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Editorial

In the first article of the current issue, Dom Henry Wansbrough outlines the process and main points contained in the recent document from the Pontifical Biblical Commission entitled *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*. As a member of the Commission, Dom Henry recounts how and why it was necessary to publish such a document and how its aim is to bring together Jews and Christians in their understanding of and mutual respect for the Scriptures, a heritage common to both traditions. The next issue of *Scripture Bulletin* (January 2003) will continue the exploration of the document and will contain three articles which offer a response to it from a Jewish as well as a Christian perspective.

One of the aims of *Scripture Bulletin* is to introduce the reader to new and current ways of reading the Bible. Previous issues have included cultural, feminist and literary approaches. This issue includes two articles that broadly use a post-colonialist approach to elucidate how the Bible has been interpreted or read in situations arising from the 20th century. In the first of these articles, Dr. Michael Prior shows how certain biblical narratives have been deployed as part of the ideological justification for the exploitation of others, not least through various imperialising and colonising enterprises. Such enterprises, he argues, were propelled by other compelling factors, invariably related to greed and power, but the Bible was always at hand to 'legitimise' them. In the second of these articles, Dr. John McDonagh shows how the Philistines were regarded as *the other* and how the 'demonic' Philistines fulfil a role that was later to be played, amongst others, by Africans, Indians, Aborigines and Irish in the construction of the great colonial edifice of *otherness*.

In the final article, Dr. Wilfried Warning, who has carried out considerable work in this field, demonstrates how a close reading of the biblical text – assisted by a Bible computer program – brings to light the exact distribution of a given word and how this in turn can signal to the reader important terms or phrases that hold the key to the interpretation of the entire passage. Should you have any comment to make on any of the four articles, the authors would be very happy to hear from you directly and have included their email addresses.

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The Jewish People and its Holy Scripture in the Christian Bible

(The Lattey Lecture delivered at Cambridge University on 5th March 2002)

Henry Wansbrough

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By chance it happens that my neighbour in the choir in which I sing at Oxford is a Jew. Recently he remarked that I was to preach in his College Chapel. 'What is that to do with you?' I asked. 'I sing in the Chapel choir; you see, faith doesn't seem to be a requirement,' he replied. 'Anyway, what will you be preaching on?' 'I think I'll preach on Christianity as the fulfilment of Judaism,' I replied. 'You do just that,' was his answer. 'Will questions be allowed?'

In the aftermath of the Second World War and the atrocities committed against the Jews during that period¹ the sympathy for the Jews and the question inevitably asked whether such a persecution could have occurred without the background of centuries of Christian anti-Semitism have provoked renewed reflection on relationships between Jew and Christian since the beginning of Christianity. In addition, the biblical movement within the Catholic Church, in which Fr Lattey (and indeed the donor of this lecture) played such an important part, have provoked a new examination of the extent to which any understanding of Christianity must grow out of an understanding of Judaism.

The Biblical Commission began its work on this topic in 1997. The Commission has had a mixed history and deserves a short introduction. It was established by Leo XIII in 1902 to encourage and guide Catholic participation in the biblical reflection following the major advances in archaeological and ancient literary studies of the nineteenth century. However, the Commission became notorious in the wake of, and partly as an instrument in, the repression of the Catholic Modernist Crisis by a series of extremely conservative and cautious rulings between 1905 and 1915, which, together with the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* and

¹I do not use the term 'Holocaust', which I regard as a bullyingly racist term. Firstly, it disregards the occurrence of other dreadful instances of racial cleansing, such as the atrocities to gypsies by the same Hitler, and massacres in Armenia or Rwanda. Secondly, the use of the sacrificial term lends this horror a sort of sacredness which makes it untouchable.

the decree *Lamentabili*, in fact strangled Catholic biblical scholarship for nearly half a century. The tide was turned by the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which fully encouraged open Catholic participation in biblical study. This new openness issued in the important letter from the PBC to Cardinal Suhard of Paris (1948), which withdrew the insistence that Adam and Eve must be considered historical personages. Since then, among the works of the PBC, I would single out for mention two documents: the important work on the Historicity of the Gospels (1964), which firmly backed the three stages in the understanding of the life and mission of Jesus, and most recently the 1993 document on different methods in the Interpretation of the Bible.²

The background would not be complete without mention of the Pope's personal interest in the project. It was at his request that this topic was chosen, for he wished some statement to be made on the matter, though it must have been by chance that the document was completed at just about the time of his momentous visit to Jerusalem in 2000. The relations between Christianity and Judaism have been a continuous interest of his. This is fully in accord with the declaration of Vatican II on Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, which states that 'the Church cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament by way of that people with whom God established the ancient covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws nourishment from that good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the gentiles have been grafted' (no. 4). The continuous present tense of 'draws' is striking – the relationship is continuous. John Paul II's interest may also not be unconnected with the large number of Polish Jews who perished under Hitler. There is the unforgettable story which emerged during his visit to Israel, of the Jewish girl whom the young seminarian carried 3 km to the railway station.³ He regards relations with Judaism as being an internal rather than an external element in the Church. As long ago as 1980, visiting a synagogue at Mainz, he declared, 'The encounter between the People of the Old Alliance, which has never been abrogated by God, and that of the New Alliance is a dialogue internal to our Church' (*Documentation Catholique* 77 (1980), 1148). In 1986, visiting the Synagogue of Rome, he told the Jews of Italy that Judaism is not extrinsic but intrinsic to Christianity. This is quite unlike the relationships between Christianity and any other religion (*Documentation Catholique* 83 (1986), 437). Such, then, is the background to the commission given to the PBC.

²Sympathetically but not uncritically reviewed in the collection of essays, mostly by Anglican scholars, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, edited by J.L.Houlden (SCM, 1995).

³*Time Magazine*, 3.4.00, p. 34.

The normative edition of the document is in French⁴. The papers and discussions which contributed to it were in the five principal European languages, as were also the discussions of them. In view of the reputation for autocracy – and even restrictiveness - enjoyed by the Vatican, it might be worth saying that the only words of Latin spoken during the session were a short formal speech at beginning and end of the week from Cardinal Ratzinger, who thereafter relaxed with his gentle smile, listened attentively with his affectionate courtesy, and spoke seldom but profoundly in whatever language happened to be being used. The discussions were, to my mind, a model for any open scholarly discussion: the topics were put forward by the members.⁵ Papers were circulated two months in advance and carefully read, then discussed and re-edited. Discussion was open and animated.⁶ The document was then edited by the Secretary, Albert Vanhoye, and re-submitted twice to the full Commission. Any final changes after that were edited in by a committee of three elected by the full membership, and the finished product returned to the Commission for a *placet/nonplacet* vote.

I. The Sacred Scriptures of the Jewish People as a Fundamental Part of the Christian Bible

The first section of the document is entitled *Les Saintes Ecritures du peuple juif, partie fondamentale de la Bible Chrétienne*. The purpose of this part is to show – in stark opposition to any Marcionist tendency – that the New Testament is in total continuity with the Jewish Bible, and is based upon it. The similarity of attitudes is shown in detail. The most fundamental aspect is that the Christian scriptures repeatedly show a recognition of the continuing validity of the Bible as the Word of God, and of the Jewish people as the Chosen Race. It is not merely that authors like Paul recognise that the gospel is God's power for the salvation of everyone who has faith, Jews first (Rm 1.16), or that 'salvation comes from the Jews' (Jn 4.22), or that the meaning of Christ is continually shown to be in the fulfilment of the scriptures (Lk 24.27 – indeed, the Emmaus story as a whole has been described as the myth of Christian kerygma).

⁴ It is now available in English from the Catholic Truth Society as *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*. ISBN 88-209-7919-0.

⁵ For instance, I put forward as an important topic 'Jewish methods of exegesis in the New Testament'. As there was at that time there was no inter-testamental expert on the Commission, I was saddled with writing the paper. By the time I came to submit it a year later, the Commission had been afforeed by Ryszard Rubinkiewicz.

⁶ My neighbour, Raymond Brown, turned to me during the third session (his last) and remarked, 'Well, Henry, you haven't been burned yet.'

More than that, a whole range of similar attitudes and ideas can be brought to light. So many New Testament key-words receive their meaning not from secular Greek but specifically from biblical Greek, without which they are unintelligible; one may instance *doxa*, that wonderful concept of 'divine glory' rather than merely 'reputation', *metanoia*, 'conversion' or 'repentance' rather than a simple and banal change of mind, *agape*, that obscure and little-used word, filled with content to express the specifically Hebrew concept. The verb occurs once in Homer and rarely elsewhere, but of the noun Liddell & Scott give no instance outside the LXX and Christian Greek, *angelos* as a heavenly messenger, rather than simply an announcer or augury of the future, *diatheke* as a divine and lasting pact rather than a mere disposition by bequest.

My own particular interest was in certain techniques of presentation and argument used in Judaism and in the New Testament.⁷ The same way of presenting biblical quotations can be seen in the writings of Qumran as in the New Testament, the lemma introduced by 'as it is written' or 'thus it is written'. More interestingly, the use of the scriptures in the New Testament mirrors that of Qumran. Each is concerned to show that current events fulfil the scriptures, but with significant differences. The *pesharim* of Qumran are continuous commentaries on books of the Bible, applying one verse after another continuously to the events of recent history or the present day, whereas the New Testament books work in the opposite direction: they start from current events and show that they are the actualisation of biblical texts (Mt 1-2; 1 Cor 10.4). In technical passages the argumentation coheres with the rules of exegesis attributed to Hillel. Perhaps the most significant instance of all is the application of the sixth of Hillel's *middoth* by Matthew: the whole observance of the Law is to be interpreted in the light of Hosea 6.6, 'What I want is love not sacrifice' (Mt 9.13; 12.7; 23.23). But it is particularly fascinating also to see Paul wickedly hoisting the rabbis with their own petard, turning claims to Jewish superiority on their heads by the use of rabbinic arguments (e.g. in the midrash on Hagar and Sarah in Gal. 4).

Furthermore, both Christianity and Judaism (and in fact Islam) respect the oral tradition which interprets and supplements the Bible. In both traditions the oral tradition completes the written.⁸ In Judaism the oral

⁷ Cf. Henry Wansbrough, 'Jewish Methods of Exegesis in the New Testament' in *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 25 (2000), 219-244.

⁸ This was forcefully demonstrated to me recently on the occasion of a presentation at the Oxford Catholic Chaplaincy by myself (on 'What a Christian thinks of Judaism') and Rabbi Norman Solomon ('What a Jew thinks of Christianity'). Rabbi Norman insisted that I should speak first, on the grounds that Christianity is the older religion, since the New Testament precedes the Talmud.

tradition is held to stem from Moses no less than the written tradition, an expression of its normative value. In the Catholic Church the relationship between scripture and tradition was exhaustively debated at Vatican II. The Council refused to sanction the idea of two sources, averring that 'Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God which is committed to the Church' (*Dei Verbum*, 10) though the exact relationship between them is never defined, merely 'The teaching office draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.'

A further similarity of method may be seen in the formation of the Canon. Both Christianity and Judaism were feeling their way towards defining which books are considered sacred, which books among those held in religious honour are specially revered and read in the liturgical assembly, or – as Judaism would put it – which books 'soil the hands'. The form of the Bible received by Christianity from Judaism was the Greek LXX, including an indeterminate number of books in Greek which were not in the end accepted into the canon of Judaism. Its form was still unfixed, for different versions still included different books. Judaism and Christianity arrived at their separate canons of scripture around the same time, but independently. The close co-operation between them over the Bible, however, even at a later date, is shown by Jerome's fierce championship of the *Hebraica veritas*, and by the help given him by rabbis over his translation from the Aramaic (Preface to Tobit).⁹

2. Fundamental Themes of the Scriptures of the Jewish People and their Reception in the Christian Faith

The first part of the document, therefore, remains rather external to scripture itself, discussing the approaches to scripture in Christianity and Judaism and the use made of the Bible. The second part (which is as long as the other two parts put together) handles the factor of continuity within the scripture itself. Here it is stressed that many of the ideas and themes of Christian theology receive their valuable beginnings in the Bible, and that without the pre-Christian biblical revelation they remain unintelligible. The balance, however, is this. The Christian does not read the Bible as the Jew does, for the important themes of the Old Testament reach a new focus and actualisation in the New. In this regard, however, there is an important novelty in the document which I have never seen

⁹ It could also work against Jerome. Augustine warns Jerome that the unfamiliarity of his new translation of Jonah occasioned such a riot at Oea in Tripoli that the bishop felt obliged to appeal to some local Jews for arbitration. And they, 'whether from ignorance or from spite', supported the old translation (Augustine, *Letter 71.3-5*)! The interest of this story is, of course, that the Bishop was prepared to appeal to the Jews about the authority of the Bible.

expressed elsewhere, and which constitutes an important expression of respect for Judaism. The advance and focus of Old Testament ideas in the New Testament does not imply that the Christian should hold a Jewish reading of the Bible to be illegitimate. Each way of reading the Bible is valid: 'the Jewish reading of the Bible is a possible one, in continuity with the Jewish Holy Scriptures of the era of the Second Temple, a reading analogous to a Christian reading which has developed in parallel. Each of these two readings is consonant with the perspective of faith of which it is a product and expression' (no. 22). The Christian reading is not, then, the only admissible reading, and the Jewish reading cannot be characterised as a false reading. On the contrary, without any Christian interpretation, the Old Testament is a treasury of knowledge of God and of the human condition. It is merely not a Christian reading, not informed and directed by Christian faith.

On the other hand, it is perfectly legitimate to read the Old Testament in the light of Christ and of the New Testament, just as Deuteronomy reads the story of the manna as the Word of God (Dt 8.2-3). There the manna is the symbol of the word of God, teaching Israel to obey God's commandments. Similarly Chronicles re-reads the stories of Kings from the perspective of his own day. King David, rather than being a flesh-and-blood, lusty warrior is transformed into the ideal king, the founder of the Temple liturgy. In prophecy, also, the return from the Babylonian exile is foretold in terms of the Exodus from Egypt to show the continuity of God's saving power. There is of course, nothing new in Christianity about seeing the New Testament in the Old, in reading the Bible in the light of Christ. In the patristic ages this occurred already in allegorisation: the red chord of the prostitute Rahab (Jos 2.18) was understood by Origen as Christ's blood, just as in the New Testament itself an elaborate process of allegorisation occurred, for example, in the treatment of the parables of Jesus. However, a retreat from this allegorical approach does not imply that there is no Christian sense to the Old Testament. On the contrary, the great biblical themes (pilgrimage, the presence of God among human beings, the promises, the alliance) reach their fulness in Christ and attain a new focus, a new plenitude and a new creation. 'Jesus does not confine himself to a role already pre-determined – the role of Messiah – but confers on the concepts of Messiah and salvation a fullness which could not have been imagined beforehand; he fills them with a new reality' (no 31).

The opening statement is followed by brief studies of several themes which run through the Bible into the New Testament, showing just how they come to a sharper focus in the New. I find this an inspiring part of

the document. It constitutes an important resource both for major theological themes of the Bible and for the development of these themes into the New Testament. Between them these major themes build up a fine picture of the continuity and advance of the understanding of God through the two Testaments.

2.1 The Revelation of God

The first theme discussed is the Revelation of God – aptly enough, for the knowledge and understanding of God is the basic purpose of the Bible. The God of the Bible is a God whose self-expression is by speech, whether it is making promises to Abraham or David, or making known the divine ways and the divine will through the mouth of the prophets. Even the act of creation is described under the image of speech, both at the beginning in Genesis ('God said, "Let there be...") and in the much later Book of Wisdom (18.15, 'Down from the heavens, from the throne leapt your all-powerful Word'). In the New Testament too Jesus is first the preacher of God's Word, and then, in the fuller understanding of John, is seen as the Word made flesh, the fullness of revelation in human form. Furthermore, just as the word of God is the means and principle of creation, so the Word incarnate, the risen Christ, is the principle of a new creation. Besides being the basic theme of the Bible, this reflection also provides a superb example of the way in which the New Testament accepts, builds on and carries the biblical message further, with a new focus on Jesus.

2.2 Human Grandeur and Failure

In the story of the Garden of Eden every person is invited to recognise his or her own history and situation, created in the image of God but now vulnerable and out of harmony with creation. I find this discussion of the first chapters of the Bible particularly significant for four reasons. Firstly, without any mention of historicity, either positive or negative, the story is read as an interpretation of the present human situation in all its dignity and fallibility. Secondly, there is no fear of accepting that the imagery of 'image of God' may well be adopted from the Egyptian language of the king formed in the image of God – adopted but adapted because generalised to all of humanity. Thirdly, there is strong emphasis on an aspect which the emphasis of Catholic theology on *dominium terrae* has often been accused of obscuring, that of continuing the creative work of God to the whole of creation. Fourthly, there is a strongly egalitarian emphasis, both on the association of the woman with the man in continuing the government and peopling of the world, and in the

exclusion by the creation story of any human group claiming superiority over any other.

In the New Testament human misery and disharmony are fully evident, both physical and moral. The document instances two classic examples, Paul's lament over his own inability to act as he wills in Romans 7, and the splendid tableau of that paradigm of evil, the corruptions of the whore of Babylon in Revelation 17-18. This issues principally in Jesus' divine pity and in the insistent call to conversion. Again the imagery of 'the image of God' receives a new dimension in the transformation of the Christian into the resemblance of Christ, the perfect image of God, 'being transformed into the image that we reflect, in brighter and brighter glory' (2 Cor 3.18).

2.3 God, Liberator and Saviour

After these two basic considerations of the divine and human, the themes begin to build up to show the biblical view of the divine rescue of humanity from its predicament. First the theme of God as Liberator and Saviour is discussed, then the choice of Israel, the alliance and the Law and institutions of Israel, and finally the kingship of God. Looked at in a certain way, the texts both make valuable sense on their own and point towards a fuller reality. So God is from the beginning of the Bible a liberator and saviour, liberating Israel from Egypt and again from the Babylonian exile, and finally keeping Israel amazingly intact despite the attempts of the Syrian rulers to wipe out its particularities. On the individual level, too, God is seen as a saviour from all kinds of trouble, invoked especially in the Psalms. In the New Testament this aspect of liberation takes on a new dimension. Still in continuity with the Old Testament, God is shown to be working through human instruments, just as through the Judges and Kings, so through Jesus who gave his life as a ransom for many. Again here the document takes a balanced attitude to the History of Religions school: having pointed out that in the earlier part of the New Testament the term 'Saviour' is avoided because of the pagan connotations of saviour gods, by the time of the Pastoral Letters and 2 Peter the danger has disappeared, so that those letters can capitalise on the sense, and use the hellenistic idea to express the Christian message of salvation.

2.4 *The Choice of Israel and the Covenant*

The two themes of the choice of Israel and the covenant, central to the whole thrust of the discussion of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity were nevertheless not easy to deal with. The first danger is that the choice of Israel seems to exclude or even reject other nations. This one-sidedness is carefully avoided, in that the choice of Israel is seen to be partly for the sake of other nations. Israel's titles as 'first-born son' and 'first-fruits' imply that there are other children and other elements to the harvest (cf. Zc 14.16). At least from the universalistic approach of the later prophets from the Third part of Isaiah onwards it becomes increasingly a central part of the message that the nations will come to Jerusalem and draw salvation from Israel.

More difficult is the question whether the choice of Israel persists, whether Israel remains the Chosen People. Matthew, impregnated as he is with the conviction that Christianity is in continuity with Judaism, nevertheless sees other nations succeeding to the inheritance of Israel (8.11; 21.43). More extremely, he sees the Vineyard being taken away from the original tenants. Is it to be taken away from the nation as a whole or merely from its leaders? Luke, the universalist, insists that at every stage, before the saving message turns to the gentiles, large numbers of the Jews embrace it. So much is clear from the Infancy Stories, which are deliberately worded in such a way that they almost seem part of the Old Testament, and where we see the promises being fulfilled to the pious Poor of Israel, observant of the Law and submissive in every way to the Lord. In the Acts, too, the first and ideal community of the Church is at Jerusalem, formed from thousands of adherents drawn from Judaism. At each stage of Paul's mission successively in Asia Minor, Greece and Rome, the apostle attracts significant numbers of Jews before being forced by Jewish hostility to turn to the gentiles. Paul, for his part, in those agonised chapters of Romans, sees the original branches cut off from the stem of the olive tree, but the stem remains designated to salvation: 'as regards those who are God's choice, they are still well loved for the sake of their ancestors' (Rm 11.28).

Similarly in the matter of the Covenant. This was, perhaps, the single most hotly debated question in the whole discussion. It was twice sent back for re-drafting to a sub-committee of which I found myself the unwilling chairman.¹⁰ The issue is the crucial point whether the new covenant can be said to include historical Israel or Judaism. Three factors

¹⁰ One session of which narrowly missed being cancelled because it coincided with a crucial match between Madrid and Bilbao!

are presented:

(a) The series of covenants by which God bound himself to Israel were continually broken by Israel. It is in such a context that at the time of the Babylonian exile Jeremiah (and Jeremiah alone in the Old Testament) promises a new covenant, written on the heart rather than on tablets of stone. This idea of a new covenant never became prominent in Israel's thinking. It is not used again until it is picked up at Qumran by the Damascus Document to designate the new, messianic community (CD 6.19). Then it is used in the Luke-Paul version of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, 'the new covenant in my blood' (Lk 22.20; 1 Cor 11.25). Jesus therefore sees his new community as the community of the new covenant (also called 'my *ecclesia*', corresponding to the *ecclesia* or gathering of God in the Old Testament). Is it in any sense realised of the community of Judaism, or does the new *ecclesia* in any way imply that the community of Judaism is now obsolete?

(b) The New Testament testifies in many different ways that Christians felt themselves to be in a new relationship with God. One element was that the covenant-as-law was now abolished, though the covenant-as-promise still remained (Rm 1.26; 11.26-32). The novelty consists also in the universal extension of the covenant (Peter's Pentecost speech, Acts 3.25; the expanded New Jerusalem, Rv 21.3). The expression 'blood of the alliance' shows the basic novelty of the situation: the new relationship is founded no longer on the animal blood shed in the sealing of the covenant on Sinai, but on the self-giving of Jesus on the Cross (Hebrews 7.18-19; 10.9-10).

(c) Finally, though the ancient covenant persists in the sense of God's enduring loyalty to the promises to Israel, a new stage, heralded by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, has been inaugurated by the sacrifice of Christ. One cannot speak of a decisive *break* between Christianity and Judaism, for the new situation is in continuity with the old; but it is appropriate to speak of a decisive *newness*.

I pass over a series of stimulating themes for which the progress and focussing on Christ contributes notably to our understanding of revelation:

1. the Law (the importance of the Law in Judaism and the new Law in Christ),
2. prayer (the wealth of Israel's prayer and worship, but the new status of prayer as adopted sons crying Abba),
3. Jerusalem and the Temple (the presence of God in the midst of the Chosen People, but the new mode of God's presence in the Christian).

2.5 *The Reign of God*

(Note: the document avoids the apparent territorial overtones of 'Kingdom of God')

The growing importance of this theme in the Old Testament is outlined, especially its cosmic dimensions from the exile onwards (particularly in the kingship Psalms). From the exile onwards the kingship of God is seen to extend no longer just to Israel and its territory but to the whole world, indeed the whole universe. In the apocalyptic literature an eschatological dimension becomes increasingly important, that is, Israel's hope is focussed more on a decisive event, the intervention of God or the Day of the Lord, which will change the world and bring the reign of God to be a reality in a new way. The inter-testamental literature (Jubilees and the Psalms of Solomon) shows that this idea was alive and vigorous at the time of Jesus, conceived principally as a heavenly, eternal kingdom. In Jesus' own proclamation it has an absolutely central position, filling his whole horizon. The urgency of its arrival dominates his message. This is expressed above all in the gospel of Matthew, who gives it a focussed content in the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of the Kingdom and the final parables of Judgement.

To sum up this major section of the document, there is, between Old and New Testaments, continuity, discontinuity and progress. The continuity has been made obvious by the presence of the great themes which run through the whole Bible. The discontinuity consists in cessation of such institutions as levitical priesthood, animal sacrifice, laws of purity, restrictions for the Sabbath. While it should not be denied that for Judaism these are elements of major importance, at the same time it must be noted that there are reservations about many of these elements already in the Old Testament. The prophets are incessantly critical of Israel's unthinking reliance on material practices which were meant to lead to salvation but have become empty ritual. The advance, as we have seen, consists in Jesus bringing these great themes to perfection, a realisation of promises, or extension or concretisation. The revelation of God reaches a new fullness in Jesus, the Word and Son of God. Human dignity receives a new dimension in the restoration of all things in Christ. God the Saviour brings a new salvation in the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Resurrection. The promises of a holy People of God are fulfilled to a new intensity by the divine presence of Christ in his community of the new covenant.

3. The Jews in the New Testament

The third and final section of the document is entitled 'The Jews in the New Testament', and in fact is an examination, book by book, of the charge of anti-Semitism (or, more accurately, anti-Judaism) in the New Testament. This is, of course, a grave charge, since anti-Jewish activity has historically often been cloaked by a specious justification from the New Testament. The classic example of this is the use of the saying 'His blood be upon us and upon our children' (Mt 27.25) as an invitation to revenge the death of Jesus on the whole Jewish race. Other less obvious texts which have been used are the description of the Jews in First Thessalonians as 'enemies of the whole human race' (1 Thess 2.15), and the standard description of the opponents of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as 'the Jews'. This thorough examination is long overdue.

It begins by establishing a background in the controversies of the time, even within Judaism, where violent language and action was commonplace. Political correctness has no place in the attitude of Ben Sira to the Samaritans (Sira 50.25-26):

There are two nations that my soul detests;
the third is not a nation at all:
the inhabitants of Mount Seir, the Philistines,
and the stupid people living at Shechem.

Similar abuse, and much more virulent, is commonplace in the Scrolls of Qumran against Sadducees and Pharisees alike, and especially the Temple authorities. The Wicked Priest (presumably the high priest of the time) attacked the founder of the sect during the celebration of Yom Kippur and drove him into exile (1QpHab 11.6-8). One might also mention the persecution of the Christians by the zealous Saul before his conversion (Ga 1.13-14; Acts 9.1-2), the flogging to which Paul himself was three times subjected, and the 'scourging in their synagogues' predicted in Matthew 10.17. There must surely be a threat of expulsion from the synagogue behind the threat to the parents of the Man Born Blind for acknowledging Jesus as the Christ (Jn 9.22; cf. 12.42) and the prediction, 'they will make you *aposynagogoi*' in the Last Supper Discourse (Jn 16.2). Against the background of this sort of violent opposition towards the end of the first century, it would not be surprising if some traces of hostility appeared in the Christian literature of the time.

The examination of each of the New Testament writings proceeds not in chronological order but in the order in which the books appear in printed

editions of the New Testament.

The most notorious of all anti-Jewish sayings is that of the crowd in Matthew's account of the trial of Jesus. This is in some ways surprising. Matthew stands on the cusp of the break between Christianity and Judaism. There can be no doubt that he grows out of Judaism, and is permeated with its thoughts, concepts and loyalties. At the same time he has harsh words to say, 'Nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this'. The hostile language of Matthew is not directed against the Jews in general, but is typical of contemporary polemic and expectedly reflects that of two rival groups within Judaism. Matthew, writing from the point of view of a minority within Judaism, and a persecuted minority at that, makes a careful distinction between the leaders and the people as such. So in the Parable of the Vine-Dressers it is not the vine itself which is condemned (as it is in Isaiah 5), but those appointed to tend it. His polemic against the Temple in 23.37-24.2 may seem aggressive, but it is no more forceful – indeed considerably less threatening – than the polemic common in the prophets and contemporary literature between one group and another within Judaism. Furthermore, it reflects the language and style of Jeremiah's prophecies against the Temple (Jer 7.16-20), and particularly in the passage (26.6) where Jeremiah reverses the promise to Abraham (Gn 12.3) that his descendants will become a blessing for all the nations of the world: 'I shall treat this Temple as I treated Shiloh, and will make this city a curse for all the nations of the world'. Even so, there is a positive ending promised in Mt 23.39. Against this background, the document argues that when all the people cry out 'His blood be upon us and upon our children' (27.23), this 'all the people' should be taken to mean only the casual crowd who happened to be present (no. 72). I am now not sure that this comfortable interpretation is tenable, for Matthew here carefully changes from his normal *ochlos* to the theologically significant *pas ho laos*. It is, however, inconceivable that a writer so deeply attached to Judaism as Matthew should intend the condemnation of the whole people for all time, and I would far rather, following his Jeremiad against the Temple, relate it literally to the following generation which saw the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

The Gospel of John has also been held up as an example of anti-Judaism, because the title 'the Jews' is the standard name for the opponents of Jesus. At the same time, however, it is striking that John fully recognises the values of Judaism, and indeed explains Jesus in terms of them. In the first week in the Jordan Valley the disciples come to him in successive days, attributing to Jesus the titles of dignity in Judaism, rabbi, messiah, king of Israel. He returns the compliment to Nathanael as 'a true

Israelite'. Throughout the gospel John's way of showing the greatness of Jesus is to focus upon his person the festivals and solemnities of Israel, until finally he takes the place of the Passover lambs, slaughtered at the hour of his death. Similarly, the more exalted, transcendent Christology of John, showing the exalted position of Jesus (which many scholars see to be the real cause of the break between the Johannine communities and the Jews), is made in terms drawn from the Bible, both Hebrew (the 'I am') and Greek (the Logos). The hostility of 'the Jews', which is such a clear feature of this gospel, is a reflection of the experience of the Johannine communities, whose high Christology was so offensive to the Jewish communities. Mutual accusations proliferated, Jesus being accused of being a sinner, a blasphemer and possessed – Jewish accusations familiar from Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* a few years later.

Of Paul's love for the Jews and of his loyalty to Judaism as he saw it in the light of Christ there can never be any doubt.¹¹ It informs his whole cast of thought. His fullest and most agonised statement of his longing for their acceptance of Christ is in Roman 9-11. For me the most convincing proof of this is the very ineptitude of his final image, insisting that the pruned dead branches will finally be grafted back onto the olive tree. Once dead, it is futile to graft branches back into the tree. Whether it works or not, the image remains the vivid expression of Paul's burning conviction that the whole of Israel will one day be saved by Christ. The only passage which could for a moment seriously suggest any anti-Jewish sentiment is 1 Thess 2.14-16. Here the Jews are characterised as 'not pleasing to God and opposed to the whole human race'. But the context is so obviously particular and polemical – these Jews are preventing the evangelisation of Judea – and the language so obviously rhetorical and generalised that they give no tenable grounds for the charge of anti-Judaism in Paul.

The other writings of the New Testament may be passed over quickly. Far from providing grounds for anti-Judaism, the final books of the New Testament are especially strongly impregnated with Judaism. Remarkable is the Letter of Jude, which seems to be wholly based on Jewish models, both in form and in content, even making heavy use of non-canonical Jewish writings.¹² The survey concludes in a positively up-beat mode

¹¹A sign that a certain previous obscurantism has wholly disappeared from Catholic scripture scholarship was the unhesitating consistency with which the generally accepted division of the Pauline corpus was assumed. The discussion treated separately the seven letters universally accepted as genuine, the deutero-Paulines and the Pastoral Letters.

¹²At an earlier session I presented a paper, based on R. Bauckham's work, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1980), to show that Jude 4-19 is uncannily similar

with the Book of Revelation, which is so thoroughly Jewish in genre, mood and symbolism, representing the outcome of world history as the New Jerusalem, presided by the twelve apostles representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Far from being anti-Judaic, it is so Jewish that it even reproaches as counterfeit Jews those Jews who oppose Christianity (2.9; 3.9, no 83).

Conclusion

I have never found apologies a very satisfying genre, either to deliver or to receive. There is nearly always at least a hint of inauthenticity about them, and always a trace of resentment at having to apologise. If the person to whom the apology is made is fit to receive an apology, the apology will be at least partly embarrassing. And yet apology has been recently very much in the international air, apology to Galileo, apology to the Orthodox, apology to the Jews. I find the document we have been considering far more welcome. It puts on a firm footing a steady and well-reasoned relationship between members of the same family who in the past have been sometimes violently estranged from each other. It shows respect for the traditions and thinking of the other party and acknowledges the riches received by the authors' branch of the family from the other tradition. It explains, while not condoning, how the authors' branch of the family has felt some coolness towards the grounds – admittedly insufficient – on which offence was given. It provides plenty of scope for the two traditions to honour each other and to avoid repetition in the future of the misunderstanding which has been so harmful in the past.

in style of exegesis to the Qumran *pesharim*. This was too long and detailed for the final draft.

The Israel-Palestine Dispute and the Bible

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The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the most explosive issues in international affairs. Conflicting secular nationalisms, of course, are at the heart of the discord, but it is clear that opposing religious identities also play their part. Despite its potential for good, one is all too aware that religious dedication can be, and frequently has been, a powerful stimulus to committing evil, sometimes in the name of God. The events of 11 September 2001 in the USA, and the spate of suicide bombings in Israel add urgency to the discussion of the links between religion, national identification and statehood, and the violence that they can engender. For readers of this journal the role of the biblical narrative in Palestinian-Israeli discord is of particular relevance.

The problem of religiously-motivated conflict is exacerbated for Jews and Christians because certain traditions of their foundational documents promote violence, even to the extent of mandating genocide as an act of pious conformity to the directives of God. In the biblical narrative, in particular, the process of taking possession of the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey, required that the land flow also with the blood of its indigenous population.

Nor is the problem merely rhetorical, since the relevant biblical narratives have been deployed as part of the ideological justification for the exploitation of others, not least through various imperialising and colonising enterprises. Such enterprises, of course, were propelled by other compelling factors, invariably related to greed and power, but the Bible was at hand to 'legitimise' them. All too frequently the higher values of religion—the worship of God and the love of others—were eclipsed by the imperatives of exclusivist nationalisms, leading frequently to a desecration of God's name and the destruction of peoples.¹ Yet, such

¹ In *The Bible and Colonialism. A Moral Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) I focus on three different regions and periods, in which each colonial enterprise gained the support of the Bible: the invasion of Latin America in the fifteenth century, the sequel in the nineteenth and twentieth

matters seldom seem to bother biblical scholars.

Nor has the biblical academy distinguished itself so far in facing into the fact that 'the return' of Jews with a view to establishing their state necessarily demanded the ethnic-cleansing of Palestine's Arab community, a task not only 'legitimated' by the biblical narrative but demanded by it. On the contrary: only a decade after the full horrors of Nazi 'ethnic cleansing' had been revealed, William Foxwell Albright had no qualms about the plunder attendant upon Joshua's enterprise—through which 'a people of markedly inferior type should vanish before a people of superior potentialities'—a project he understood in a largely historically reliable way.² Albright's Orientalist attitudes, typical of virtually every Western colonial enterprise which predicated that the 'superior' peoples of the West had the right to exploit, and in some cases exterminate, the 'natives', was shared by other giants in the biblical academy.³ Reflecting these conventional values, Albright also judged that through Zionism Jews would bring to the Near East all the benefits of European civilization (1942: 12-13).⁴

Moreover, the recent interest in 'the land' and in 'the return from exile' are related to the Zionist programme. Even after Gerhard von Rad's lament in his 1943 pioneering essay that, despite the importance of 'the land' in the Hexateuch, no thorough investigation had been made,⁵ in fact no serious study of the theme was undertaken for another thirty years, and the timing of that work was no coincidence. W.D. Davies acknowledged

centuries to the Dutch incursion into the Cape Colony of southern Africa in 1652, and the Zionist colonialism of Palestine in the twentieth century. Using the examples of South Africa, Israel, and Ulster, Donald Harman Akenson argues that a major component of the mindset of each of these cultures has been the conceptual grid that they assimilated from the Hebrew scriptures (*God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel, and Ulster*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

² *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (New York: Doubleday), pp. 280-81.

³ George E. Wright justified the genocide of Joshua in terms of the inferiority of the indigenous culture (in George E. Wright and R.H. Fuller, eds., *The Book of the Acts of God: Christian Scholarship Interprets the Bible*, London: Duckworth, 1960, p. 109). In the previous century, Heinrich Ewald, who in his five-volume history of Israel (1843-1855) was determined to demonstrate the Israelites' unique, tireless efforts to achieve true and perfect religion, wrote: 'It is an eternal necessity that a nation such as the majority of the Canaanites then were, sinking deeper and deeper into a slough of discord and moral perversity, must fall before a people roused to a higher life by the newly awakened energy of unanimous trust in Divine Power'. Similarly, G.F. MacLear in his commentary on Joshua (1880) could write: 'When...God entrusted the sword of vengeance to Joshua, was ever campaign waged in such an unearthly manner as that now inaugurated by the leader of the armies of Israel?' He ends by quoting a sermon of Thomas Arnold: 'The Israelites' sword in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth...they preserved unhurt the seed of eternal life' (quoted in A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua Retold: Synoptic Perspectives*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998, p. 133).

⁴ 'Why the Near East Needs the Jews', *New Palestine* 32 (1942):12-13.

⁵ 'The Promised Land and Yahweh's Land in the Hexateuch', in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (London: SCM and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966, repr. 1984), pp. 79-93, p. 79.

that he had written his seminal *The Gospel and the Land* (1974)⁶ at the request of friends in Jerusalem, who just before the war in 1967 urged his support for the cause of Israel.⁷ In his 1982 work, Davies publicised his hermeneutical key: 'Here I have concentrated on what in my judgement must be the beginning for an understanding of this (Israeli-Palestinian) conflict: the sympathetic attempt to comprehend the Jewish tradition'.⁸ Moreover, while Davies considers 'the land' from virtually every conceivable perspective, little attention is given to broadly moral and human rights' issues. Furthermore, he excluded from his concern, 'What happens when the understanding of the Promised Land in Judaism conflicts with the claims of the traditions and occupancy of its other peoples?' He excuses himself by saying that to engage that issue would demand another volume,⁹ without indicating his intention to embark upon such an enterprise.

Israel-Palestine: Nation and Religion

Although from its inception Political Zionism was an altogether secular ideology there are ideologically-driven forces within Israeli religious society today, which aspire to construct a Jewish State based on the *Torah* (and the *Halakhah*). In such circles the modern State of Israel has sacral, even redemptive significance. Moreover, the existence of the state attracts a unique vocabulary of approval by many (religious) Jews and Christians, elevating it above normal discourse. Some expressions of Christian Theology, and many Evangelical Christians, associate the modern state with the fulfilment of biblical prophecy, and with the end-time, thereby bestowing upon it the highest possible authority, and situating it within God's cosmic plans, and above any concerns that might spring from considerations of humankind's discourse on morality.¹⁰

There is, however, a major moral problematic deriving from the establishment of the State of Israel and its compartment since 1948, namely the *Nakba* (catastrophe) it brought to the indigenous Arab population of Palestine. In the process of establishing the Jewish state Palestine was occupied by a foreign minority, and emptied almost entirely

⁶ *The Gospel and the Land. Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

⁷ Davies, W.D., *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. xiii.

⁸ *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism...*, (pp. xiii-xiv). He wrote this book under the direct impact of the 1967 war, and its updated version in 1991 after the Gulf War (*The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism. With a Symposium and Further Reflections*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

⁹ *The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism. With a Symposium and Further Reflections*, p. xv.

¹⁰ See Michael Prior, 'Zionist Ethnic Cleansing: the Fulfilment of Biblical Prophecy?' *Epworth Review* 27(2000): 49-60.

of its indigenous Arab people and villages. This forcible displacement of an indigenous people from its homeland continues to be supported from abroad, financially, politically, and even theologically. The conquest is hailed by many to be a miraculous act of God and a victory for freedom and civilised values. Concomitantly, every effort is made to ignore, suppress, or even deny the Palestinian *Nakba*.

The moral problematic of the State of Israel is more acute still. There is available now an abundance of Zionist archival evidence demonstrating that the damaging consequences to the indigenous Arab population of Palestine were foreseen as necessary, were systematically planned-for, and were executed at the first opportunity in 1948, and in several other ways since, especially in connection with Israel's victory in the June 1967 war that lasted only six days, but whose effects perdure to this day. The damage done to the indigenous population, then, was not accidental, or due to the unique pressures of war, but was at the heart of the Zionist enterprise from the beginning.¹¹ The only viable moral authority 'justifying' such actions is the Hebrew Bible.

The Bible: the 'Jews' sacrosanct title-deed to Palestine'

It is commonly asserted that the Bible legitimates the implementation of the Zionist political programme. Sometimes the claim is made cynically, as in the assertions of those who profess no belief in God and have no regard for the sacred provenance of the Bible. Thus, Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, asserted that the Bible is the 'Jews' sacrosanct title-deed to Palestine...with a genealogy of 3,500 years'.¹² The claim is also made in more subtle and sophisticated ways, as, for example, in the otherwise forward-looking and ecumenically eirenic statement *Dabru Emet* (Speak the Truth), written by 150 prominent Jews in the USA (12 September 2000), and signed by many more Jewish scholars since.

¹¹ See, in particular, Nur Masalha's *Expulsion of the Palestinians: the Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), and his *A Land without a People. Israel, Transfer and the Palestinians 1949-96* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997). These studies, based on primary research in various Zionist archives, fundamentally undermine the hegemonic Zionist narrative that its intentions were altogether innocent, if not indeed altruistic. By uncovering such evidence Masalha demonstrates that the imperative to 'transfer' the indigenous Arab population was at the core of the Zionist enterprise from the beginning, and was pursued with determination at the levels of both planning and execution. Masalha's contribution to the discourse on 1948 is more complete than that of the Israeli 'New Historians'. He not only lets the Zionist evidence concerning 1948 speak for itself, but also shows how prominent was the necessity of 'transfer' in the thinking of the Zionist leadership from the middle 1930s, at least. He charts the establishment and compartment of the Yishuv's two 'Population Transfer Committees' (1937 and 1941). Masalha's most recent book, *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: The Politics of Expansion, 1967-2000* (London: Pluto, 2000) is a comprehensive treatment of the imperial imperative within Zionism.

¹² *The Rebirth and Destiny of Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 100.

Dabru Emet promotes exclusively Jewish claims to Palestine. Acceptance of such claims has contemporary implications: even though its determination to create a state for Jews would require the expulsion of the indigenous Arab population, the Zionist enterprise is clothed in the garment of piety, and is a compulsory tenet for participants in the conventional Jewish-Christian dialogue:

Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel. The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically-based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised—and given—to Jews as the physical centre of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support.¹³

In virtue of the biblical narrative, then, the land of Israel belongs exclusively to the Israelites and their descendants in perpetuity. For people who ascribe divine provenance to the biblical text there could not possibly be a higher legitimating authority. It is invoked to salve whatever pangs of conscience one might have about the expulsion of some one million Palestinians (c. 750,000 in 1948 and c. 300,000 in 1967), even though the origins of Zionism were in the nationalistic and colonial spirit of nineteenth-century Europe, rather than in the Bible.

Zionism: from the Secular to the Sacred

The Political Zionism outlined by Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) in 1896 provided the major ideological drive for the establishment of the State of Israel fifty years later. Herzl laid out his plans in his pamphlet *Der Judenstaat*,¹⁴ and gave his utopian aspirations the beginnings of a plan of campaign the following year with the convening of the First Zionist Congress. Herzl's Political Zionism from its inception was a secular

¹³ Apart from the moral problematic of expelling the indigenous population, it is not clear how Christians can reconcile the religious imperative to ascend to Jerusalem with a number of key New Testament texts which reflect a centrifugal missionary dynamic moving out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth: e.g., "Stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24.49), and "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1.8). Note also the ending of the Gospel of Matthew, with the risen Jesus exhorting his disciples to 'make disciples of all nations'. See Michael Prior, *Jesus the Liberator. Nazareth Liberation Theology (Luke 4.16-30)* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 52-56.

¹⁴ *Der Judenstaat. Versuch einer Modernen Lösung der Judenfrage* (Leipzig und Wien: M. Breitenstein's Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1896). The German original was translated into English by Sylvie d'Avigdor as *A Jewish State*, and in 1946 as *The Jewish State. Der Judenstaat* might be translated more appropriately as 'The State for Jews', to distinguish it from the implications of a Jewish state (*Jüdischer Staat*).

ideology.

Reflecting typical nineteenth-century European nationalisms, Herzl insisted that Jews world-wide constituted one people and a 'distinctive nationality' [*Volkspersönlichkeit*] (p. 18), whose problem could be solved only through the 'restoration' [*Herstellung*] of the Jewish state (p. 7).¹⁵ Relying on the link between *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) which underpinned many other nineteenth-century European nationalisms, Herzl's Zionism had much in common with 'Pan-Germanism', with its emphasis on *das Volk*, proclaiming that all persons of German race, blood or descent, wherever they lived, owed their primary loyalty to Germany, the *Heimat*. Jews likewise, wherever they lived, constituted a distinct nation—what Benedict Anderson would later designate an 'imagined community'¹⁶—whose success could be advanced only through establishing a Jewish nation-state.

In line with stereotypical colonialist prejudices, Herzl gave little attention to the impact of his plans on the indigenous people. Notwithstanding, he knew what was needed to establish a state for Jews in a land already inhabited. An item in his diary entry for 12 June 1895 signals his plans. Having occupied the land and expropriated the private property, 'We shall endeavour to expel the poor population across the border unnoticed, procuring employment for it in the transit countries, but denying it any employment in our own country.'¹⁷ He added that both 'the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.'

Providing 'a house to shelter the Jewish nation' would also 'advance the interests of civilisation, by establishing a cultural station, on the shortest road to Asia, a task Jews were ready to undertake as the bearers of culture.'¹⁸ Mirroring typical nineteenth-century European colonial attitudes, Herzl presented the proposed state as 'a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation [*Kultur*] opposed to barbarism' (p. 30). He reflected elsewhere also typical European racist

¹⁵ Quotations and page references are from the seventh edition, *The Jewish State. An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, revised with a foreword by Israel Cohen *The Jewish State* (London: Henry Pordes, 1993), into which I have inserted phrases from the original text in German.

¹⁶ *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/New York: Verso, 1991).

¹⁷ 'Die arme Bevölkerung trachten wir unbemerkt über die Grenze zu schaffen, indem wir in den Durchzugsländern Arbeit verschaffen aber in unserem eigenen Lande jederlei Arbeit verweigern' (Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Autobiographische Notizen. 1886-1895*. Vol. II, ed. by Johannes Wachten *et al.*, Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1983, pp. 117-18).

¹⁸ *Protokoll des I. Zionistenkongresses in Basel vom 29. bis 31. August 1897* (Prag: Selbstverlag - Druck von Richard Brandeis, 1911), p. 15.

superiority. He assured the Grand Duke of Baden that Jews returning to their 'historic fatherland' would do so as representatives of Western civilisation, bringing 'cleanliness, order and the well-established customs of the Occident to this plague-ridden, blighted corner of the Orient'.¹⁹

Furthermore, the modern, secular Jewish commonwealth of Herzl's novel *Altneuland* (1902), set in 1923 and for European consumption, was a haven of the liberal spirit and a blessing for the natives. To adapt the language of Joseph Conrad, Herzl's Jewish State would be an 'outpost of progress' in 'the heart of darkness'.

Despite the fact that Herzl had no sense of Jewish national culture, and no inward relationship to Judaism or to his own Jewishness,²⁰ he was well aware of the potential of appeal to religious sentiment. The notions of 'Chosen People' and 'return' to the 'Promised Land' would mobilise Jewish opinion, despite the fact that the leading Zionists were either non-religious, atheists or agnostics. Thus, 'Palestine is our ever-memorable historic home', and its very name 'would attract our people with a force of marvellous potency' (p. 30). Herzl ended his pamphlet by promising that 'a wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabees will rise again' (p. 79)

Although not widely acknowledged, the British clergyman, William Hechler, played a critical role in assisting Herzl's Zionist plans.²¹ Already in 1882 Hechler had argued in a pamphlet (*Die bevorstehende Rückkehr der Juden nach Palästina*) for the restoration of Jews to their ancestral land, in fulfilment of the Hebrew prophets. Soon after the publication of *Der Judenstaat* he presented himself in Herzl's study in Vienna, promising his help. Relying on his good reputation with the Grand Duke of Baden—he had been a tutor to his children—Hechler arranged Herzl's meeting with him, and later in Jerusalem with the Grand Duke's uncle, Kaiser Wilhelm II. As he made clear in a letter to the Grand Duke (26 March 1896), in which he also promised to send three copies of Herzl's pamphlet, Hechler saw a clear correspondence between *Der Judenstaat* and the Hebrew prophetic tradition of Jewish restoration. Indeed, in a letter to a colleague in Jerusalem in 1898 he wrote,

¹⁹ *The Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl*, translated by Harry Zohn, and edited by Raphael Patai (New York: Herzl Press, 1960, Vol. I, p. 343).

²⁰ So Martin Buber at Herzl's graveside (1904)—see Robert Wistrich, 'Theodor Herzl: Zionist Icon, Myth-Maker and Social Utopian', in Robert Wistrich and David Ohana (eds), *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma* (London: Frank Cass, 1995: 1-37), pp. 30-31. Although Herzl's motivation was utterly secular, at various times people referred to him as the Messiah, or King of Israel, and as the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures.

We are now entering, thanks to the Zionist Movement, into Israel's Messianic age. Thus, it is not a matter these days of opening all the doors of your churches to the Jews, but rather of opening the gates of their homeland, and of sustaining them in their work of clearing the land, and irrigating it, and bringing water to it. All of this...is messianic work; all of this the breath of the Holy Spirit announces. But, first, the dry bones must come to life, and draw together.²¹

Earlier, while discussing Leo Pinsker's *Autoemancipation* with the author, Hechler, arguing against Pinsker's toleration of a Jewish homeland other than in Palestine, took out his Bible and pointed to passages in Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and elsewhere, making clear God's plan to bring the diaspora to Jerusalem. Moreover, Herzl records that on the train returning to Vienna after meeting the Grand Duke of Baden, Hechler unfolded his maps of Palestine, and instructed him for hours on end that the northern frontier of the Jewish state should be the mountains facing Cappadocia, and the southern, the Suez Canal. 'The slogan to be circulated: The Palestine of David and Solomon'.²² On the day of Herzl's burial, Israel Zangwill, the Anglo-Jewish writer and propagandist, compared him with Moses, who had been given only a sight of the Promised Land. But all was not lost, since, after Moses, Herzl 'has laid his hands upon the head of more than one Joshua, and filled them with the spirit of his wisdom to carry on his work'.²³

Herzl's Political Zionism, however, was a conscious repudiation of some of the most fundamental tenets of Judaism, Orthodox and Reform. That the Zionist movement would arrogate to itself the agency for the *restoration* of the Jewish people to its ancestral land was blasphemy. Rabbis representing all shades of opinion denounced Zionism as a fanaticism, and contrary to the Jewish scriptures. 'Zionism, and Herzl himself, were anathema to the most illustrious and influential of eastern European rabbis almost as a matter of course.'²⁴ Even within the small circle of the orthodox supporters of Zionism, formed into the Mizrahi faction with Herzl's encouragement in 1902, there was the widespread recognition that Zionism was not merely a variant on the Jewish faith, but

²² Hechler was so attached to a literalist reading of the Bible that he was confident that archaeologists would find on Mount Nebo the manuscripts of the five books of Moses, written in his own hand, and hidden away in the Ark. The discovery would prove how deranged were the theologians who said that Moses wrote nothing. Such was the respect for Hechler's friendship with Herzl that he was the last person, outside of Herzl's immediate family, to visit him on 2 July 1904, the eve of his death (Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism*, pp. 16, 22, 31).

²³ Israel Zangwill, *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill, Selected and Edited by Maurice Simon*, Soncino Press, London, 1937, pp. 131-32.

²⁴ David Vital, *A People Apart. The Jews in Europe 1789-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 625.

a very substitute for it.

In the West, Herzl's own Chief Rabbi in Vienna, Moritz Gudemann, objected that the Jews were not a nation, and that Zionism was incompatible with the teachings of Judaism.²⁵ Herzl dismissed also the objections of France's Grand Rabbin Zadok Kahn: 'Things here go too well with them to admit thought of a change'.²⁶ The executive committee of the German Rabbinical Council 'formally and publicly condemned the "efforts of the so-called Zionists to create a Jewish national state in Palestine" as contrary to Holy Writ'.²⁷ Belgium's Grand Rabbin, M.A. Bloch, also protested against the First Zionist Congress at Basle, describing its aspirations as 'far from those of Judaism'.²⁸

Clearly, the predominantly secular Zionist movement was considered to be a rebellion against, and a conscious repudiation of classical Judaism and its theological tenets, and with good reason. For many political Zionists, religion was irrational, non-empirical, imperialistic, and an altogether repressive and regressive force, from which no anthropological validity, social bonding, psychological insight, or existential illumination could be expected. Indeed, in the camp of strident anti-religious secularism one's way to salvation was to escape from the prison of the sacred. Thus, Yosef Hayim Brenner declared, 'From the hypnotic spell of the twenty-four books of the Bible I have been liberated for some time now'.²⁹ For Karl Kautsky, Judaism was a weight of lead attached to the feet of Jews who eagerly sought progress.³⁰ For such people, religion was a symptom of Jewry's sickness in exile. The break with the Jewish past should be not only with religion, but with Jewish history itself. Zionist Palestine would be new, secular, and qualitatively different from the past of the diaspora. Its Jewish nationalism would stand on its own feet, free of its religious modality.

Nevertheless, despite the anti-religious stridency of Political Zionism, the late Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Lord Sir Immanuel Jakobovits could say,

²⁵ *Nationaljudentum* (Leipzig and Vienna: M. Breitenstein's Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1897), p. 42.

²⁶ *Diaries*, 18 November 1895.

²⁷ David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), p. 336. Herzl referred to the five rabbis, two Orthodox and three Liberal, rather contemptuously as the *Protestrabbiner* (*Die Welt*, 16 July 1897 – see Immanuel Jakobovits (Chief Rabbi), *The Attitude to Zionism of Britain's Chief Rabbis as Reflected in their Writings* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1982: Lecture delivered to The Jewish Historical Society of England in London, 9 May 1979), p. 6.

²⁸ See Jakobovits, *The Attitude to Zionism*..., p. 22 n 17.

²⁹ See James S. Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land? The 'Canaanite Critique of Israel* (Bloomington Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 59, 154, 18.

³⁰ See Walter Laqueur, *History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 420.

The origins of the Zionist idea are of course entirely religious. The slogan, 'The Bible is our mandate' is a credo hardly less insistently pleaded by many secularists than by religious believers as the principal basis of our legal and historical claim to the Land of Israel...Modern Political Zionism itself could never have struck root if it had not planted its seeds in soil ploughed up and fertilised by the millennial conditioning of religious memories, hopes, prayers and visions of our eventual return to Zion...No rabbinical authority disputes that our claim to a Divine mandate (and we have no other which cannot be invalidated) extends over the entire Holy Land within its historic borders and that halachically we have no right to surrender this claim.³¹

How different this was from the views of Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler, who had received Herzl on his first visit to London, and who regarded the Basle Congress as an 'egregious blunder' and an 'absolutely mischievous project.' He altogether rejected Herzl's political Zionism:

...I view the present movement with unfeigned concern, because I regard it as opposed to the teaching of Judaism, as impolitic, as charged with grave peril. I do not identify this movement with Zionism...When we refuse our cooperation to the project, that has now been formulated, it is not from lack of sympathy but because we regard it as impracticable, as inoperative, as fraught with peril, as calculated to revive the false charges of incivism and lack of loyalty to our native country or land of our adoption, and finally as opposed to the teachings of Judaism.³²

And in our own day, far also from repudiating Political Zionism, Jonathan Sacks, the successor of Adler and Jakobovits as Chief Rabbi, considers the State of Israel to be 'the most powerful collective expression' of Jewry, and 'the most significant development in Jewish life since the Holocaust'.³³ At the Service for Israel's Fiftieth Anniversary, Sacks portrayed the birth of the state as a coming to the promised land in the line of the biblical stories of Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Ezra and Nehemiah. While he recalls with sadness the twenty thousand who died so that Israel should exist, he spares no thought for the Arabs of Palestine and the

³¹ *The Attitude to Zionism...* Jakobovits goes on: 'But what is questionable is whether we must, or indeed may, assert it at the risk of thousands of lives, if not the life of the State itself.... We are halachically compelled to leave the judgment on what provides the optimum security for Jewish life in Israel to the verdict of military and political experts, not rabbis. Included as a major factor in this difficult judgment must also be the overriding concern to preserve the Jewish character of Israel which may clearly depend on the proportion of Jews within the State' (pp. 20-21). Jakobovits asserts the unique Jewish title to Jerusalem, and accepts the need for an eventual withdrawal 'on Israeli terms' from territories occupied (p. 21).

³² Hermann Adler's writings on political Zionism are limited to a sermon, delivered on 12 November 1898, and published in full in the *Jewish Chronicle* under the title, 'Religious versus Political Zionism' (25 November 1898).

³³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 December, 1993: 21.

surrounding states who have paid an even more severe price for the prize of Zionism. Instead, we learn that the Jewish pioneers created farms and forests 'out of a barren landscape'. He concluded, 'The very existence of the State of Israel after nearly two thousand years of dispersion testifies to the power of hope sustained by prayer. So tonight we give thanks to God for the land and the State of Israel which brought our people from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from death to new life.'³⁴

I have traced elsewhere the metamorphosis of the religious estimation of Political Zionism, from being an anathema, to occupying a position of virtual sacred significance within religious Jewish thinking.³⁵ Nowadays, the claim to exclusive Jewish title to Palestine is so pervasive, not only within the Jewish religious establishment and Christian Zionist and Jewish Zionist circles, but even within mainstream Christian Theology, and much of university biblical studies, that the very attempt to raise the issue is sure to elicit opposition. The opposition normally takes the form of personal abuse, and, on occasion, the intimidation of publishers and broadcasting corporations. One is seldom honoured by having the substantive moral issues addressed in the usual academic fashion. However, such issues must be raised, if only because the integrity of the scholastic enterprise itself is at stake.

Zionism has left its mark even on the biblical academy. The invective one detects in the debate about even 'ancient Israel' makes one suspicious that more is at stake than customary objective scholarship in search of an elusive past. The academic transgression, of course, consists of trespassing on a carefully protected discourse on 'Ancient Israel' that has implications for the legitimacy of developments in Palestine in our own time.³⁶

The Land Traditions of the Bible

I have examined many aspects of the question at greater length elsewhere, illustrating the problematic of the moral character of these traditions in that the gift of the Land of Canaan to the Israelites is inextricably related to the divine mandate to subject the indigenous population, not simply to

³⁴ Speech at the Service for Israel's Fiftieth Anniversary in the Presence of HRH The Prince of Wales, at St John's Wood Synagogue, London, 29th April 1998.

³⁵ Michael Prior, *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 67-102.

³⁶ See Michael Prior, 'Ethnic Cleansing and the Bible: A Moral Critique', *Holy Land Studies. A Multidisciplinary Journal* 1(2002): 37-68, p. 58 n 19.

expulsion but to genocidal extermination.³⁷

By modern standards of international law and human rights the land narratives from Exodus to Joshua mandate 'war-crimes' and 'crimes against humanity'. Readers might seek refuge in the claim that the problem lies with the predispositions of the modern reader, rather than with the text itself. One cannot escape so easily. One must acknowledge that much of the *Torah*, and the Book of Deuteronomy in particular, contains menacing ideologies and racist, xenophobic and militaristic tendencies. Nevertheless, biblical scholars appear to be oblivious to this embarrassing fact, and retain a high esteem for Deuteronomy, assessing it to be a theological treatise *par excellence*, and the focal point of the religious history of the Old Testament.³⁸

Read with a literalist naïveté these land traditions predicate a god who is a xenophobic nationalist and a militaristic genocidal ethnic-cleanser. Reliance on the authority of a gift of land from such a god, then, is problematic for any reader who might presume that the divinity would be sufficiently moral to entertain the values of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, at least. Moreover, at the level of reception, these biblical traditions have fuelled virtually every form of militant colonialism emanating from Europe, resulting in the sufferings of millions of people, and loss of respect for the Bible. Were it not for their religious provenance, such biblical sentiments would be regarded as incitements to racial hatred. On moral grounds, therefore, one is forced to question whether the *Torah* in fact provides divine legitimacy for the occupation of other people's land, and the virtual annihilation of the indigenous peoples.

It is naïve to cleave to the view that God made the promise of progeny and land to Abraham after the fashion indicated in Genesis 15. Recent biblical scholarship, aided by increasing archaeological evidence, makes it impossible to evaluate the biblical narratives of land as pointers to what

³⁷ *The Bible and Colonialism* (1997); 'The Moral Problem of the Land Traditions of the Bible', in Michael Prior (ed.), *Western Scholarship and the History of Palestine* (London, Melisende, 1998), pp. 41-81; *Zionism and the State of Israel* (1999); 'The Bible and Zionism', in Naim S. Ateek and Michael Prior (eds), *Holy Land—Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians* (London, Melisende, 1999), pp. 69-88.

³⁸ In the 1995 Lattey Lecture in Cambridge University, Professor Norbert Lohfink argued that Deuteronomy provides a model for an utopian society ('The Laws of Deuteronomy. A Utopian Project for a World without any Poor', *Scripture Bulletin* 26[1996]: 2-19). In my role as the formal proposer of a vote of thanks, I invited Fr Lohfink to consider whether, in the light of that book's insistence on a mandate to commit genocide, the utopian society would be possible only after the invading Israelites had wiped out the indigenous inhabitants. The protocol left the last word with me, and subsequently I was given a second word, being invited to deliver the 1997 Lattey Lecture, for which I chose the title, 'A Land flowing with Milk, Honey, and People', *Scripture Bulletin* 28(1998): 2-17.

actually happened in the period portrayed in the text. In the wake of the seminal works of Thomas L. Thompson and John Van Seters,³⁹ it is now part of the scholarly consensus that the narratives of Genesis do not record events of an alleged patriarchal period, but are retrojections into a past about which the writers knew little, reflecting the author's intentions at the later period of composition, perhaps that of the attempt to reconstitute national and religious identity in the wake of the Babylonian exile.⁴⁰

Neither do the Exodus-Settlement accounts present empirical facts of history. The archaeology of Palestine shows a picture quite different from that of the religiously-motivated writings of the Bible. The evidence from archaeology and extra-biblical literature, supplemented by insights from the independent methodologies of geography, sociology, anthropology, historical linguistics, Egyptology, Assyriology, etc., points in a direction altogether different from that implied by Joshua 1-12. This extra-biblical material suggests a sequence of periods marked by a gradual and peaceful coalescence of disparate peoples into a group of highland dwellers whose achievement of a new sense of unity culminated only with the entry of the Assyrian administration. The Iron I Age settlements on the central hills of Palestine, from which the later kingdom of Israel developed, reflect continuity with Canaanite culture, and repudiate any ethnic distinction between 'Canaanites' and 'Israelites'.⁴¹ The biblical narrative, then, unless read in a naïve, literalist fashion, offers little succour to ethnic cleansers. But even if the Exodus-Settlement narratives did portray the events approximately as they happened one would still have to contend with their ethical stance in portraying Yahweh as a great ethnic-cleanser.

Were the biblical narratives of land acknowledged to belong to the genre of legend rather than history, or to be confined to the realm of mere rhetorical discussion of ancient literature in its various genres, few would object. But when they have vital significance for people's lives in one's own generation problems arise. Much of the legitimacy associated with the establishment of the State of Israel, and the esteem it enjoys in religious circles of having quite distinctive values and even unique religious significance, derives its major moral legitimisation from a particular reading of the Old Testament. Two important conclusions follow from the biblically-based claim of exclusive Israelite/Jewish rights to Palestine.

³⁹ Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Pentateuchal Narratives. The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1974), and John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975).

⁴⁰ See further Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism*, pp. 216-23.

⁴¹ See further Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism*, pp. 228-47, and *Zionism and the State of Israel*, pp. 159-83.

'Jews' hailing from any part of the globe, who themselves were never displaced from Palestine, have the 'right of return', a title to settle in the State of Israel given legal substance in the 'Law of Return' which was enacted by the Israeli Knesset on 5 July 1950.⁴² Without the Bible, such a claim to legitimacy would have no currency in the wider world wherein, for one, a communal right of return operates only when a defined community has been subjected to recent expulsion—a *sine qua non* for orderly international behaviour. But, from a moral perspective, there is a yet more problematic element. The Jewish 'right of return' easily translates into the 'right to expel' the indigenous population, an aspiration which was at the core of the Zionist enterprise from the beginning. And, since Jews have sole tenure—a claim easily derived from the biblical narrative, and approved of by the State of Israel—the recently uprooted and expelled Palestinian Arabs have no right of return.⁴³

Conclusion

Western sympathy for the Zionist enterprise is striking. Whereas elsewhere colonisers are objects of opprobrium, the Zionist conquest is widely judged to be a just and appropriate accomplishment, sometimes even enjoying unique religious significance. Thus, normal rules of morality are suspended, and this particular exercise in ethnic cleansing is applauded. The rationale for this derives from literalist interpretations of particular biblical traditions: the Zionist prize is no more than what the Jewish people deserves in virtue of God's promises as outlined in the Bible. Although Political Zionism was an assault on Judaism, its colonial policy today has no more ardent supporters than Religious Zionists. But even for secular Zionists, Jewish claims to exclusive title to 'the land of Israel' rest on the Bible. It salves whatever pangs of conscience Zionists might have about the foreseen and intended expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs.

However, the Bible's land traditions pose fundamental moral questions, relating both to their content—they mandate the ethnic cleansing of Canaan—and to the ways they have been deployed in favour of various colonial enterprises. Nevertheless, neither has been sufficient to bother

⁴² To qualify for 'return' under the 'Law of Return' immigrants must prove only that they have at least one Jewish grandparent. Under Jewish *halakha* rulings, however, one is Jewish only if one's mother is Jewish by birth, or has converted to Judaism before one's birth. Israeli government officials estimate that more than 40 per cent of the one million immigrants from the former USSR over the last decade are not Jews, and many of the others have had little contact with Judaism.

⁴³ See the discussion in Michael Prior, 'The Right to Expel: the Bible and Ethnic Cleansing', in Naseer Aruri (ed.), *Palestinian Refugees and their Right of Return* (London and Sterling VA: Pluto Press, 2001), pp. 9-35.

the biblical academy to the point of critical opposition. One might have hoped that academics would have an ethical responsibility and be accountable to a wider public, and view the modern conflict also from the perspective of the victims. This would be analogous to reading the biblical text 'with the eyes of the Canaanites', with a sensitivity to the moral question of the impact which the Zionist conquest and settlement have had on the indigenous population of Palestine.

A moral exegesis of the Bible and an ethical evaluation of its interpretation, not least as it refers to the Holy Land, is indispensable today. Clearly, the biblical land traditions are problematic. After a long period of silence, the need for a Moral Exegesis of the Bible is being recognised by some. Heikki Räisänen, Professor of New Testament Studies in the University of Helsinki, insists that 'a moral evaluation of biblical texts and of their interpretation is indispensable today', and applauds my application of a moral critique to the Zionist enterprise.⁴⁴ Peter J. Miano, Executive Director of the Society for Biblical Studies, also criticises the biblical academy for virtually ignoring the moral dimensions of the biblical texts. He suggests that when the values and moral standards of biblical passages go unrecognised they are susceptible to being misappropriated and misapplied, sometimes with damaging consequences. Taking his cue from my Moral Critique, Miano proposes a 'Value Critique', 'the deliberate examination of the value systems presumed by and expressed in the stories of the Bible'.⁴⁵ While Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza calls for an 'ethics of accountability' in Biblical Studies she does not rise to the challenge of facing into one of the most blatant uses of the Bible as a charter for oppression, and one for which the domestic politics in, and foreign policy of the USA have a particular responsibility.⁴⁶ Perhaps it is her own 'social location' that prevents her from facing into what is one of the great scandals of the international biblical community, namely its silence in the face of Political Zionism's cynical embrace of the biblical narrative as an integral element of the ideological justification for its programme.

Given the 'international community's general disdain for ethnic cleansing it is surprising that even Christian reflection on the Holy Land has not gone much further than reflect predictable conformity with political realities as they develop. At best, one detects in the attitudes within the Churches an adherence to 'the fallacy of balance', the assumption that in

⁴⁴ *Beyond New Testament Theology. A Story and a Programme* (London: SCM, 2000), p. 207.

⁴⁵ *The Word of God and the World of the Bible. An Introduction to the Cultural Backgrounds of the New Testament* (London: Melisende, 2001), p. 12.

⁴⁶ *Rhetoric and Ethic. The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

this unique situation of conflict there is an equality of rights, an equality of pain, an equality of sacrifice, etc., as if the rights of the perpetrators of oppression and of its victims were finely balanced.

Foreskins, Foreigners and Foes: The Philistines and the Creation of the Colonial Other

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Introduction

In 1991, Ron Atkinson publicly pledged his future to his then employers, Sheffield Wednesday Football Club, announcing he would be "barmy"¹ to leave. Needless to say in a long tradition of football managers he resigned as manager the following week to take over at Aston Villa, an act of such perceived betrayal that a local newspaper ran a banner headline with a single word printed in bold letters above a picture of the errant manager - 'JUDAS'. In response to this, Brendan Kennelly has written, 'Judas was in no position to write a protesting letter to that newspaper. How must men and women who cannot write back, who must absorb the full thump of accusation without reply, who have no voices because they are 'beyond hope', feel in their cold, condemned silence?'². Kennelly attempted just such a response with his brilliant *Book of Judas* (1991) in which he voices Judas Iscariot and allows him to respond to centuries of censure where his name has been a byword for a particularly hurtful and underhand form of betrayal. While Judas has found a source of potential redemption in the work of Kennelly, no such luxury has been afforded to the Philistines, a cultured, sea-fearing race who settled in Canaan during the 13th and 12th centuries BCE. Their name has also entered the lexicon of mute shame, ranking alongside the Barbarians³ as the personification of the outsider, epitomising an ignorance of clearly delineated and deliberately exclusive cultural signifiers. The Philistines entered this pantheon of *the other* as a

¹ www.allsports.com/fapremiership/sheffieldwednesday/archive/votingold1.html, p.1.

² Brendan Kennelly, *The Book of Judas* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1991), p.10.

³ The Barbarians originated in the Near East migrating their way across the continents of Asia and Europe. Known in later generations as the Indo-Aryan people, some of them settled in the regions of the Caucasus mountains and of Persia (present-day Iran); others in the fertile crescent of Mesopotamia, Philistia, and Sumeria; yet others in what is now known as the Balkan states of Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Romania, and others into the lands of Northern Europe into what is now present-day Germany, Scandinavia, France, Spain, and Britain.

direct result of the challenge they posed to the burgeoning Hebrew nation and it is entirely consistent that their name has been used from biblical times to distinguish between those who set the social, cultural and political agendas and those who stand irredeemably outside the ideologies created to facilitate the rationalisation of the nation space. In the Bible it can be surmised that the Philistines are the seminal other, the model outsiders whose sole textual function is to plot the destruction of civilisation and whose activities provide crucial nodes of justification for the creation and expansion of the nation of Israel. The demonic Philistines fulfil a role that was later to be played, amongst others, by Africans, Indians, Aborigines and Irish in the construction of the great colonial edifice of otherness, and was a role ironically played out to tragic effect by the Jews themselves over centuries of ethnic persecution and alienation.

The Arnoldian Legacy

In *Culture and Anarchy*, a seminal treatise on the state of England published in 1868, Matthew Arnold coined what became the popular usage of the term Philistine, namely what Chris Baldrick defines as 'a person devoted narrow-mindedly to material prosperity at the expense of intellectual and artistic awareness; or (as an adjective) ignorantly uninterested in culture and ideas'⁴. While acknowledging that 'this attempt at a scientific nomenclature falls very far short in precision of what might be required from a writer equipped with a complete and coherent philosophy'⁵, Arnold divided contemporary English society into three somewhat overlapping groupings, namely Barbarians (the aristocratic class), the Philistines (the middle-classes) and the Populace (the working class). The Liberal English bourgeoisie are labelled as Philistine, the latter giving 'the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light'⁶, and the light motif and the Philistines fear of its illuminative qualities runs throughout the work. The Philistine constantly retreats from the *light* of a restorative culture, secure in the darkness of a rigid and utilitarian world view which is resistant to both internal unease and external enlightenment. Arnold's subjective, unreferenced and somewhat sarcastic use of the term cannot belie the fact that largely as a result of his endeavours the word Philistine has entered the lexicon of cultural essentialisation, a people whose travails and genocidal experiences at the hands of the Israelites are reduced to what Arnold refers to as self-

⁴ Chris Baldrick, *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.167.

⁵ J. Dover Wilson (ed.), *Matthew Arnold. Culture and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 105.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.101.

affirming reflections on 'the things of itself and not its real self'⁷. However, Arnold's use of the term Philistine (and indeed the term Barbarian) highlights the complexities involved in the attempted definition of the other, namely the reflexive nature of the nomenclature of identification. Built into the concept of the other is a veiled acknowledgement of the presence of the other in the self, apparently polarised opposites physically co-existing at the margins and indeed co-defining each other within the intellectual parameters of colonial discourse, albeit parameters drawn by the dominant partner. The Israelites could not define themselves without the Philistines, therefore the very people portrayed as epitomising the potential nemesis of the people of Israel are themselves forming their adversaries through their very existence. The Bible, therefore, fulfils the classical criteria of colonialist literature by allowing the Israelites to denigrate Philistine culture at every turn, engaging in what Abdul JanMohamed refers to as 'an obsessive, fetishistic representation of the native's moral inferiority'⁸ which, by contrast, increases 'the store of his own moral superiority'. JanMohamed argues that this self-perpetuating cycle of cultural and moral denigration allows the dominant power to accrue 'surplus morality', which is then fed directly back into the negative portrayal of the other. Consequently, the behaviour of the Philistines has to be portrayed in the Bible on a continual downward moral spiral of betrayal, slaughter and inherent untrustworthiness, a pattern of behaviour that concurrently establishes the moral authority of the Israelites. This essentialisation of the Philistines results in their inability to end this self-sustaining cycle and given the fact that the originary narrative drive emanates from the Israelite perspective their double bind appears inextricably constructed.

In Judges 13:1-5⁹, the Philistines make an early biblical appearance as the nemesis of the people of Israel, significantly identified by Samson as the 'uncircumcised' (Judges 15:19). This nomenclature clearly identifies the Philistines as non-Semitic, characterised not by their inherent generic traits but by their difference to the chosen people of Yahweh. Indeed, their appearance is directly as a result of the Israelites behaving in an undisclosed manner that 'displeases Yahweh' (Judges 13:1) and throughout the books of the Old Testament the Philistines are regularly held out as the ultimate external punishment if the Israelites should in any way depart from Yahweh's interpreted wishes. Although the exact cause of the conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines remains largely unexplained, it would appear that disputes over land form the basis of the

⁷ Arnold, p.105.

⁸ Abdul R. JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory' in Ashcroft B., Griffiths, B. and Tiffin, H. (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (Routledge: London, 1995), p.23.

⁹ Taken from *The Jerusalem Bible* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968). All subsequent biblical references will be from this edition.

difficulties between them, although these disputes are rarely explicitly referred to. The primary function of the Philistines, therefore, is to act as a cultural mirror to the chosen people, anonymous outsiders whose essential barbarism reflects the inherent superiority of the Israelites and this carefully constructed Philistine model of otherness provides the Israelites with a crucial objective correlative upon which to base emerging notions of a collective identity. In his 1882 treatise on nationhood, Ernest Renan identified a 'heroic past'¹⁰ as an essential composite element of what he refers to as the 'spiritual principle' that is a 'nation' and he clearly foregrounds the galvanising effects of shared memories of 'suffering' over the more ethereal concepts of identifiable unitary experiences. This ephemeral national spirit is predicated upon common 'glories' identifiable in the past and an essential element in this construct is the identifiable oppositional intrinsically evil other whose actions elicit the required responses that will crystallise in the national consciousness. The Philistines, largely anonymous enemies and repeatedly referred to in the collective sense, perform this precise function in the world created by the authors of the books of the Old Testament. Their story is textually irrelevant and their very cultural anonymity is essential if the chosen people are to form any sense of their own identity. The role of the Philistines in the story of Israel can be seen as the progenitor of the experience of a variety of colonised groups whose textual existence is predicated on the perspective of the dominant socio-cultural forces operating within the colonial paradigm.

The consequences of such forces can be devastating, resulting in what Ngugi Wa Thiong'o refers to as the 'internalisation'¹¹ of negative cultural imagery to the degree that cultures become liminal and incapable of self-definition. When this situation emerges, complex cultural constructions are diluted to reductionist clichés and labels whilst an entire people can become a byword for those perceived to fall outside the artificially created socio-cultural standards of the dominant hegemonic petty-bourgeois consensus. Indeed, the travails of the Philistines fulfil one of Homi K. Bhabha's ideological conditions regarding the formation of the 'political unity of the nation'¹² in that their very existence at the border of the Kingdom of Israel facilitated the creation of the 'signifying space' within which a burgeoning concept of Israelite self and nationhood began to crystallise. However, it would be an over-simplification of such a multi-layered, chronologically-extended and pseudopygraphied text such

¹⁰ Ernest Renan, 'What Is a Nation?' in Homi K. Bhabha, (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), pps. 8-23 (p.19).

¹¹ Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (James Curry: London, 1986), p. 18.

¹² Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (Routledge, London, 1990), p.300.

as the Bible to circumscribe a perspective of the Philistines as the original Other, despite the ample evidence for such an interpretation. In his book *Intimate Enemy*, Ashis Nandy identifies a crucial weakness in the post-colonial binary of self and other, namely the inability of historians or theorists to identify what he refers to as the 'non-players'¹³, those individuals or groups who do not easily fit into either the category of the colonised or the coloniser and whose political affiliations undermine the nomenclature of definition. One such 'non-player' is Ittai of Gath, a Philistine whose uncommon and unexpected declaration of loyalty to the Israelite King David (2 Sam. 15:18-23) acts as a crucial correlative to the relentless duality of the Book of Samuel. He and his six hundred Gittites (residents of the Philistine city of Gath) pledge their allegiance to the leader of their traditional enemies, further exposing the other within the other that undermines the potentially overbearing portrayal of the binary; such an episode is a crucial step in the attempted unravelling of the nature of apparent polarisations. The importance of such textual incidents is expressed by the leading exponent of Subaltern Studies, Ranajit Guha :

Blinded by the glare of a perfect and immaculate consciousness the historian sees nothing, for instance, but solidarity in rebel behaviour and fails to notice its Other, namely betrayal.¹⁴

It is, however, part of the overall trend of the biblical Philistine portrayal that the non-player defects from the Philistines to the Israelites and not vice-versa, thereby providing further proof of the moral and cultural superiority of the latter over the former. It is certainly arguable that it is only when this betrayal occurs from the self to the other that a text can be perceived as potentially undermining its pre-eminent ideologies.

David and Goliath: The Myth of National Imaginings

Throughout the 188 references¹⁵ to the Philistines in the Old Testament, they are generally portrayed in a manner reminiscent of the stereotype of the 'Indians' in early, post-politically-correct Hollywood westerns, ready at all times to upset the civilised advance of a clearly superior, recognisable and identifiable culture. However, there are significant individual examples which merit close examination because in their deconstruction lies the origins of their cultural exclusion. Only three Philistines are portrayed in any textual depth in the books of the Old

¹³ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy - Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.xiv.

¹⁴ Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter Insurgency' in *Subaltern Studies*, Vol.2, pps. 1-42, (p.40).

¹⁵ These 188 reference are taken from the *NIV Study Bible Complete Library* search engine.

Testament, the first being King Abimelech who swears an oath with Abraham at Beersheba (Gen. 21:27), an episode that is described in *NJBC* as a moment when 'the pagan king acknowledges the divine origin of Abraham's material success'¹⁶, immediately establishing the ultimate Philistine authority as secondary to that of the chosen people represented by Abraham. It is not until the Books of Samuel, however, that the Philistines emerge as the true nemesis of the people of Israel, their constant threatening presence galvanising the often-shaky monarchies of Saul and David. The clear inference in 1 Samuel is that of the divine nature of the army of Israel¹⁷ and its battles, ably supported by Philistine cannon fodder. It is, however, only on the later appearance of Goliath (1 Sam 17) that a fuller, more recognisable model of Philistine otherness and implied colonial Israelite superiority begins to emerge. David, the iconic future King of Israel, first comes to prominence by offering his services to Saul as the only Israelite combatant ready to face Goliath, a giant Philistine 'shock-trooper' (1 Sam. 17:4) measuring 'six cubits and one span tall' (17:5), corresponding roughly to an equivalent of ten feet and three inches tall¹⁸, a remarkable and scarcely credible height. The setting for this epic battle is a town called Socoh described in *NJBC* as 'the frontier land between Israel and Philistia', evocative of a biblical *High Noon* in which David exemplifies that 1952 film's byline, 'The story of a man who was too proud to run'¹⁹. The frontier is a traditional setting for conflict, the boundary between the civilised known world and the mysterious land of the outsider, at once exotically mysterious and threateningly forboding, and the Bible certainly has played a very significant role in the creation of the liminal border as a site of cultural, economic and political friction.

Throughout the books of the Old Testament, the land beyond the border of Israel evokes the territorial manifestation of the other. For example, in Joshua, the land ascribed to the people of Judah is bordered by 'the wilderness of Zin' (Josh. 15:1) while the 'portion awarded' (Josh. 17:1-5) to Manasseh, the son of Joseph, includes 'the wilderness that goes up from Jericho'. Again, in Numbers, when the Israelites leave their own territory they encounter 'the wilderness that borders Moab' (Num. 21:11) while the land of the Amorites is also accredited as a wilderness, bounded by desert and salt-sea. Indeed, this literary portrayal of Israel as a moral,

¹⁶ R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer and R.E. Murphy, (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), p.22. This edition will be referred to as *NJBC*.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.165.

¹⁸ *The Oxford English Dictionary* (on line) measures the Roman Cubit at 17.4 inches and the Egyptian Cubit at 20.6 inches while a span measures an average of 9 inches. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (p.171) places Goliath's height at 'about 10ft'.

¹⁹ Taken from <http://www.filmsite.org/high.html>

cultural and physical oasis is explicitly expressed in Malachi when Yahweh, venting his anger against Esau, announces that 'I turned his towns into a wilderness and his heritage into desert pastures' (MI, 1:2-5) while any land outside the land of Israel 'shall be known as Unholy Land', thereby firmly cementing the link between land and the nation, confirming Bhabha's assertion of the territoriality of tradition.

The choosing of single combat as a means of resolving a conflict was 'not unheard of in Old Testament times' (*NJBC*, p.171) and the portrayal of David standing alone against the Philistine giant at the edge of civilisation is a powerful image of original national imagining, the classic icon of the personification of a national ideal galvanised by the necessary presence of the ultimate threat to that ideal. David's combat with Goliath is without doubt one of the Old Testament's most recognisable single events and the victory of the future Israelite king against seemingly overwhelming odds is a scenario that can be found in the cultural mythologies of nearly every ethnic grouping.

Goliath's grotesque height clearly identifies the Philistines as capable of producing genetic freaks, a fact attested to by the appearance of yet another physically unusual Philistine at the battle of Gath, 'a man of huge stature with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all' (1 Chr. 20:6) who is coincidentally slain by Jonathan, David's nephew. Goliath's physical advantages are supplemented by elaborate descriptions of his armour in which his entire body appears to be covered in bronze, suggestive perhaps of some latent fear of the indomitable Israelites. These descriptions serve to highlight the impending impossibility of combat with such a warrior and are classically constructed to merely heighten the perception of the nature of David's inevitable victory. In stark contrast to Goliath's fearsome appearance David is described as 'a youth, a boy of fresh complexion and pleasant bearing' (1 Sam. 17:42), implying a clear ethnographic divide between the Israelites and the Philistines. This is a typical colonial textual construction in which the other, in this case Goliath, manifests physical features that are simultaneously grotesque and supernatural. As with the description of Celtic heroes, Goliath's weaponry appears almost superhuman (described in the *NJBC*, p.171, as 'not typical'), his spear the thickness of 'a weaver's beam' and the head alone weighing in at 'six hundred shekels of iron' (1 Sam. 17:6-7). This portrayal fits neatly into what Benita Parry refers to as 'the wide range of stereotypes and the shifting subject positions assigned to the colonised in the colonised

text²⁰ with Goliath's massive frame representing the impenetrability of the Philistines while David's fresh features simultaneously suggest a purer form of genetic inheritance and an implied tactical nous. However, a problem with the standard portrayal of the colonised other arises with the very weaponry that Goliath parades before the terrified Israelites. In a typical colonialist construct, the technological advantages of the colonisers are foregrounded to suggest the immutability of their dominance, clearly superior and sophisticated weapons coolly facing up to unsophisticated fanaticism, implying the inevitable victory of science over passion. However, Goliath's weapons place him in a very different league to his Israelite opponents, an acknowledgement made by the authors of the Books of Samuel of the historically accepted superiority of Philistine iron work²¹ of the time. His technological supremacy, therefore, would appear to give him a distinct advantage over David whose rejection of Saul's armour prior to the upcoming combat merely adds to the created narrative tension.

The righteousness of David's cause, therefore, is also explicitly implied by his lack of armour in that he states that the only protection he will need is the 'name of Yahweh Sabaoth' (1 Sam. 17:45) and the relative simplicity of his sling and 'five smooth stones from the river bed' (1 Sam. 17:40) if anything emphasises the barbarity of Goliath, thereby cleverly portraying technological supremacy as an implied evil. Goliath's great size and weaponry ultimately count for nothing in the combat and his threat to feed David's flesh 'to the birds of the air and the beats of the field' (1 Sam. 17:44) only serves to highlight Philistine arrogance which is depicted as clearly inferior to the steely will of the divinely inspired David. He castigates Goliath for coming only with 'sword and spear and javelin' (1 Sam. 17:45) while he brings his faith, his belief in an order that clearly does not include the Philistines in its cosmic view. This exchange is a crucial and definitive enunciation of the nature of the biblical other with Goliath exposed as fatally ignorant of the divine will which will overcome whatever physical or material obstacles are placed in its path. The nature of the Philistine's otherness, therefore, is dictated by their denial of the power of Yahweh and their continued attempts at usurping the power of Israel. They personify the arrogance of denying the power of Yahweh, while the Israelites ironically personify the parallel arrogance of unshakeable belief. In fact Yahweh's interventions against the Philistines are portrayed in certain passages of the Old Testament as more than mere Davidian evocations of divine assistance. In I Chron. 1:14, for example,

²⁰ Benita Parry, 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse' in Ashcroft B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H., (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* London: Routledge, 1995), pps. 36-45, p.41.

²¹ For an examination of the Philistine tradition, see <http://www.bge.nl/en/articles.filist1.html>.

the Philistines square up to the Israelites once again on hearing of the accession of David to the throne and a battle is prepared for at Rephaim. The usual narrative structure of these battles is for David to ask for Yahweh's general and covert help ('Will you deliver them into my power?' I Chr. 14:10) which invariably materialises in the form of a Philistine massacre. However, at Rephaim, after an initial victory for David, the Philistines rally for a second round of combat, prompting Yahweh to give David an unusually elaborate and specific series of instructions:

Do not attack them from the front; go round and engage them opposite the balsam trees. When you hear the sound of steps in the tops of the balsam trees, launch your attack, for that will God going out ahead of you to rout the army of the Philistines (1 Chron. 14: 14-15).

Clearly in this particular encounter Yahweh has seen fit to depart from his typical interventionist *modus operandi*, namely that of promising without specifying the means the deliverance of the Philistines into the hands of the Israelites. His specific instructions to David explicitly leads the Philistines to their destruction, the peculiar narrative motif of the sound of footsteps acting as the mark of divine intervention. As is typical of the aftermath of Philistine/Israelite battles, punitive raids are carried out on Philistine positions with the chroniclers listing the enormous resultant casualties with barely concealed glee. Edward Said notes a chilling echo of this post-combat punitive slaughter when recounting the nature of French military '*riazzas*' in Algeria in the 1840's, what he translates as 'punitive raids on Algerians' villages, their homes, harvests, women and children'²². According to Said, these raids formed 'the core of French military policy' and were justified by one General Changarnier on the basis that 'this type of activity is taught by the scriptures...in which Joshua and other great leaders conducted 'de bien terribles *razzias*' and were blessed by God'. The consequences of such actions are brutally outlined by Said in which 'ruin, total destruction and uncompromising brutality are condoned not only because legitimised by God but because, in words echoed and re-echoed from Bugeaud to Salan, 'les Arabes ne comprennent que la force brutale'²³, an attitude that can arguably find its origins in David's valedictory psalm in 2 Sam 22:

I pursue my enemies and destroy them,
nor turn back till an end is made of them;

²² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), p.220.

²³ Said is quoting from *L'Algerie: Nation et Societe* (Paris: Seuil, 1982) by Mostafa Lacheraf in *Culture and Imperialism*, p.220. The quotation can be roughly translated as 'the Arabs only understand brute force'.

I strike them down, and they do not rise,
they fall, they are under my feet.

They cry out, there is no one to save,
to Yahweh, but there is no reply;
I crush them fine as the dust of the squares,
trample them like the mud of the streets.

Indeed, this genocide against the Philistines is not limited to the activities of David. In Amos, for example, amongst the various punishments listed under the heading 'Judgement on the Neighbours of Israel and on Israel Itself' (Amos 1:2) only the Philistines suffer the approbation of total annihilation. While Tyre, Phoenicia, Damascus and Judah are prophetically to suffer various punishments from burnt palaces to exile, Yahweh is not going to rest until 'the last of the Philistines is dead' (Amos 1:8), confirming the narrative drive throughout the Old Testament towards the ultimate elimination of the Philistine race. This destruction is further visited in Jeremiah when 'the word of Yahweh that was addressed to Jeremiah against the Philistines' (Jer. 47:1) announces their fate in dramatically constructed imagery:

Men shout aloud, and there is wailing
from all the inhabitants of the country,
at the thunder of his stallions' hoofs,
the crash of his chariots, the grinding of his wheels.
Fathers forget about their children,
their hands fall limp
because the day has come
on which all the Philistines are to be destroyed (Jer. 47:2-4).

The Presentation of Delilah

Within the Old Testament, there appears to be no tactic that the Philistines will not employ in their inherently futile struggle with the people of Israel, from open combat to licentious subterfuge. The latter tactic finds its most eloquent expression in the story of Samson and Delilah in which the Philistines appear to hatch an elaborate plan to foil the armies of Israel but inevitably the end up as the dupes of the all-knowing Yahweh. This strange interaction between Samson and the Philistines is predicated upon the direct insistence of Yahweh, who sends an angel (Judges 13:8-25) to forecast the conditions of Samson's conception and birth and the child is stated as clearly being possessed of 'the spirit of Yahweh' (Judges 14:25). His birth is announced as a direct result of Yahweh 'who was seeking an occasion for quarrelling with the Philistines; since at this time the Philistines has Israel in their power'

(Judges 14:4). This marks a significant shift in the interventionist policies of Yahweh who appears to create Samson for the very purposes of disposing of the Philistines rather than merely responding to another attack. Samson, therefore, is a Trojan horse whose infidelities are directly manufactured by a pro-active Yahweh who appears very well briefed in the possible Philistine responses to Samson's activities (a not unreasonable expectation given his divine status!).

The main tactic employed by Samson to antagonise the Philistines is to arrange a marriage with a Philistine woman, who notably does not even merit a name²⁴, and to behave in such an outrageous fashion as to force the Philistines into a response that will ultimately prove to be their undoing. What is particularly interesting about this episode is that Samson's provocative behaviour and the Philistine's inevitable response reverses the usual Old Testament duel between the Israelites and the Philistines in that the latter are seen to respond to a provocation rather than acting as initiators. Their response parallels the typical Israelite reaction to some perceived Philistine threat yet it is the latter who ultimately suffer the greatest losses. It would appear, therefore, that the Philistines are never to be granted an opportunity to speak back while even their self-defensive actions are placed clearly in the context of their intrinsic ruthlessness. Conversely, Samson's overtly murderous behaviour, which springs from a persistent and immutable Israelite self-belief, is depicted as morally superior to his Philistine counterparts, each act of Samsonite rage and slaughter being firmly contextualised and justified with the divine world view of the people of Israel. Delilah, who became Samson's paramour after the murder of his first wife by the Philistines, is the traditionally feminine mirror image of Goliath, utilising her beauty and charm to persuade Samson to reveal the source of his prodigious strength. In a typical binary opposition, Samson's great physical power is exemplified as a great virtue, while that of Goliath appears grotesque, even carnivalesque. The inherent inconsistency of this portrayal of physical strength merely reinforces the perception of the narrative bind that constricts the emergence of a balanced perspective. What is seen as an admirable attribute in Israelite hands is clearly seen as an unnatural malformation in the hands of those destined to be the less than an objective cultural correlative. Samson's prodigious strength is employed solely for the destruction of the Philistines and one of the many ironies of the Book of Judges is that while Samson's disobedience to Yahweh results in his death, it is the Philistines who appear to suffer the greatest losses. When he tells Delilah of the source of his strength,

²⁴ Throughout Judges 14, Samson's wife is referred to as 'one of the daughters of the Philistines' (Judges 14:1) or 'this one' (Judges 14:4) or by other various badges of anonymity.

Samson reneges on the deal made between his mother and the angel of Yahweh, while his role as 'he who will begin to rescue Israel from the power of the Philistines' (Judges 13:5) is fatally undermined. Samson's humiliation at the hands of his foes (he is blinded) clearly indicates one of the strongest underlying themes of the Book of Judges, namely Yahweh's protection is dependant upon strict obedience of the covenant and the only consequence of this form of disobedience is Philistine oppression. Significantly, although Yahweh appears to have deserted Samson and placed him under the control of the Philistines, at the last moment he allows Samson to destroy the temple of Dagon and simultaneously achieve the notable feat of killing more Philistines at his death than over the course of his life. Consequently, one of the primary messages of Judges is that Yahweh will punish the Israelites if they dare to betray the covenant, but this punishment will clearly amount to no more than a slap on the wrist and the opportunity to establish a range of new anti-Philistine mythologies which will sustain future punitive raids on their hapless neighbours. While the *NJBC* notes that 'God's presence insures the strength and God's absence opens the way for oppression'²⁵, the consistent logistical losers in the final analysis of Yahweh's turbulent relationship with the Israelites are the Philistines.

While Samson's swashbuckling twenty-year career as a judge in Israel comes to a dramatic and blood-soaked conclusion, no mention is made of the fate of Delilah, the Philistine woman whose guile led to his ultimate demise. As a female counterpart of Goliath, Delilah perfectly fits the Book of Judges poisoned view of the Philistines. Motivated by material greed (she is offered eleven hundred silver shekels by each of the chiefs of the Philistines), Delilah uses her sexual hold over Samson to tease out the secret of his God-given powers. Clearly, then, the Israelites have to be on their guard from every possible Philistine subterfuge and the crossing of cultural boundaries by Samson results in his eventual demise. In Judges 16:4, it is noted that 'Samson fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek', highlighting Samson's tender nature and the clear danger posed by Delilah's geographical heritage. His innocence, a consistent element in such a burlesque character, is manipulated by Delilah with strong sexual undertones in that she 'lulls' him to sleep on each occasion, utilising her physical attributes to the maximum, in much the same manner as Goliath attempted to use his natural physical superiority over David. While Delilah succeeds in tricking Samson, crucially it is Samson's own admission of the source of his strength that proves to be his undoing, rather than any direct action by Delilah. The

²⁵ *NJBC*, p.160.

role of Delilah, therefore, entirely fits in with the regular biblical template of Philistine behaviour, guided by the overarching and immutable principal of the ultimately futile attempted destruction of the Israelite people.

Conclusion

In his complex analysis of the foundational principals of nationhood, Homi K. Bhabha argues that 'the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of its irredeemably plural modern space, bounded by different, even hostile nations, into a signifying space that is archaic and mythical'²⁶. This crucial signifying space of the nation is predicated upon physical boundaries and the presence of ethnic groups whose major defining characteristics merely serve to justify the existence of that space and its inhabitants. Relative to the Philistines, the dominant thrust of certain books of the Old Testament is to portray them in such a negative light that their very presence acts as a justification of the nation of Israel. The myth of the Philistines and their intrinsic brutality is an essential composite element in the Davidian myth of the nation of Israel, and an unravelling of the one could certainly assist in the unravelling of the other.

²⁶ Bhabha, p.300.

Terminological Patterns and the Noun 'r^lh' 'Foreskin' in the Pentateuch

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Introduction

Pentateuchal studies, once the 'show-piece of critical biblical scholarship'¹, seem presently to be the most controversial area of exegesis. Probably, most readers of the Bible would agree that in the final analysis we have no concrete information concerning the procedure of the production of biblical literature, and therefore our source-critical and redaction-critical models are, at best, vague². Therefore, we are doomed to failure if we attempt to restore the *ipsissima verba* of biblical authors and consequently we have to depend on the text as transmitted in the manifold Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Since, however, nobody 'writes at random ... we can expect to find some logic or system – not necessarily conscious – behind the placement of material, and we can further assume that this placement is supposed to serve the author's goals'³. Therefore it would appear more fruitful to take the extant *Endgestalt*, the final shape, as the starting-point for any exegetical endeavours. Anticipating the objection that I have subjectively selected one particular 'manuscript version' and made it my point of departure, the following should be noted here: first, this paper is based upon the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and on *BibleWorks*, a text-version that has been collated against various editions of the Hebrew Bible⁴; second, the findings have been carefully checked in the concordance edited by S. Mandelkern; third, the LXX as printed in the Göttingen edition has also been consulted.

Close reading of the biblical text – assisted by a Bible computer program – brings to light the exact distribution of a given word. In some recent

¹ E. Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1996) 69.

² Cf. G. Steins, *Die 'Bindung' Isaaks im Kanon (Gen 22). Grundlagen und Programm einer kanonisch-intertextuellen Lektüre*, HBS 20 (Freiburg: Herder, 1999) 220.

³ M. V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*, Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991) 153.

⁴ *BibleWorks 4. The Premier Biblical Exegesis and Research Program. User Manual* (BibleWorks 1999) 219-224. 'This latest electronic version ... is extremely close to BHS, 4th edition' (220).

studies the (entire) vocabulary of a given passage has been scrutinized. By tabulating the words, their distinct distribution and their relative frequency were established; consequently, it was demonstrated that some important terms or phrases have been placed in significant positions. Having tabulated the respective positions and counted the frequencies of the words used in such a text-unit (an entity that may consist of a brief passage, a chapter or even an entire biblical book), some terms turn out to be of structural significance, and it is these outlines, based on counting a given sentential entity or a single word, that have been designated 'terminological patterns'⁵.

As of summer 2002, more than 140 terminological patterns have been discovered in the Pentateuch, and obviously in each case the respective pericope has to some degree been determined by these verbal links. With regard to the present paper, one could argue that this approach is arbitrary because the terminological pattern presented below is based on a single word, *'rlh*, 'foreskin'. However, the following 'terminological facts' should be considered. Elsewhere, terminological patterns have been presented that support the literary cohesiveness of Genesis 17, the story in which the noun appears for the first time in the Bible. Seemingly, Genesis 17, *per se*, has been structured, at least to a certain degree, through the linguistic linkages resting on the words *bryt* 'covenant', *hyh* 'to be', and *zr'* 'seed, descendant'. The terminological patterns founded on *'wlm* 'eternity', *qwm* 'arise, establish', *dwr* 'generation', *zkr* 'male', and *npl* 'to fall' encompass major parts of Genesis⁶. The verbal patterns founded on the divine epithet *Shaddai* and the verb *mwl* 'circumcise' extend beyond the confines of Genesis⁷. Significantly, terminological patterns have been disclosed in each part of the Hebrew Bible, the Torah⁸, the Prophets⁹, and the Writings¹⁰.

In each of the aforementioned studies the transmitted biblical text as found in our Hebrew Bibles presents itself as a text that has been

⁵ W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus*, Biblical Interpretation Series 35 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999) 25.

⁶ W. Warning, 'Terminological Patterns in Genesis 17', *HUCA* 70/71 (1999/2000) 93-108.

⁷ W. Warning, 'Terminological Patterns and the Divine Epithet *Shaddai*', *TynB* 52 (2001) 149-153; idem, 'Terminological Patterns and the Verb "Circumcise" in the Pentateuch', *BN* 106 (2001) 52-56.

⁸ W. Warning, 'Terminologische Verknüpfungen in der Urgeschichte', *ZAW* (forthcoming); idem, 'Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 12,1-3', *Bib* 81 (2000) 386-390; idem, 'Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 15', *Hen* 23 (2001) 3-9; idem, 'Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 22', *Spes Christiana* (forthcoming); idem, 'Terminological Patterns and Genesis 24', *EstBib* (forthcoming); idem, 'Terminological Patterns and Genesis 38', *AUSS* 38 (2000) 293-305; idem, 'Terminological Patterns and Genesis 39', *JETS* 44 (2001) 409-419; idem, 'Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Leviticus 11', *BZ* 46 (2002) 97-102.

⁹ W. Warning, 'Terminological Patterns and the Book of Jonah', *Hen* (forthcoming).

¹⁰ W. Warning, 'Terminological Patterns and the Book of Esther', *OTE* (forthcoming).

carefully composed by its ancient author. I understand and use the term 'author' as referring to the person(s) who wrote the extant text, who composed text-units which we call, for example, 'Genesis 17', Exod 4.24-26', or 'Genesis'. Whatever the oral and/or written prehistory of these texts has been, there can be no doubt that at some point in the history of ancient Israel these different stories and narratives were completed in a way that conformed to the intention of their authors.

In many different eras and cultures, people have had some predilection for certain numbers. The preference for the number *seven* in the Ancient Near East can hardly be questioned, it represents completion and completeness. It has already been shown that when terminological patterns within self-contained passages are explored, the seventh position is frequently emphasized by some special term or phrase, i.e. the biblical writer has composed his text in such a way that a theologically significant statement appears in the seventh slot.

Since 'the only *fact* available to us is the text of the Pentateuch in all its complexity'¹¹, the terminological pattern to be presented below is based on counting, tabulating, and evaluating the ten occurrences of the noun 'foreskin' in the Pentateuch. Concerning such 'veiled counting'¹² in the Hebrew Bible, it is wise to take M.Tsevat's admonition into consideration:

The literary units to be scrutinized concerning the frequency of characteristic words must be clearly and distinctly recognizable as such, and if possible they should be delimited in the same way in previous research, so that the exegete will not be tempted or be exposed to the reproach that he or she places the caesura in the continuum of the text in such a way that the characteristic term occurs the desired number of times¹³.

Due to the fact that in present-day biblical studies this approach is rarely being used and hence certain reservations on the part of scholars are understandable, I believe that at times the theological message inherent in the biblical texts becomes more manifest, if we take the extant *Endgestalt* at face value. In view of the linguistic linkages disclosed thus far, the appropriateness of this approach is probably put in its proper perspective by M. Tsevat's keen observation:

¹¹ R. N. Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 27 (his emphasis).

¹² M. Tsevat, 'Abzählungen in 1 Samuel 1-4', in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Blum et al. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990) 213, speaks of 'verhüllte Abzählungen'.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 208.

After having become accustomed to this aspect of art, you will no longer have any basic problems with the veiled countings of the Old Testament. You will rather realize that the significance of the components of a piece of art and their simple identifiability are not necessarily in a positive ratio to one another¹⁴.

Therefore, all occurrences of the noun 'foreskin' in the Pentateuch have been counted, tabulated and analysed.¹⁵ According to current scholarly opinion, the ten texts that have been placed side by side in the following table derived from diverse authors living in different eras. Probably, no modern reader of the Pentateuch would seriously question that the placement of Exod 4:24-26 in its present context must have been meaningful to the author of the extant text and, what is more, the placement of this pericope has probably served his compositional goals. Therefore, 'the narrative of the nocturnal assault made by YHWH'¹⁶ in Exod 4:24-26, probably the most enigmatic event in the life of Moses, must have been invested with very significant meaning.

At this point, I would point out that the present study aims *only* at presenting the terminological pattern based on the noun 'foreskin' and hence, no additional 'imaginative interpretation'¹⁷ will be offered.

The episode that 'has stimulated a variety of theories regarding its origin and meaning, but no consensus in the most basic questions'¹⁸, is undoubtedly a unique passage in the Bible. First, only here we are told, *expressis verbis*, that the rite of circumcision is performed by a woman; second, the conspicuous use of the verb *krt* 'cut' instead of the common verb *mwl* 'circumcise' is singular throughout Scripture, and third, in the unparalleled statement, 'and Zipporah took a flint knife and cut off her son's foreskin'¹⁹, the noun 'foreskin' appears the seventh time in the Pentateuch. Due to the fact that we lack any precise information as to

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁵ In the LXX the noun 'foreskin' is likewise found in Gen 17.1, 14, 23, 24, 25; 34.14. In contrast to the MT, the Greek translation reads in 34:24b, 'and they were circumcised in the flesh of their foreskin, every male', possibly in to avoid the repetition of 'all the men who went out of the city gate' (NIV), a phrase occurring twice, both in v. 24a and v. 24b. In Lev 19:23 the LXX reads 'impurity' and in Deut10:16 the phrase 'the foreskin of your hearts' is rendered by 'hardness of your hearts'.

¹⁶ B. P. Robinson, 'Zipporah to the Rescue: A Contextual Study of Exodus iv 24-26', *VT* 36 (1986) 447.

¹⁷ J. I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Dallas: Word Books, 1987) 57.

¹⁸ J. Goldingay, 'The Significance of Circumcision', *JSOT* 88 (2000) 5.

¹⁹ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967) 60, comments: 'Thus the ancients were accustomed to use stone implements for every sacred rite, owing to the conservatism inherent in the sphere of worship. Even when men had learned to make metal tools and to use them in everyday life, they still continued to employ flint instruments for ritual purposes'. Cf. C. Houtman, *Exodus*, vol.1, *Historical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Kok Publishing House: Kampen, 1993) 435-436.

how literature was produced in ancient Israel, we cannot determine if this pericope derived from an ancient tradition, but was not part of the earliest form of the Moses narrative²⁰ or whether it may contain material from a variety of sources²¹

It is a fact that not every passage in Genesis and Exodus dealing with circumcision is part of the following table (cf. Gen 21:4; Exod 12:43-49). Nevertheless, the ensuing table clearly evidences that Exod 4:24-26 has been integrated and has even been given a prominent position, namely the significant seventh slot:

Gen 17.11	you must be circumcised in the flesh of your	foreskin
14	. . . whose	foreskin is not circumcised
23	. . . and be circumcised their	foreskins
24	. . . when he was circumcised in his	foreskin
25	. . . when he was circumcised in his	foreskin
34.14	a man who has still his	foreskin
Ex. 4.25	Zippora took a flint knife, and cut off her son's	foreskin
Lev 12.3	on the eighth day circumcise the flesh of his	foreskin
19.23	consider as uncircumcised its	foreskin [ie its fruit]
Deut 10.16	circumcise the	foreskin of your hearts

Exegetical Inferences

Although the oral and/or written prehistory of Exod 4:24-26 evades us and, what is more, even the exact meaning of that enigmatic event eludes us²², the 'terminological extraordinariness' of this circumcision has been demonstrated. The only circumcision in the context of which the verb *krt* 'cut' rather than *mwl* 'circumcise' has been used, is the only circumcision performed by a woman, and it is in the context of this 'enigmatic episode that the noun 'foreskin' chances to appear the *seventh* time in the Pentateuch. Both among the Israelites and other ancient peoples the number *seven* is loaded with the notion of fulfilment, completion, and finishing. It is a fact that Zippora's circumcising their son, 'when YHWH attacked him and sought to kill him' (Exod 4:24), turns out to be a life-saving act. In Exod 4:26 it is clearly stated that (immediately) afterwards, 'he let him alone'. The aspect of having satisfactorily completed the rite of circumcision is evidently corroborated and complemented by the

²⁰ Robinson, 459.

²¹ Houtman, 427 (see his bibliography on page 432 n.7).

²² Cf. W. H. Propp, 'That bloody bridegroom (Exodus iv 24-26)', VT 43 (1993) 495-518; C. Houtman, 'Exodus 4:24-26 and Its Interpretation', JNSL 11 (1984) 81-105; R. B. Allen, 'The "bloody bridegroom" in Exodus 4:24-26', BSac 153 (1996) 259-269.

'terminological fact' that exactly at this point the noun is used the seventh time in the Torah.

Evidently, the argument that in 'literature the form is meaningful ... In literature the form creates meaning ... In literature the meaning exists in and through form'²³, has been evidenced anew. Whatever the oral and/or written *Vorlagen* of the texts juxtaposed above may have been, it cannot be questioned that the author of the extant text has created a terminological pattern that contains a clear-cut theological message.

Conclusion

In his evaluation of the present state of Pentateuchal studies, R. N. Whybray notes that:

as far as assured results are concerned we are no nearer to certainty than when critical study of the Pentateuch began. There is at the present time no consensus whatever about when, why, how, and through whom the Pentateuch reached its present form, and opinions about the dates of composition of its various parts differ by more than five hundred years²⁴

Since this is the fourth study analysing aspects of the terminology used in Gen 17, I take the liberty to venture a 'synopsis': First, it is only the rainbow (Gen 9.12, 13, 17) and circumcision (Gen 17.11) that are *expressis verbis* designated as (*l*)*'wt bryt* 'sign of the covenant' in the Hebrew Bible and hence it is noteworthy that following 6:18; 9:9, 11, 12, 13, 15 the noun 'covenant' occurs the seventh time in 9.16, reading: 'I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come as an eternal *covenant*'. Following Gen 3:22; 6:3, 4; 9:12, 16; 13:15, the noun '*wlm* 'eternity' is used the seventh time in 17:7, reading: 'I will establish my covenant as an *eternal* covenant between me and you and your descendants after you'. The terminological and thematic interrelation of the flood story and the Abraham narrative could hardly be more explicit and expressive. Second, the divine epithet 'Shaddai' occurs the seventh time in Exod 6:3 (cf. Gen 17.1; 28.3; 35.11; 43.14; 48.3; 49.25) thus referring retrospectively, as it were, to the Lord's earlier appearances to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Third, in a twenty-two-part terminological pattern based on the verb *mwl* 'circumcise' the third and third-from-last positions (Gen 17.12; Lev 12.3) prescribe the eighth day as the appointed time for any Israelite male to be

²³ L. Alonso-Schökel, 'Hermeneutical Problems of Literary Study of the Bible', *VTSup Congress Volume 28. Edinburgh 1974* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975) 7.

²⁴ Whybray, 12.

circumcised, and the circumcision of Ishmael and Isaac is mentioned in the seventh and twelfth positions respectively. Fourth, the author of the extant text employs the noun 'foreskin' the *seventh* time in the context of Exod 4:24-26 thus giving emphasis to that nocturnal event.

Each of these four studies is closely related to the notion of the covenant between the Lord and Israel, both terminologically and thematically. Hence we may rightly conclude that by using covenantal terminology, employed first in Gen 17, almost the entire Torah, the *Magna Charta* between the Lord and Israel, is encompassed and it is this law code that contains the rules and regulations for their mutual relationship.

In view of the above presented facts, facts that are based on the words actually used by the biblical author, the transmitted text of the Hebrew Bible should be more highly appreciated.. In the preceding pages the (deliberate) distribution of the noun 'foreskin' has been presented. In general, we are told that the texts juxtaposed in the above table come from different biblical writers who lived in different eras. Whatever the alleged/actual prehistory of the passages placed side by side has been, the table strongly indicates a deliberate literary design. Therefore, mindful of Whybray's realistic assessment that there is presently no scholarly consensus whatever about when, why how, and through whom the Pentateuch reached its present form, the reader is called upon to consider the evidence and to decide for oneself whether the approach presented above is valid or not. In my view, the literary artistry disclosed in biblical texts dates from an original author rather than a later redactor.

Book Reviews

General

Making Sense of the Bible: Literary Type as an Approach to Understanding. Marshall D. Johnson, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK, 2002, pp.ix + 161. Pbk. \$12/£8.99.

‘The Bible can begin to make sense when we appreciate the variety of literature it contains and the spectrum of interests on the part of the individuals and groups that produced it’ (p.141). Marshall Johnson launches the admirable project of introducing the student or interested layperson to the different types of literature to be found in that rich and complex collection we call the (Christian) Bible. He is absolutely right to suggest that to make sense of a biblical text we have to know what kind of literature we are reading.

He has chapters on Wisdom Literature, Poetry of Worship, Historical Narratives, Prophetic Literature, Legal Collections, Apocalyptic, Letters and Gospels. (For a more complex and nuanced taxonomy we would have to consult Otto Eissfeldt.) Each chapter gives a brief description of the characteristics of the type, a summary of some prominent examples of the type, and a short statement on how to read the material. In the end more than half the book is no more than a potted account of the content of certain biblical books and this is possibly not the most helpful way to fill the pages in what is already a short introduction. But the author does push the student into recognising that the Bible must not be read as a homogeneous text. So many beginners read the Bible naively as though it is all to be judged as history – believable history or unbelievable history – and Johnson leads them away from that mistake to a more varied appreciation.

In all but his chapters on Prophecy and Gospels, the author offers examples from Old and New Testaments for each type; so we have Old Testament letters as well as New and New Testament examples of Wisdom, Worship, History, Law and Apocalyptic as well as Old. Most of these chapters are short but Johnson’s enthusiasm takes over on The Gospels which he deals with at greater length. Yet even here he uses most of his section on the Synoptic Gospels to merely outline the story Mark tells with some additional comments on the particularities of the structure of Matthew and Luke and their redactional interests. A useful section on

John in no way helps resolve the issue of history and theology in the Fourth Gospel.

An admirable project, then, and a book I will gladly recommend to my first year students, but a project that is perhaps not fully achieved. Could we not have been offered particular examples of texts that will yield different meanings when they are read as different literary types? The single page on Genesis as prehistory is wasted when it fails to show how passages in that book can be read in radically different ways. If Genesis is prehistory, what does that imply? It is important to push further and try to distinguish between historical narrative, legend, fable and myth, all of which can be presented as 'history'. This can be quite a problem in the Old Testament but is of serious on-going Christian interest when we read narratives about Jesus in the Gospels.

Geoffrey Turner

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Paolo Veronese. *Piety and Display in an Age of Religious Reform.* Richard Cocke. Ashgate, Aldershot, 2001. Pp. 270. £49.95.

During Autumn 2001, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham held a series of public lectures on Veronese to celebrate the restoration of one of its finest paintings, Veronese's *The Visitation*. In a packed lecture-theatre each week, the audience was treated to a series of rare and rich insights into religious work of this wonderful and often neglected artist. Thus my delight to see a new book published on Veronese in December 2001 by Dr. Richard Cocke, a leading expert on Veronese in the English speaking world. (That the publication of the book should come so soon after the lecture series was purely co-incidental but nevertheless very fortuitous).

This is a really beautiful book of very high quality both in its presentation and content. Starting from a well chosen picture of the *Adoration of the Magi* on the dustcover that makes you want to pick up the book every time you see it, the book contains some 26 colour and 91 black and white illustrations, many inspired by biblical themes from the Old and New Testament (for example, an entire chapter is given over to pictures that deal specifically with Christ's Feasts and the Last Supper). Cocke begins with an informative biography of Veronese and the society in which he lived (thus the title "Piety and Display in an Age of Religious Reform"). A cursory glance at his bibliography indicates how well the book has been researched from a biblical and theological point of view

(and with particular reference to the Council of Trent) and how insights from theology have influenced Cocke's sensitive and knowledgeable explanation of the paintings. For example, he explores the idea of sight as faith, central in the Venetian renaissance and other rich theological themes such as the presentation of the saints and biblical characters as exemplars for the faithful.

Cocke offers rich insights into Veronese's treatment of such themes as the Marriage Feat of Cana, the Baptism of Christ, the Visitation, the Resurrection and the Assumption of Mary. The book is extremely well indexed and referenced so that I was able to trace very easily all the references to *The Visitation* within the space of two pages (pp. 124-125). Cocke skilfully explains how *The Visitation* should be interpreted within the context of the two altarpieces that originally accompanied it, *Christ with Zebedee's Wife and Sons* and *The Resurrection*. He shows how the prophecies of Elizabeth (in *The Visitation*) and the reply of Christ to the request of Zebedee's wife that her two sons should sit on Christ's side ("Are you able to drink the cup that I shall drink of?") are fulfilled in *the Resurrection*. This, along with many other examples, invites the reader to make connections and links between the different parts of the Gospels. This book is also very rich in exploring other incidents in the life of Christ depicted by Veronese.

I found the sections of the book very easy to negotiate. The table of contents contains very useful and relevant sub-headings. There is a very well laid out catalogue of Veronese's work, an excellent bibliography and - what will be of special interest to the teacher of biblical studies - is the list of paintings that relate to the Old Testament, the Life of Christ and the Life of the Virgin and the Saints given at the end of the book.

Now that almost every Theology and Religious Studies Department in the country has at least one course on the *Bible and Art* or *Theology and Art*, this book is essential to all Theology libraries. It is a wonderful reference book which the lecturer can consult in order to include biblical paintings in his or her module that ask questions of the biblical text or offer a different perspective on the life and person of Christ. But it is also a fascinating book for the individual to read. It is not overly technical and the beauty and colour of the plates and Cocke's explanation of them are really very moving.

All in all, this is an outstanding book, well worth the money, and one that will not only enrich the teaching of the biblical lecturer but also enrich him/her as an individual. And, of course, from a history of art point of

view it is the leading book in English on Veronese; but this reviewer is more interested in how it helps us understand the ways in which Veronese illuminates the richness of biblical narrative and in that, Cocke has managed to achieve a most effective exposition.

Martin O'Kane

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Old Testament

Ichabod Toward Home: The Journey of God's Glory. Walter Brueggemann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. Pp. ix + 150. Pbk. £10.99/\$15.

Walter Brueggemann, Old Testament professor at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur (Georgia) has become known as one of the most original commentators on the Old Testament in his generation. This volume, based on lectures he gave at Princeton Theological Seminary in 2001, examines the theme of glory in the story of ancient Israel. The author does not write abstractly; rather, he does his theology in the light of the situation of the Church and the world today.

At the start of the third Christian millennium, the Church in Britain seems to be going through an inglorious phase, or at least a time of difficulty. We could echo the words of Eli's daughter-in-law after the capture of the Ark of the Covenant, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel" (1 Sam 4:21). In this context, Brueggemann has chosen an appropriate theme for today.

The volume's first three chapters offer a theological reading of 1 Samuel 4-6. First Samuel 4 depicts Israel's descent into loss as the Ark is captured by the Philistines. Brueggemann asserts that the full embrace of loss characteristic of Israel's faith (for instance, when facing the exile) is relevant for believers today. After making links to the Holocaust and Good Friday, B. brings it closer to home with a list of everyday ills from a typical parish: "Gene's nonsmoker's lung cancer; Barbara's malignancy; little Michael; Tim's forced departure from the parish; the vanished child; the paralyzed athlete; the lost job."

Yet following this apparent defeat comes God's intervention (1 Samuel 5). On the third day the Philistines decide to send the Ark back to Israel after the image of Dagon has been miraculously decapitated. Brueggemann links this divine intervention with the exodus and the

return from exile, as well as with the ways God can intervene to lift the Church out of despair into hope.

First Samuel 6 depicts the return of the Ark to Israel and its arrival at Beth-shemesh, from where David will later bring it to Jerusalem. The theme of glory in this section of the Ark Narrative prefigures the glory of Jerusalem under David and Solomon. The movement from exile to homecoming recurs at the end of the Babylonian exile.

Then, after a chapter pleading for imagination rather than bald rationality in biblical interpretation, Brueggemann's final chapter reflects on the message of his text for today. In his view, the story offers a way out of denial and despair and complacency. Brueggemann interestingly links the three-day narrative to the three-day weekend and the paschal mystery of Jesus' cross and resurrection.

I regard this book as a fine example of biblical theology, starting with the biblical text, moving through the experience of the Israelites and Jesus, and leading us to look again at our life today. It could be helpful spiritual reading for someone willing to reflect on Israel's experience of despair and hope, and seeking God's presence in his apparent absence.

Jeremy Corley

Ushaw College, Durham

Biblical Morality: Moral Perspectives in Old Testament Narratives.
Mary Mills, Ashgate 2001, pp.vii + 270, Hbk. £45, Pbk. £16.99.

The study of OT ethics has often in the past focused on OT laws which embody moral precepts ('you shall not kill', 'you shall not steal', etc.), and has been concerned with their continuing place in Christian morality. Mary Mills takes a different approach; she explores the moral perspectives of OT narratives and the values which underlie them.

Mills recognises that there are fundamental differences between the social context of the OT and those who look to it for moral guidance in the present day. In ancient Israel a person was not seen as an autonomous self, but someone whose identity was bound up with their family and community, and society was defined by relationship with God. Mills accordingly adopts a three dimensional approach and examines morality in relation to persons, community, and 'cosmos' (the world and God).

The author draws heavily upon narrative criticism, and concentrates on three aspects: the portrayal of character, the plot which binds together diverse episodes, and location in time and place. She makes an interesting correlation with the three dimensions of morality: character with personal morality, plot with community values, and location with 'cosmos'. In each case, Mills explains the specific aspect of narrative criticism concerned, but the reader without any prior knowledge may find it heavy going when she cites the work of theorists who employ technical terms.

Three characters are put under the microscope: Abraham, David and Esther. The approach in each case, as throughout the book, is to summarise the divergent readings of (post-) modern scholars. On the one hand, Abraham is seen as a model of faith: on the other hand his actions towards women are often questionable. Similarly, David is 'both golden boy and an abusive father' (pp.243f); the stories about him leave the reader 'varying between acclaim and condemnation' (p.70). Likewise, in the story of Esther a wide range of possible moral visions relating to life in a foreign environment is brought to light.

Mills does not limit herself to describing moral attitudes portrayed in the narrative, nor with the evaluation of them by the narrator. The way that the reader is drawn into the world of the story and often left to draw his or her own conclusions about the motivation of a particular character, enables her to introduce also a 'reader-response' approach. In the case of Abraham, for example, her evaluation of the morality of his actions stems from present-day moral perspectives, and in particular from feminist perspectives.

Three narratives are also chosen for the exploration of morality and plot, that is, for moral vision in relation to community. Two of these, Ruth and Joseph, involve vital issues of family values, and like the third, Jonah, also involve insider/outsider issues. Again, a 'bewildering complexity' emerges. The writer's own insights are judicious and often thought provoking, but they are sometimes in danger of being lost within the rich tapestry she weaves from the works of other scholars.

The third section 'Morality, Time and Place' deals with cosmic issues. Genesis 1-11 is examined for the relationship between human behaviour and world order; Daniel 1-7 is studied for the relationship between world powers, God, and end-time; Job provides the setting for the discussion of the moral character of God himself. This is the most taxing section of the book, since any discussion of time must necessarily be philosophical. It is also the strangest in the way that symbolic functions are suggested for

different 'places'. Job, for instance, achieves a new moral vision of the cosmos 'through the alternative worlds of the 'the dungheap and the storm'' (p.233).

'Morality' in this book is used in a broad sense. It ranges from personal behaviour to the forging of a new vision of cultural identity and the maintenance of hope in exile. It embraces both the description of standards of behaviour in the OT narratives with which it deals, and also evaluation of those standards in the light of modern perceptions. It destabilises the possibility of a 'biblical morality' by demonstrating the diversity of possible interpretations of OT narrative, and by questioning the validity of some of the values it embodies. The reader expecting a definitive account of OT ethics will not find it here. Rather, this is a book for those who wish to think through for themselves the variety of possible responses to situations which present challenges to personal, family or community values.

The book also provides a useful compendium of the insights of recent narrative criticism. It draws (with one exception) on sources available in English. Regrettably, the referencing is sometimes inconsistent and occasionally inaccurate. Nonetheless, for those prepared to wrestle with the complexity of its approach and of its findings, it is a work densely packed with challenging insights and intriguing questions.

Allan K. Jenkins

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Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther (second edition). Michael V. Fox. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001. Pp. x + 333. £18.99.

This is an extremely good book, enjoyable to read as well as interesting and informative. Fox provides a translation and commentary on the Book of Esther, followed by a chapter analysing the portrayal of each of the main characters. His aim in thus focussing on the characters (including God and the Jewish people) is to demonstrate how they serve to put across to the reader the author's views or ideology, as he argues that: "...the central ideas (of the Book of Esther) are embodied in, rather than merely enunciated by, the persons in the text." (p. 2). Fox's detailed analysis of the text really allowed me to gain new insights into each character and the overall message of the Book. I also learned from his Jewish perspective on the Book of Esther, as he draws attention to the precariousness and unpredictability of the Gentile State when viewed through Jewish eyes.

Both in the commentary and in separate chapters, Fox discusses issues such as historicity and dating, and the work's structure and genre. This second edition includes a section (pp. 288-303) briefly introducing and evaluating some of the most important contributions to Esther scholarship which have appeared since Fox's book was first published in 1991. He also engages directly with the feminist critique of the Book of Esther as undergirding patriarchy with its portrayal of a woman who is submissive to her male relatives, and who uses deception and manipulation to get her way. Fox argues that, on the contrary, the author is critical of the sexism of the Persian court manifest in chapters 1 and 2, and that: "He respects Esther as a woman of courage and intelligence...depicts a successful relationship of power-sharing between male and female, in which both attain prestige and influence in the community...What is more, the book takes as its hero a woman whose importance to the Jewish people does not lie in childbearing; there are only a handful of such cases in the Bible." (p. 210).

The book will be useful to those engaged in teaching and also to students. It will provide a valuable resource not only for anyone studying the Book of Esther in detail, but will also serve students who are being introduced to a variety of ways of reading the Bible as an excellent example of the contribution that can be made to Biblical Studies by literary approaches to the texts.

Susan Docherty

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First and Second Chronicles, (Interpretation Series). S. Tuell, Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001, Hbk. Pp.247.

This commentary series is designed to meet the needs of students, teachers and ministers, and this volume fits that intention, avoiding difficult technical language while addressing matters of ancient culture, for instance. The link between text and audience is made through the view that Chronicles already represents tradition re-interpreted for a new community – and that is the basic function of modern commentaries also. Tuell points out that these books might appear to be of slight value to a modern reader, in line with the LXX title of 'What is left [over]'. Although the Chronicle account of David is not as glamorous as that of the Deuteronomistic historian in Samuel, there is still a deep concern for David's role. He provides the focus for the community's understanding of itself, contemporaneously and as linked to past tradition.

Tuell's use of chapter titles highlights his view, moving from Genealogies to David (and Solomon) at centre stage, then to later kings of Judah, with Ezra and Nehemiah as postscript. David is the hinge of the books in his role of creator of Temple liturgy, viewed as developing the religion set out by Moses and as the origin of a Temple liturgy which was being renewed in the time of the Chronicler. It is the Temple and its liturgy which are the source of community identity; Hezekiah reformed the Temple set up by Solomon and Josiah was the last royal reformer. Later kings caused a spiritual decline which Ezra has worked to renew. Reading Chronicles in the light of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah gave Tuell insight into a shift in approach in Israelite tradition. Ezra is the great compiler of written records of tradition, and Chronicles draws on written texts in the OT to create a renewed profile of true religion. This is an interesting and accessible commentary which will be of use to those with a serious interest in studying OT books.

Mary Mills

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New Testament

Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament. Richard N. Longenecker (ed.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. Pp. xiii + 292. Pbk. £19.99/\$28.

This collection of a dozen essays by twelve respected scholars surveys New Testament prayer in three parts: the setting, the gospels, and the rest of the New Testament evidence. Each essay concludes with about a page of bibliography.

After a brief introduction from the editor, the first four essays deal with prayer in the ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman world. Chris Seitz's treatment of prayer in the Old Testament emphasizes theology rather than history: God reveals his name to the Israelites, but their response in prayer is very mixed, though models of prayer are provided by Moses, David, and the Suffering Servant of Second-Isaiah. David Aune's outline of prayer in the Greco-Roman world rejects the common distinction between public ritual prayer and personal prayer, as well as the widespread distinction between religious prayer and magic; his helpful examples illustrate the language, structure, and style of Greco-Roman prayer. Asher Finkel's discussion of first-century Jewish prayer emphasizes the importance of the temple and illuminates the Passover background of Jesus' final pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Mark 11-14). Eileen

Schuller's survey of prayer in the Dead Sea scrolls focuses on Essene prayer for mornings and evenings, and for sabbaths and festivals, particularly the annual Pentecost covenant renewal.

The volume's second part deals with Jesus' prayer as indicated in the gospels. Stephen Farris's analysis of three canticles in Luke's infancy narrative (Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis) considers authorship, community of origin, and theological language. Howard Marshall studies Jesus as an example and teacher of prayer (both thanksgiving and petition) in the synoptic gospels. Tom Wright suggests that as a paradigm of Christian prayer, the Our Father expresses Jesus' vision of God's people engaged in a new exodus journey to freedom under God. Andrew Lincoln's discussion of prayer in the Fourth Gospel notes that by comparison with the other three gospels, petition has been replaced by Jesus' intimate relationship with the Father (see John 17).

The volume's third section covers prayer in the rest of the New Testament. Joel Green deals with prayer in the Acts of the Apostles under the heading of "persevering together in prayer," focusing on key moments in early church life (commissioning leaders, facing persecution, new missionary developments, and various needs for salvation). Richard Longenecker covers prayer in the Pauline letters, noting the Jewish background of the apostle's prayers and considering elements of adoration, thanksgiving, and petition. Then Ramsey Michaels deals with prayer in Hebrews and the catholic epistles under the heading of "finding yourself an intercessor"; whereas Hebrews sees Jesus as an intercessor, James emphasizes the personal qualities needed in human intercessors. Finally Richard Bauckham considers prayer in the Book of Revelation, focusing on the prayers of the saints, the cry of the martyrs, and the prayer for the return of the Lord. Though the volume has no editorial conclusion, there are two useful indexes.

Within its own framework this carefully-edited volume offers an accurate description of New Testament prayer, as well as helpful consideration of its Jewish background. However, David Aune's chapter is the only one to pay attention to the Greco-Roman context (ignored in the other essays). For instance, I could find no reference to Mark Kiley's important anthology entitled *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine* (London: Routledge, 1997). On a wider level, some essays seem content to describe the New Testament data on its own terms, without always setting the prayers in their historical and cultural context. Perhaps the work would have gained value by adopting a broader perspective, relating New Testament prayer to the Greco-Roman context, later Christian spirituality,

and contemporary questions. Thus, the strength of this volume (its clear focus on New Testament prayer) is also potentially its weakness. As a reliable survey of its subject, this volume could profitably be used for a course on biblical prayer for theology students, novices, or educated laypeople. Hopefully, such a course would then go on to assess the value of the New Testament witness for the prayer life of contemporary believers.

Jeremy Corley

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The Parables of Jesus. Arland J. Hultgren, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2000, Pp.xxix + 522, Hbk £21.99.

It is not easy for the average homilist to produce new and original insights on the parables of Jesus which will enable the congregation to make the relevant connections and links with the story of their own lives. As we know, there is no substitute for the hard work of sitting down and reading the commentaries and allowing the wisdom of the scholars to mingle with prayer and pastoral reflection if we are to do justice to the text and to the modern listener.

This book by Hultgren, professor at the Lutheran Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, could be a serious contribution to the library of any pastor or adult educator looking for substantial support to the preparation process. From this perspective what he has achieved is remarkable. He has drawn from the best of scholars both recent and older vintage, Protestant and Catholic, and argues the case for different interpretations very clearly; nor is he frightened of nailing his colours to the mast where there is dispute.

His exegetical commentaries are particularly helpful, examining options with a meticulousness and common sense which reminded me of William Barclay's writing. I find his capacity to leave some elements in the parables as being unnecessary of explanation or justification quite liberating. He is happy to let the story speak for itself without trying to make it fit into an imposed framework; time has been more generous with some details of the parables more than others.

It is his expositions at the end of each parable (particularly the last paragraphs), however, which commend this book to me and makes it such a powerful resource for the homilist and for the non-specialist adult educator. He seems to draw on a wide range of pastoral experience in order to situate his interpretation in the modern context and has a very

easy and straightforward way of expressing himself. This style is very engaging and affirming of one's own struggles with the text both for study and homily preparation.

What convinces me more than anything of the value of this book is the way that he has incorporated his own spiritual and theological insights in a manner which is challenging but not threatening to the reader. There are many examples but one of the best, for me, is at the end of his exposition on the Prodigal Son (p.87) where he says, 'Forgiveness happens all the time; the offended person simply forgives, and life moves on. The same must be true of the Divine-human relationship. If we must be repentant in order to be saved, God have mercy on us!' This is complemented by his quote from Martin Luther (p.280), 'Sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more'.

John Dale

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The Gospel of Mark (Sacra Pagina). John R. Donahue, S.J. and Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., Liturgical Press 2002, pp. xv + 488, Hbk. £33.99.

Jesus in Solidarity with His People: A Theologian Looks at Mark. William Reiser, Liturgical Press 2000, pp. xvii + 233, Pbk. \$19.99.

The Gospel of Mark, long considered the 'Cinderella' among the gospels, has in recent decades once again found its way to the scholarly ball. These two recent works on Mark represent very different contributions from within American Catholic scholarship.

Donahue and Harrington have now given us their long-awaited volume in the *Sacra Pagina* commentary series, in time for Year B. The commentary follows the series' well-established pattern: a fresh translation of Mark (aimed at capturing the 'vividness and flow' of his narrative), detailed notes on specific verses and phrases, and an 'interpretation'. This is preceded by a substantial introduction to the whole gospel, setting out the authors' stance, and surveying interpretative methods, before majoring upon the Gospel's literary and theological features (some readers may decide to skip the weighty section on Marcan scholarship). In terms of the traditional concerns of the historical critic, dating and provenance, there are no surprises. Our authors opt for the mainstream dating around 70 CE, and locate Mark and his 'community' in Rome in the aftermath of Nero's persecution (no concession here to Bauckham's critique of reading the gospels as 'windows' onto specific first century churches).

What are this commentary's strengths? First, though indebted to the historical approaches of the past two centuries, Donahue and Harrington have learned from the best (and avoided the worst) of more recent scholarly methods, including literary criticism. Thus they have a particular concern for both 'intratextuality' (i.e. reading Mark as Mark, attempting to understand particular pericopae in the light of the whole) and 'intertextuality' (attending to the relationships between Mark and other texts). They show, for example, how an intratextual reading of Mark alleviates the anti-Jewish potential of the gospel, while reading Mark intertextually with certain Old Testament passages sheds light upon Mark's negative portrayal of the disciples.

Second, their translation manages to convey something of Mark's stylistic and grammatical idiosyncrasies, as well as the freshness of his narrative. Thus Jesus responds to the leper 'with a deep groan' (Mark 1.43); Mark's first sea miracle describes how 'a fierce windstorm came up' (4.37); the Gerasene demoniac is found 'screeching and mangling himself with stones' (5.5).

Third, the interpretation sections generally offer some thoughts on how the preacher might 'actualize' the passage in a homily. Sometimes these comments are rather bland: e.g. the saying about new wineskins urges contemporary Christians to grapple with the perennial tensions between old and new. Occasionally, however, they can offer much food for thought (as on the narrative of appointing the Twelve, or the Gerasene demoniac). But it is in the passion narrative where the homiletic potential is particularly pronounced. Explicitly indebted to R.E. Brown's magisterial *Death of the Messiah*, the sections on Mark 14-15 explore the evangelist's literary skill and theological acumen in an accessible and preachable way. All in all, this commentary is a welcome addition to the *Sacra Pagina* series, and a valuable resource for both the academy and the parish.

Rather different, yet equally provocative, is *Jesus in Solidarity with His People* by their fellow Jesuit, William Reiser. As the subtitle suggests, Reiser approaches Mark not primarily as an exegete or historian, but as a theologian. Such an approach is refreshing, given the widespread scholarly tendency to treat the gospels as sources of ancient history. But it has two particular features: first, Reiser reads Mark as an Easter story from beginning to end. Second, given that the story of Jesus is also the story of God's people, reading Mark calls forth solidarity with God's poor, among whom Jesus is to be encountered in our own time and place.

What follows, then, is not a sequential commentary on the text, but a series of theological essays which deal creatively with themes from the Gospel (such as Jesus' baptism, the nature of the Kingdom, and the meaning of parables). Among these chapters are particular gems. Reiser sheds interesting light on the Christian claims for Christ's sinlessness in the light of his identification with God's people. He tackles the apparent disjunction in the gospel between Jesus the miracle-worker and Jesus the crucified by viewing Jesus as lifting the world's crucified ones down from their crosses before he reached Golgotha. And he has a brilliant chapter on paying taxes to the emperor, which highlights the specificity of the issue addressed in Mark 12 and the provocative, prophetic nature of Jesus' response.

What is the educated, financially secure and politically-free reader to make of Mark's Gospel? We must not delude ourselves (e.g. by allegorising the physical conditions of the 'poor') into identifying ourselves directly with the man with the withered hand or the woman with a haemorrhage. Yet, Reiser claims, Mark's collection of stories force us to ask whether we are outsiders or insiders to Jesus' circle. Do we want to live 'in the company of those whom societies around the world disesteem and reject' (p. 115), but who find their place in the 'Kingdom of Throwaways'?

Reiser's book is not an easy one: it forces the reader to think hard, and to reassess his or her commitment to the gospel as Mark presents it. At times, one wonders whether he is not a bit too certain about what Mark thought (and, more problematically, what the historical Jesus of Nazareth thought). Moreover, given the thematic structure of the book, one doesn't get a clear sense of the gospel as a whole. But perhaps, paradoxically, that is one of its strengths. For the form critics would part company with the literary critics over the coherence of Mark's narrative. Reiser turns this on its head, noting that the fragmentary nature of the Marcan Gospel chimes in with that sense of fragmented existence felt by many in the contemporary world. Perhaps, after all, Reiser has discovered the glue which can hold – for Mark and for us – those fragments together: belief in the presence of the risen Jesus which enables solidarity with those who, like Jesus, find themselves at the bottom of the pile.

Ian Boxall

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A Mystical Portrait of Jesus: New Perspectives on John's Gospel.
Demetrius R. Dumm OSB, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota,
2001, pp.xxi + 177. Pbk \$16.95.

This book will not help you pass your exams but you might find it helpful if you were to go on a retreat with John's Gospel as its focus. It follows a style of biblical comment that is out of fashion these days despite the title. As a Benedictine, Dom Demetrius Dumm is an inheritor of a monastic theology that we associate with Bernard of Clairvaux in which contemplation is seen as an anticipation of life in heaven. Yet while it seems anachronistic, the book is part of a broad tradition of comment on the Fourth Gospel which we associate in this country with William Temple and R.H.Lightfoot. Dumm himself has been much influenced by William Countryman and Sandra Schneiders in the United States.

Dumm states at the outset, by quoting the Pontifical Biblical Commission document of 1993, that the historical-critical method is the indispensable method for the scientific study of the meaning of ancient texts but that it is not the only method for understanding the New Testament. There is, however, nothing very scientific about this book as the author focuses on the symbolism of the Gospel. Behind the Gospel the author sees a pattern of Conversion (chapters 1 and 2) leading to Baptism (chs 3-5), Eucharist (chs 6-7), Enlightenment (chs 8-9) and Eternal Life (chs 10-11) all of which leads the reader to 'a deep mystical awareness of their union with Christ'. The body of the Gospel is then supplemented with a section on the passion and resurrection narratives which is placed at the beginning of the book, then the Last Supper Discourses (chs 14-17) and finally the Prologue which forms the book's conclusion.

The author by no means comments on every verse. His choice is rather arbitrary and often he seems to be picking on something like every tenth verse. Whether you, the reader, will take to Father Dumm's style may be determined by the following example from page 4. When Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed Jesus's feet 'The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume' (Jn 12.3). Commenting on Mary's example and the 'fragrance', Dumm writes, 'Those who imitate Jesus through a life of loving service to others will also be thought foolish, but eventually all will know that wisdom is on their side. Moreover, just as through the anointing of Jesus "the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume" (12.3), so also our anointing by Jesus fills the universe with a fragrance of divine love beyond imagining.' This is a style of biblical comment I can only call perfumed.

One way Dumm's uses symbolism is to identify individuals in the Gospel as representatives of first century Christian communities. So in the Fourth Gospel Jesus represents the whole Christian community. When Jesus converts the Samaritan woman, this is the Church converting a community of early Samaritans to Christianity who, Dumm thinks, lie behind the authorship of the Gospel (following Raymond Brown's idea of authorship). This identification is possible because "mysticism disregards the limits of time and space". Dumm is actually on safer ground when he says that the attempt to drive the parents of the man born blind (ch 9) from the synagogue does not reflect Jesus's own time but the end of the century when Jews were driving Jewish Christians out of the synagogues. In that comment there is a historical rootedness that we do not find in the speculation about the Samaritan woman.

Later Mary, the sister of Lazarus, 'the mystical and contemplative one', is said to represent the Johannine community, while Martha represents other Christian churches. The difference between these women and their representative communities is the grand theme that Dumm pursues throughout the book: religion, meaning the reduction of the Christian life to ritual observance (Martha), versus a living faith (Mary). He goes so far as to say that 'The entire Gospel of John, in my opinion, is a plea to restore Mary to her proper place in the Christian community' (p.159) which is surely an unconsidered overstatement.

So Jesus represents the Christian community when converting the Samaritan woman (p.xx), but by p.20 he represents the Johannine community, which Mary in her turn represents on p.159. When Mary the mother of Jesus is said to "represent the Church as the community that will give spiritual birth to subsequent generations of his followers" on p.28 you feel that this mystical approach to reading John's Gospel has got rather out of control.

Geoffrey Turner

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New Publications

Members of the Executive Committee of the Catholic Biblical Association have had a productive year in terms of publications:

Ian Boxall, *Revelation and Insight*. SPCK, 2002, pp.x+166, Pbk, £12.99.

This book introduces some of the complex issues involved in interpreting Revelation, asks why there have been such a diversity of readings throughout history and offers a way through the interpretative maze. Recent scholarship, reacting to popular “End of the World” readings, has tended to focus almost exclusively on John’s first century context. While not neglecting historical questions, this book also explores other ways in which the Apocalypse has been read, arguing that a rounded understanding of this liturgical text – unusual among the New Testament writings in its claim to describe visionary experience – requires us to take them more seriously.

Ian Boxall

Jeremy Corley, *Ben Sira’s Teaching on Friendship*. *Brown Judaic Studies 316*. Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University, 2002. Hbk. Pp. xv + 297. \$39.95.

How did the ancient Israelites view friendship? Our best source is the Wisdom of Ben Sira or Ecclesiasticus (ca. 180 BC). Corley’s work is the first in-depth study in English of the sage’s seven poems on friendship. These poems include warnings against false friends, encouragement to loyal friendship, and an insistence that true friendship is only possible within the context of a reverent relationship towards God. Research for this book involved studying some Hebrew manuscripts that were found hidden in the storeroom (Genizah) of an old synagogue in Cairo and are now kept at Cambridge University library.

Jeremy Corley

Adrian Graffy, *Trustworthy and True. The Gospels Beyond 2000.* Dublin, Columba Press, 2001 ISBN 1-85607-332-7

This is a companion to the author's volume on the Old Testament. In an accessible but challenging style, the insights of Catholic biblical scholarship are employed to trace the developing portrayals of Jesus in the four gospels, from the Gospel of Mark, through the shared traditions of the Synoptics and the particular contributions of Matthew and Luke, to the Fourth Gospel. The author emphasises that the gospels contain a blend of historical tradition and catechetical explanation. The four gospels are seen to reflect the evolving understanding of Jesus in the early Christian communities. There is a useful index to help the reader to track down particular gospel passages.

Adrian Graffy

Mary Mills, *Biblical Morality: Moral Perspectives in Old Testament Narratives.* Ashgate 2001, pp.vii + 270, Hbk. £45, Pbk. £16.99.

This is a book which explores moral perspectives in Old Testament stories, using characterisation, plot, time and place setting to organise this exploration, aligned with person, community and cosmos as organising concepts. It covers a range of Old Testament narratives in this investigation.

Mary Mills

Martin O'Kane, (ed.), *Borders, Boundaries and the Bible.* Continuum/Sheffield Academic Press, 2002. Pp. 360. £33.50.

The book is an edited collection of papers delivered at two conferences at Newman College as part of the *Bible and Arts* programme. The title of the first conference was *Reading the Bible: Breaching Borders, Crossing Boundaries* and the second was *Characters and Heroes of the Bible: challenging traditional assumptions*. The book reflects the interdisciplinary nature of current biblical studies, especially the interpretation of the Bible through the Arts (the book contains many plates and images). Its aim is to show how the crossing of boundaries enriches our understanding of the text. Among the contributors are: Robert Carroll who writes on the Bible as cultural literature, Mary Douglas on animal creation in Leviticus, Wendy Porter on interpreting the Bible through music, Edward Kessler on the Binding of Isaac in Judaism and Christianity, Larry Kreitzer on Holbein's the Ambassadors, John Hull on interpreting the Bible through blindness. Martin O'Kane

contributes an introduction and an illustrated essay on the *Flight into Egypt* as an icon of hope for the refugee and alien.

Martin O’Kane

Michael Prior, (ed.), *Holy Land Studies. A Multidisciplinary Journal.* Published by Continuum, in June 2002.

The launch of the new Journal co-incides with the inauguration of the Holy Land Research Project., ‘A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian and Muslim Fundamentalist Perspectives on Jerusalem, and their Implications’ (2002-2005) which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. The International Advisory Board for the Journal includes Jews, Christians and Muslims, political scientists, historians, biblical scholars, Middle East specialists, university vice-chancellors, and theologians: Edward Said, Ilan Pappé, Tim Niblock, Samih Farsoun, Dan Rabinowitz, Naseer Aruri, David Burrell, Naim Ateek, Vincent Malham, Thomas L. Thompson, Donald Wanger, Oren Yiftachel, William Dalrymple, Peter Du Brul, Thomas Mullins, Bernard Sabella, Salim Tamari, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Noam Chomsky.

Further information on the publication are available from the editor, Michael Prior, at priorm@smuc.ac.uk, or the Associate Editor, Nur Masalha, at masalhan@smuc.ac.uk.

Michael Prior

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