Bild in frühchristlicher Zeit* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1902).
23 See P. Levi, 'The Podgoritza Cup', *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963), 55–60, reprinted in Finney, *Art, Archaeology and Architecture*, pp. 158–66.
24 *CIL* 3 (Suppl. I–3) 10190 = *ILCV* 2426.

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Fig. 37.4 Drawing of the Podgoritza cup

connection between prayer and image and also points to the variety of ways in which the Bible could have been communicated in the ancient world. The prayers that made up the *commendatio animae*, in whatever form, transmitted orally as well as textually, took their substance from the scriptures, this much is obvious. However, it then also follows that the biblical stories would then have been disseminated via the medium of the prayers, as well as (or even instead of) biblical readings. Finally, it is obvious that the stories would have been known from works of art, which were themselves reproduced in other works of art (through repetition and the use of pattern books). That is, our putative ancient Christian could have learned the story of Jonah from a variety

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of sources: we should never assume a straightforward one-way transaction, from written text to visual image. Hence, the idea that 'signitive' images always refer 'back' to a single, stable written text must be seen as overly deterministic.

Early Christian art was influenced by more than canonical, 'orthodox' written biblical texts. It was of course influenced by oral as well as written traditions, as in the case of the Dura synagogue paintings, which are not to be simply related to texts from the Torah, but rather should be interpreted in the context of typological exegetical material from the Midrash and Targum.[25] But what about other possibilities? One of the images on the Podgoritza cup depicted Peter striking the rock with a staff or wand, a popular scene in early Christian art (appearing in sculpture and painting as well as in 'minor' arts), but nevertheless one which was not identified by scholars until relatively recently.[26]

This lack of recognition is not so surprising as, to begin with, the image is often barely distinguishable from that of Moses striking the rock in the desert. (It is clear of course, formally speaking, that the image of Peter derives from the image of Moses.) Second, this episode does not appear at all in the canonical New Testament, but derives from an episode in the 'apocryphal' Acts of Peter, where the imprisoned Peter strikes a rock in his cell and produces water, with which he baptises his guards.[27] The unwillingness of nineteenth-century scholars to identify this scene can be seen, in part at least, as stemming from a distinctive distaste for 'apocryphal' material.[28] However, it can also be seen as part of a scholarly refusal to think what for many was the unthinkable: that art might in fact have influenced text. That is, it is in fact possible that the apocryphal story of Peter striking the rock had its origin in the iconographic tradition: perhaps the frequency of the image, combined with the prevalent typological relationship between Moses and Peter, contributed towards the

25 Although this interpretative scheme has been attacked by S. Schwartz, 'On the Programme and Reception of the Synagogue Mosaics', in Levine and Weiss (eds.), *Dura to Sephhoris*, pp.165–81. Schwartz criticises an overly programmatic reading, based on a set of elite written texts, i.e. rabbinic material.

26 See G. Stuhlfauth, *Die apokyrphen Petrusgechichten in der altchristlichen Kunst* (Berlin and Leipzig: De Gruyter, 1925), pp. 50–71.

27 This episode appears in just one, Latin, version of the Acts, the so-called Linus text: *Martyrium beati Petri apostolic a Lino episcopo conscriptum* 5, in R. A. Lipsius and K. Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: H. Mendelssohn, 1891), vol. I, pp. 5–6. The text as it has come down to us probably dates from the fifth century.

28 Early Christian art did not similarly discriminate, on which see now Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art*. Note for example the surviving panels from an ivory casket, now in the British Museum (6.6–23, 8–10), which represent Peter's water miracle along with a scene from the canonical Acts (Peter's resurrection of Tabitha: Acts 9.40–1), and a pair of scenes from the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla, depicted in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality. A Symposium*, no. 455.

creation of a new story in relation to Peter. Though this must remain a matter for speculation, it reminds us that the relationship between art and text, as well as that between orality and literacy, was never a simple matter in Antiquity.

This relationship can be variously conceived, and one particularly resilient interpretation still requires refinement: that early and medieval Christian art (especially ecclesiastical iconographical programmes) should be seen as, essentially, *biblia pauperum*, 'Bibles for the poor'. While so far we have been looking at what we might call 'private' Christian art, mostly from a funerary context, we now turn to ecclesiastical decoration. There is a notable chronological hiatus to be breached: with the striking exception of the decoration of the Dura baptistery in the 240s, no programme of church decoration can be reconstructed prior to the Theodosian period. Even at this point, many of these painted programmes must be reconstructed from literary texts, though this method is not without its perils.[29] However, some mosaic decoration survives (although mostly fragmentary) in a variety of ecclesiastical buildings, dating (probably) from the late fourth century.[30] Meanwhile, the earliest surviving major programme of basilica decoration is constituted by the typological programme of mosaic decoration in S Maria Maggiore in Rome, dating from the pontificate of Sixtus III (432–40).

The function of iconographical programmes in churches has often been understood as the provision of an alternative scriptural education for the illiterate. The most important proof text here is the famous letter Gregory the Great wrote to Bishop Serenus of Marseille *c*. 600. Serenus was in trouble: his congregation had upset him by placing images in his church, and then worshipping them; when he had removed the offending objects his flock had responded with mass desertion. What was he to do, he asked Gregory. The pope replied that he should in fact allow the retention of such images, explaining himself as follows (*Ep*. 11.13):

> For it is one thing to venerate a picture, and another to learn the story it depicts, which is to be venerated. For what writing makes present to those reading, the same picturing makes present to the uneducated, to those perceiving visually, because in it the ignorant see what they ought to follow, in it they read who do not know letters. This is especially true of the pagans.

29 We need to bear in mind that writers of literary *ekphraseis* had rhetorical, literary aims in mind and should not take even descriptions of ecclesiastical decoration at face value; see here L. James and R. Webb, 'To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places. Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium', *Art History* 14 (1991), 1–17.
30 The earliest examples include the mausoleum of S Costanza in Rome, the baptistery of S Giovanni in Fonte in Naples, the former imperial mausoleum, S Aquilino in Milan and Hagios Demetrios in Thessalonika.

Gregory was not the first churchman to perceive the didactic potential of visual programmes: the earliest such discussion comes from a text written by St Paulinus of Nola in 403. In this letter Paulinus describes the decoration of his new church at Nola, which contained 'painting on sacred themes [*pictura sancta*]' (*Ep.* 27.581), including the story of Moses and the accounts of Joshua and Ruth. Paulinus seems to anticipate a query regarding this decoration and pre-empts it with an explanation. He explains that the church of St Felix of Nola receives a good number of pilgrims, predominantly from the rural districts, 'not without unbelief but unskilled in reading' (*Ep.* 27.548). These pilgrims, arriving in great number, had often in the past, to the bishop's dismay, lubricated their devotions with copious quantities of wine. Therefore, Paulinus explains, paintings were set up in the church 'in the hope that they would excite the interest of the rustics by their attractive appearance, for the sketches are painted in various colours' (*Ep.* 27.580–3). This plan was a great success, apparently, and Paulinus goes on to describe how the 'rustic' pilgrims now study the pictures, feasting their eyes rather than their stomachs, and receiving inspiration from the saintly examples depicted (*Ep.* 27.585–9). We can also see these ideas in the Greek East; for instance, the ascetic and theologian Nilus of Ancyra (also known as Nilus of Sinai), writing around the same time as Paulinus, also saw biblical sequences painted on church walls as useful 'so that the illiterate who are unable to read the holy scriptures may, by gazing at the pictures, become mindful of the manly deeds of those who genuinely served the true God' (*Ep.* 4.61). Although these texts at first glance do indeed seem to suggest all too clearly that iconographical programmes in churches were intended primarily for the illiterate, we should exercise some caution. While describing his paintings Paulinus tells us: 'Over them are explanatory inscriptions, the written word revealing the theme outlined by the painter's hand' (*Ep.* 27.584–6). While we should certainly imagine that literate visitors to the church could explain these captions to their illiterate brethren, we should certainly not assume that these inscriptions were purely and baldly functional. In another letter Paulinus provides a series of inscriptions, verses he himself had clearly taken some pains over, for his friend Sulpicius Severus' church at Primuliacum in Gaul (*Ep.* 32). At around the same time the Theodosian court poet Prudentius wrote the *Dittochaeon*: forty-eight mini-poems, purportedly to accompany forty-eight biblical scenes, half from the Old and half from the New Testament. This practice continued into the early Middle Ages: in 590, yet another Christian poet, Venantius Fortunatus, provided a long and elaborate poem on the life and miracles of St Martin of Tours, describing the hagiographic cycle depicted in the newly restored

cathedral of Tours. The provision of *tituli* together with images in churches seems to have been the norm, and, as we have seen, these *tituli* often had pretensions to high literary culture.

While images were accompanied by text, text was accompanied by images. Biblical manuscripts surviving from Late Antiquity are richly illustrated, the earliest example being the four miniatures from the so-called Quedlinberg Itala (dated to between 350 and 410), a fragment of manuscript of the book of Kings. The Vienna Genesis, meanwhile, from the sixth century, survives in twenty-four folios, containing forty-eight miniatures in total. Each page had a colourful and richly detailed illumination on the lower half, while the text was above: the concentration on the illustrations here is remarkable.[31] Some scholars consider such manuscript illustrations to have provided models for monumental art, though we need not agree with this causation in order to see their significance. Pictures were never intended *just* for the illiterate: this is a theologically apologetic notion that deserves no place in modern scholarship.

Visual images could occasionally be problematic, from the point of view of the church authorities. Inappropriate 'worship' of images depicted on church walls was one danger, as we saw in the case of Gregory's correspondent Serenus. This concern was raised as early as the Council of Elvira in 300, as one of a series of measures against various 'abuses' of ecclesiastical practices.[32] Images also had the potential to mislead: Augustine enthusiastically lambasted those 'who seek Christ and his apostles not in the holy scriptures, but on painted walls' (*Cons. ev.* 1.10), though this is in the context of an attack on a pseudepigraphical text: as is so often the case, when images are attacked the attack is not concerned directly with the images in themselves. In fact, if one were to draw up a patristic dossier with regard to discussion of images, the balance would be clearly in the religious value of images. One comment from Basil of Caesarea is typical, pointing to the special evocative and educative power of images: 'For what spoken narrative presents through hearing, this

31 See for illustrations and brief discussion, Weitzmann, *Book Illumination*. It should not be assumed that such manuscripts should be understood as wholly Christian artefacts, based on Christian artistic antecedents: the Vienna Genesis is now understood in the light of Syriac and Palestinian Jewish artistic traditions; see here M. Friedman, 'On the Sources of the Vienna Genesis', *Cahiers Archéologiques* 37 (1989), 5–17.
32 *Placuit picturas in ecclesia esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur*: Council of Elvira, Canon 36 = K. J. von Hefele, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux* trans. H. Leclercq, vol. 1.1 (Paris: Letouzey, 1907), p. 240. Interpretation is hindered by lack of context, but in any case this stipulation seems likely to have been of local rather than universal significance.

silent painting shows through imitation' (Basil, *Hom.* 19, *PG*, 31.508c–509a). So far, this chapter has sought to stress the visuality of ancient culture, and its impact on the popular experience of the Bible. We have seen how biblical imagery was, by Late Antiquity, widely used in both the funerary and the ecclesiastical domains. However, this was far from the end of the story. Biblical scenes were also represented on a whole range of objects used in everyday life, from the highly luxurious to the cheap and cheerful. To begin with the high end of the market, biblical scenes could even be worn on one's clothing, a luxurious fashion deplored by the Bishop Asterius of Amaseia in the late fourth century (*Hom.* 1, *PG*, 40.168) who complained about this expensive fashion, criticising those who

> devise for themselves, their wives and children gay-coloured dresses deco-
> rated with thousands of figures . . . When they come out in public dressed
> in this fashion, they appear like painted walls to those they meet . . . But
> the more religious among such rich men and women have gathered up the
> Gospel history and turned it over to the weavers; I mean Christ himself with
> all the disciples, and each of the miracles, as recorded in the Gospel. You may
> see the wedding of Galilee with the water jars; the paralytic carrying his bed
> on his shoulders; the blind man being healed with the clay; the woman with
> the bloody issue, taking hold of the border of [Christ's] garment; the sinful
> woman falling at the feet of Jesus; Lazarus returning to life from the grave. In
> doing this they consider that they are acting piously and wearing garments
> pleasing to God. But if they take my advice let them sell those clothes and
> honour the living image of God. Do not picture Christ on your garments. It
> is enough that he once suffered the humiliation of dwelling in a human body
> which of his own accord he assumed for our sakes. So, not upon your robes
> but upon your soul carry about his image.

Asterius' description is certainly vivid, but more vivid still are the actual surviving examples of textiles richly patterned with images of biblical figures and saints.[33] These textiles tend to be of Coptic origin, preserved by the dry Egyptian climate, and though they generally date from the sixth and seventh centuries we can take Asterius' complaint as testament to their existence some centuries earlier. Generally the scenes are depicted in embroidered 'medallions', set against a plainer background, as with an example that depicts the Virgin and Child and the adoration of the magi (see Fig. 37.5).

The biblical scenes depicted on the clothing so disliked by Asterius were all miracles from the Gospels. While Old Testament scenes predominate in

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33 See H. Maguire, 'Garments Pleasing to God. The Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period', *DOP* 44 (1990), 215–24.

Fig. 37.5 Detail of a linen tunic from Egypt: medallion depicting the adoration
of the magi

pre-Constantinian art, it is notable that New Testament miracles predominate
thereafter. A gold glass bowl (see Fig. 37.6), probably originally from Rome
but now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, features a number of
Christ's miracles, notably all accomplished with the aid of a wand: we see
Christ turning the water into wine at Cana, telling the paralytic to pick up
his bed and walk, and saving the three youths in the fiery furnace (the other
figure is Tobias, reaching with his right arm into the mouth of the fish). In
each of these images Christ holds a wand, a feature certainly not present in
any of the Gospel accounts of his miracles, yet his standard attribute in early
Christian miracle images. The wand works to stress the miraculous moment,
and to highlight the role of Christ as miracle worker, bearer of a tremendous
power.

Indeed, the miracles of Christ predominate to the near exclusion of other
aspects of New Testament narrative. One striking omission in early Christian
art is the depiction of the passion and crucifixion of Christ. The cross itself
was not avoided but acknowledged as a potent symbol of victory, compared
to the pagan victory sign, the *tropaeum*, for instance (e.g. Minucius Felix, *Oct*.
29.7). In one from a series of 'passion sarcophagi', dating from *c*. 340–400
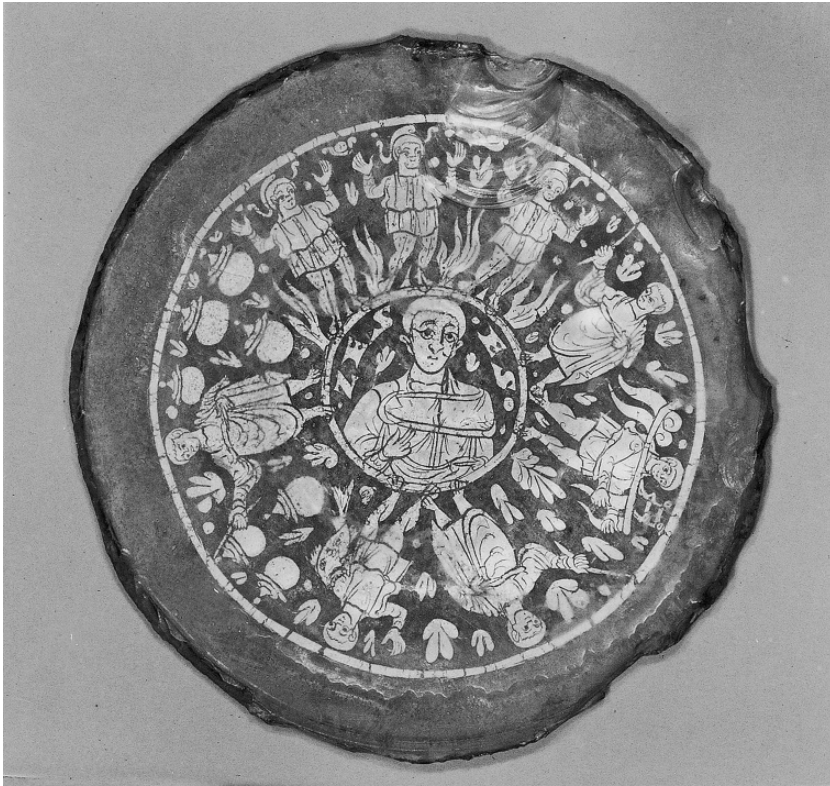
Fig. 37.6 Gold glass bowl base depicting Christ as a miracle worker with a wand

(see Fig. 37.7), we see a pagan *tropaeum* crossed with the Christian *labarum*, to form a Chi-Rho fashioned into a crown of laurels; with two soldiers sleeping beneath, the scene is a representation of the resurrection as victory over death. The violence of the crucifixion is carefully avoided in this passion iconography.

The first actual representations of the crucifixion are from the first half of the fifth century, and both are on a small scale though in very different media. Christ is depicted on the cross on one of thirty-seven scenes taken from the Old and New Testament, carved on panels on the doors of the basilica of S Sabina in Roma (*c.* 432–40).[34] Meanwhile panels from an ivory casket, now preserved in part in the British Museum (*c.* 420–30), present an abbreviated

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34 On which see G. Jeremias, *Die Holztür der Basilika S. Sabina in Rom* (Tübingen: E. Wasmuth, 1980).

Fig. 37.7 Sarcophagus depicting Christ's passion

passion narrative in four scenes: it is in the third scene that Christ's crucifixion is presented, juxtaposed, to the left, with the suicide of Judas, while three figures (Mary, John and another male figure) accompany Christ to the right (see Fig. 37.8).[35] Even from this time onwards images of the crucifixion are still few and far between, though they pick up in the East in the sixth and seventh centuries.

It does seem, therefore, that Christian art strenuously avoided representing the crucifixion. However, one intriguing graffito from (probably) the second century CE, found on the Palatine in Rome, does beg some questions about the image of Christ's crucifixion in popular culture (see Fig. 37.9). This graffito depicts an ass-headed figure on a cross, with the legend in Greek 'Alexamenos worships [his] god.'[36]

35 Depicted in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality. A Symposium*, no. 452; British Museum, inv. 1856, 6–23, 4–7.
36 This has often been related to accusations circulating with relation to various groups, regarding the worship of the head of an ass: Tacitus ascribes such worship to the Jews in *Histories* 5.3.4; this is refuted by Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 1 and by Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 9.
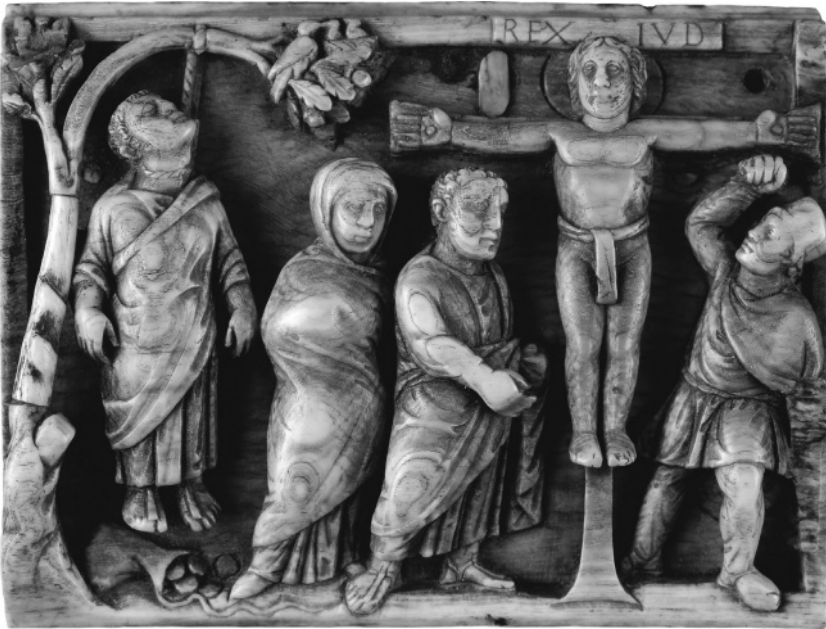
Fig. 37.8 Panel from an ivory casket depicting the crucifixion of Christ

As should now be clear, the themes most central to early Christian art were not necessarily the same subjects that predominated in later, medieval Christian art. Scenes of the nativity and infancy of Christ, for example, were slow to develop in Late Antiquity. There was one notable exception: the scene of the adoration of the magi (Matt. 2:1–12), which was very popular, as featured on the tunic from Egypt (Fig. 37.5). Why was this scene so popular? According to the controversial work of Thomas Mathews, the answer lies in the presence of the magi. Mathews argues not only that the miraculous is the most important theme in early Christian art but, further, that Jesus is represented as the ultimate magician. Christ was represented in this way as part of a fourth-century 'battle of images', a battle fought over the possession of supernatural power.[37] In this reading, Christian art, with its stress on the miraculous, represents Christian 'magic' as more powerful than any other sort. Therefore the magi are important as they represent a magical

37 Mathews, *Clash*, see especially chapter 3; e.g. the images of Christ' miracles were part of an ongoing war against non-Christian magic. Fighting fire with fire, these images addressed a major preoccupation of Late Antiquity', p. 65.

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Fig. 37.9 Graffito from the Palatine at Rome depicting a crucified donkey with the caption: 'Alexamenos worships [his] God'

tradition passed on to Jesus, an extra source of his divine power. In many depictions, indeed, the magi wear 'Phrygian' caps, recalling both their eastern origin, and, by extension, their association with eastern wisdom and magic.

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Mathews's argument is given credence if we consider the regular presence of Moses in a context that might at first glance seem surprising: in the large corpus of ancient magical papyri. Consider this example: 'I am Moses your prophet, to whom you committed your mysteries which are celebrated by Israel; you showed forth moisture and aridity and every kind of nourishment. Listen to me! I am the messenger of Phapro Osoronnophris [the good Osiris]. This is your authentic name which was committed to the prophets of Israel' (*PGM* 5, lines 108–18). Moses was by far the best-known figure from Jewish history in the wider Graeco-Roman world, and while he is mentioned by a number of Roman writers he is most ubiquitous in magical, astrological and even alchemical material.[38] The root of this seemingly strange new role for the lawgiver of the Jews stems from a biblical tradition: the story of Moses and Aaron's contest with Pharaoh's magicians (Exod. 7:10–12). This extract from the papyrus refers to the notion that part of Moses' special power derived from the divine names (always significant in ancient 'magical' texts) that had been revealed to him. We might also recall the frequent presence of Moses in early Christian art, wand/staff in hand parting the Red Sea, and striking the rock (i.e. displaying his possession of conspicuous supernatural power.)

Moses appears in Greek and demotic literature alike as a special intimate of the gods, and even as the author of magical treatises. The idea that Moses taught magic to the Jews was used as part of his anti-Christian polemic by the philosopher Celsus, who claimed that the Jews 'worship angels and are addicted to sorcery [*goēteia*] of which Moses was their teacher' (Origen, *Contra Celsum*.1.26). The word *goēteia* was pejorative, used in normative texts by proponents of traditional religion, law-makers and Christians alike. However, this is not to say that there was not in fact a large, diffuse and complex realm of the 'magical', used by a great variety of people in antiquity. This magical world was highly syncretistic by nature, and it is not at all obvious that we can isolate a specifically Jewish (or indeed Christian) magic.[39] It is clear, however, that the Bible, in its many different textual, oral and visual manifestations, played a role in this domain.

Defining 'magic' is a task to be entered upon at one's peril. While scholars such as Frazer in *The Golden Bough* saw it as a primitive form, an evolutionary precursor to religion proper, many of today's scholars are wary of giving any monolithic definition. Ancient texts defined varying practices, rituals and beliefs as 'magical' at different times and in different contexts: it is

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38 See further Gager, *Moses*, especially chapter 4.
39 See here Alexander, 'Jewish Elements'.

clear that there is no stable realm of the magical in Antiquity.[40] For instance, the philosopher Celsus claimed that he had seen Christian books 'containing magical formulas' (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.40) and, further, that Jesus should be numbered among 'the sorcerers who profess to do wonderful miracles . . . who for a few obols make known their sacred lore in the middle of the marketplace' (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.68). Increasingly, in the fourth century and thereafter Christian preachers and church councils tried to separate off a zone of unacceptable practices, hereafter to be linked to the realm of the magical, and thereby to the demonic, but this process was never simple. The attempts of modern scholars, whether following these ancient texts or not, to define certain practices as 'magical' or indeed 'superstitious' are problematic.

The definitions of 'magic' and 'miracle' have to be seen, in some sense at least, as contingent. If we return to the widespread depiction of biblical miracle scenes on household objects, we find ourselves entering an interestingly grey area. The Late Antique household was a veritable visual repository of biblical scenes, this new Christian iconography taking its place alongside the still more widespread traditional imagery. Much of this traditional imagery was notably, intentionally, apotropaic in function: a variety of symbols and motifs, such as the knot, were seen as particularly effective in warding off evil. It was inevitable in this cultural context that Christian imagery too would play a part in the protective function of everyday objects.

Certain shapes were considered to have particular protective power, one of which was the octagon, hence the prevalence of octagonal wedding rings and bracelets. Indeed, a number of octagonal wedding rings and bracelets, dating from the early Byzantine period, depict scenes from the life of Christ on seven of their eight sides.[41] The individual scenes are tiny, schematic in the extreme, which begs questions regarding the function of the imagery. For some scholars the apotropaic function of the object is key, therefore they argue that the function of the iconography, too, is to protect, rather than to instruct or inform.[42] However, whether we have in fact to accept such an ultimately reductive view of the function of iconography or objects is debatable.

A concern with the need for divine protection, in one form or another, was prevalent in Antiquity. The special power possessed by the symbol of the

40 The bibliography here is vast, but see as a useful introduction Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World*.
41 See on these objects G. Vikan, 'Art, Medicine and Magic in Early Byzantium', *DOP* 38 (1984), 65–86.
42 E.g. Maguire, *Art and Holy Powers*, pp. 31–2: 'The reduction and the repetition of the imagery shows that the scenes did not serve to instruct, like the pictures in a book, but rather suggests that they were charms'.

cross, for instance, was widely acknowledged, not least by the ecclesiastical elite. John Chrysostom takes pains to stress the power of the cross, a symbol to be inscribed 'both on house, and walls, and window, and upon our forehead' as well as 'upon our mind'. Moreover, he claims that the ritual of making the sign of the cross across the face with one's finger would keep demons at bay (*Hom. Matt.* 54.7). This does inevitably call to mind a scornful comment made by Emperor Julian, regarding Christians: 'the height of their theology consists of these two things: they hiss at demons and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads' (Julian, *Ep.* 19). While many Christians believed that making the sign of the cross was an effective means of protection against evil powers, use of physical objects was widely believed to be the most fail-safe method of all. A large number of objects generally described as amulets survive from Graeco-Roman Antiquity. An amulet is an object which by contact with, or proximity to, the person of the owner, or his or her possessions, either protects or exerts a positive advantage. It is clear that Jews, Christians and 'pagans' alike shared a deeply rooted belief in the power of amulets. They could be made out of almost any type of material and hung or worn in all sorts of places: around necks of humans and animals but also tied to, or buried near, buildings or crossroads. Various types can be identified, including the phylactery: a small case containing some kind of object believed to bring divine protection upon the owner.

Amulets and finger rings made out of durable, often semi-precious materials, were popular throughout the Roman period, sometimes referred to as 'magical gems'.[43] Certain materials were especially popular as they were acknowledged to have special powers, which we could define as either 'magical' or 'medicinal', such as haematite.[44] Many surviving gems of this type come from Egypt, and a number of these include Christian and Jewish elements. At times the healing power of the stone was heightened through the depiction of a miracle on the ring: whether this object should be defined as 'magical' is a matter of perspective. The sard intaglio featuring the good shepherd (see Fig. 37.2) can be set in this broader context of objects.

A number of amulets include writing in some form; the good shepherd ring has a brief inscription, ES V VE T V, perhaps a barbarised Latin transliteration of the Greek words for 'Jesus' and 'God'. Written texts were a category of object widely believed to have special, esoteric, powers in antiquity, not

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43 See here J. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, Studien und Perspektiven 20 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), especially pp. 81–6.
44 On the special powers of haematite see Pliny, *Natural History* 37.60.

surprisingly in a context of widespread illiteracy, where written texts remained mysterious to so many. Scriptural writings, however, were one category of text that possessed special efficacy, and hence there are many surviving examples of the use of biblical verses as amulets, whether scratched on ostraca or written on papyri, with the opening verse of Ps. 90 (91):1 proving a particular favourite: 'He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty'.[45] Jews in Antiquity commonly wore biblical verses, written on parchment, in phylacteries, following several injunctions in the Old Testament which commanded the Israelite faithful not just to keep the Lord's commandments but to bind them to their hands and foreheads and to their house and gate posts (Deut. 6:4–9, 11:18–20; Exod. 13:16). Archaeological evidence of this practice has been found at Qumran, where examples include these verses as well as the Ten Commandments themselves, on small pieces of parchment. The Gospel of Matthew (23:5) identified this practice with the Pharisees in particular, as taken up in patristic exegesis on this passage, as we shall see.

Christians themselves were far from immune from such practices. Patristic texts furnish us with a wealth of examples of biblical texts, especially miniature Gospel codices, being worn round the neck to function as amulets, or at least as protective devices of some kind. John Chrysostom refers to this practice with some equanimity: 'Do you not see how women and little children suspend Gospels from their necks as a powerful amulet [*anti phulakes megales*], and carry them about in all places wherever they go' (*Hom*.19.14). Chrysostom does not expressly disapprove of this practice, only reminding his congregation that they can also carry the Gospel *internally*, without any need for the wherewithal to buy such an expensive item. Jerome, however, expressly brands just such a practice as superstitious, and compares it to the practice of the Pharisees: 'Among us, superstitious little women, who truly have zeal for God but not in an informed manner, regularly do this [i.e. use scriptural phylacteries] to this day with tiny Gospels, the wood of the Cross, and the like' (*Comm. Matt.* 23.5–7). The practice is again linked with women (consistently seen by ancient writers as especially prone to 'superstition'), but it is in fact clear that people of all genders, ages and positions used amulets. Their use by clerics is attested: in 360 the Council of Laodicea prescribed excommunication for clerics who made (!) or wore phylacteries, described dramatically as 'chains for the

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45 This phrase is also found engraved on jewellery and gems: see, for instance, in combination with scenes from the life of Christ, a bronze bracelet described in C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1950), no. 321, while it also appears on a mould for casting small lead amulets: no. 328.

souls',[46] while several hundred years later a Gallo-Latin hagiographic text still warned against the use of phylacteries 'even if offered by clerics or supposed clerics, saying they are holy, and contain passages from the scriptures, because therein lies not a remedy of Christ but the poison of the Devil' (*Vita S Eligii* 15). Bishops were not always hostile to the notion that the Bible text possessed real power that could be harnessed by the faithful Christian. According to John Chrysostom, for instance, 'the devil will not dare approach a house where a Gospel book is lying' (*Hom. John* 32). Augustine, meanwhile, referred without criticism to the practice of using the Gospel of John as a cure for a headache (*Io. ev. tr.* 7.12).[47] Another practice indicating the special power attributed to the Bible in Antiquity is the practice of 'bibliomancy', or, to put it another way, biblical fortune-telling (*sortes biblicae*). This was a particular instance of a widespread practice, associated most commonly with the works of Homer and Virgil. However, it makes a particularly famous appearance in Augustine's account of his own conversion in the *Confessions*: he describes how, while in despair regarding the state of his soul, he heard a mysterious voice exhorting him to '"Pick up and read, pick up and read." . . . I interpreted it solely as a divine command to me to open the book and read the first chapter I might find.' When Augustine opened the 'book of the apostle', the passage he there found (Rom. 13:13–14) told him all he needed to know, confounding his final doubts and securing his conversion to Christianity (*Conf.* 8.29).[48]

Augustine later professed himself ambivalent, nonetheless, regarding the use of such *sortes biblicae*: 'regarding those who draw lots from the pages of the Gospels, although it could be wished that they would do this rather than run about consulting demons, I do not like this custom of wishing to turn the divine oracles [*oracula divina*] to worldly business and the vanity of this life, when their object is another life' (*Ep.* 55.20.37).

We should note however, that it is not that Augustine doubts the special power of the scriptures, rather that he objects to it being harnessed in this way. This is consistent with a broader trend: however often we see ecclesiastical writers objecting to certain 'magical' practices, they never deny their efficacy. Even pious and orthodox Christians lived in a world which was far

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46 Council of Laodicea Canon 36 = Hefele, *Histoire des conciles*, vol. 1.2, pp. 1018–19.

47 However, Augustine also had a practical, pastoral aim in mind here: for the bishop such a practice was to be greatly preferred to the use of more clearly 'magical' or 'diabolical' amulets: he makes this linkage expressly here, as well as on several other occasions, e.g. *S.* 286.7 and 318.3.

48 As Augustine himself tells us at this point, he thought of the example of St Anthony who interpreted the words of a Bible reading he was present at as aimed directly at himself, showing again the importance of listening to, as well as reading, biblical texts: Athanasius, *Vita Ant.* 2.

from divorced from traditional practices, rituals and beliefs, even as Christian preachers and councils began to demonise them.

This chapter has shown that the Bible was communicated in Late Antiquity in a whole range of ways, some of which might seem surprising. Its 'uses' were rich and complicated, best understood in the context of an ancient culture in which the literate and the non-literate, the elite and the non-elite, and even the religious and the magical, were hard to disentangle. Our own understanding of the Bible as an ancient text is greatly deepened when we open our minds to this world.

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