

## BOOK REVIEW SECTION

Jennifer M. DINES, *The Septuagint*. London: T&T Clark, 2004. xvii + 196 pages. ISBN 0-567-08464. Price \$25.95.

If one of the hallmarks of an academic discipline is the steady appearance of introductions, then Septuagint Studies has indeed come of age. The last two decades have seen a handful of publications in this genre.<sup>1</sup> With Jennifer Dines' *The Septuagint*, however, we now have an introduction that might not unfairly be termed *popular*.<sup>2</sup> To call it such is not to diminish the achievement of the author. On the contrary, Dines proves herself a capable guide to current developments in the field. But for this compact survey she set herself the task of writing not so much for the specialist as for the common reader. Knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not presupposed. There is little detailed textual analysis. Conversely, much attention is given to the historical origins of the text and attitudes towards it in antiquity, topics calculated to arrest the attention of newcomers to the discipline. But while the book is accessible, it does not popularize; few will feel intellectually short-changed. Dines draws us into the thick of contemporary scholarly debate and shows why it matters. As such, her book is a fitting addition to the T & T Clark series, *Understanding the Bible and its World*, edited by Michael Knibb, which aims to meet the needs of both introductory level students as well as a more general readership. To my mind, Dines has done this admirably well. So too, she has made an important contribution to the field by opening it up to non-specialists.

Dines starts by posing the question, "What is the Septuagint?", which leads into a discussion of the primary sources: manuscripts and editions

<sup>1</sup> M. Harl, G. Dorival and O. Munnich, *La Bible Grecque des Septante: Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* (Paris: Cerf: 1988); M. Cimosà, *Guida allo studio della bibbia greca (LXX). Storia–lingua–testi* (Roma: **add publisher**, 1995); N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las Versiones griegas de la Biblia* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Madrid: **add publisher**, 1998); K. H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); F. Siegert, *Zwischen hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament: eine Einführung in die Septuaginta*, Münsteraner Judaistische Studien, 9 (Münster: LIT 2001).

<sup>2</sup> This is only to say that it is has a wider appeal than the standard works. Here we may distinguish the recent introductions by their target markets: 1) biblical specialists (e.g. Fernández Marcos), 2) students with some degree of formal training in biblical studies (e.g. Jobes and Silva), and 3) students of biblical literature at various levels (Dines).

(ch. 1). Beginning thus allows her to introduce a key emphasis within her overall presentation, the heterogeneity of the textual evidence.<sup>3</sup> This not only raises early on the key topics of revision and recension but also the thorny question of whether there existed rival translations for some of the books. A brief survey of the earliest Jewish witnesses is welcome, although the suggestion that P. Bodmer XXIV (Ra 2110) is Jewish comes as a surprise and cries out for citation (5).<sup>4</sup> As a general criticism, I found Dines' citation of the secondary literature to be a little uneven. While at times she is very generous, elsewhere she holds back unexpectedly.<sup>5</sup> The opening chapter ends with an overview of the contents of the Septuagint, in which a thumbnail characterization is provided for each book.

The question of origins is next taken up. Following a deft treatment of Pseudo-Aristeas and Aristobulus (ch. 2), whose fictions offer us insight into the early reception of the Septuagint, Dines turns to more recent myths of origin—those of contemporary scholarship (ch. 3). The relatively large amount of space devoted to this topic (27–62) is entirely warranted. How one conceptualizes the historical relationship between a translation and its parent has immense implications for what one makes of the text, and, as it happens, there is today profound disagreement within Septuagint Studies on this very point. As Dines observes, scholars are drawing opposite conclusions from the same translations (57). One might well speak of rival theoretical frameworks: on the one hand, the so-called interlinear paradigm, which views a relationship of formal dependence between the target and its source to be typical of the Septuagint corpus; on the other, those who see the Greek text as an independent literary product.<sup>6</sup> Dines offers a

<sup>3</sup> The issue of textual complexity is revisited in ch. 4, pp. 58ff, where the rival positions of P. de Lagarde and P. Kahle are treated, and then again in ch. 5, where it is discussed against the background of the textual history of the Greek versions.

<sup>4</sup> Dines refers to the work of R. Kraft, but I could not find Ra 2110 on his list of putative Jewish manuscripts. See <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rs/rak/earlylxx/jewishpap.html>.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. her discussion of E. Tov's theory of partial revision in LXX-Jer lacks a citation (23).

<sup>6</sup> The existence of incommensurable views on fundamental issues was especially evident in the proceedings of the Panel on Modern Translations of the Septuagint, held at the Tenth Congress of the IOSCS in Oslo, 31 July 1998, where the principles underlying two major translation projects, the New English Translation of the Septuagint and La Bible d'Alexandrie were discussed by prominent members of the field. See B. A. Taylor, ed., *Tenth Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo, 1988*, (SBLSCS 51; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2001). For the interlinear paradigm, see A. Pietersma and B. Wright, "To the Reader of NETS," in A. Pietersma, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: The Psalms* (New York: **add publisher**, 2000).

relatively balanced introduction to the debate; while inclining in favour of those who see a conscious literary development in the texts, she attempts to give interlinearity its due. Her discussion of style is altogether apropos (54ff.). Here she draws upon her own work, analyses of Amos 1:3–2:6 and Genesis 1:2 which would suggest that literary features were introduced into the Greek text; to the extent that this is so, it might count against the assumption of interlinearity.<sup>7</sup> Yet while *ad hoc* studies of this sort point to an important line of research, they are hardly decisive. As Dines is undoubtedly aware (cf. ch. 6), what is required is detailed textual linguistic analysis coupled with the study of translation technique. A principled theory of origins will then attempt to account for the interrelationship of the two. It will need to accommodate *both* the sort of deliberate literary development evident in passages such as the ones discussed by Dines, *as well as* the high tolerance for unintelligibility attested elsewhere in the corpus—what Martin Flashar long ago called *Verlegenheitsübersetzungen*.<sup>8</sup>

In chapter four, Dines looks at the status of the Septuagint in antiquity, in effect resuming the narrative begun with her discussion of Pseudo-Aristeas. The lesson here is that the value (or function) of a text is by no means the same for all times and places; a point worth stressing, especially for those who remain under the spell of Aristeas. This section goes some way towards providing an historical context for the reception history of the text. Next is a survey of textual developments up to the fifth century c.e. (ch. 5). The complexity of the evidence is rightly stressed, in particular the existence of antecedents to the so-called Hexaplaric Versions, which receive a surprisingly full discussion.

The topics of language and style (by which Dines means translation technique) are taken up in the penultimate chapter (ch. 6). As the two are inextricably bound up with one another, it is right that they be treated together. Dines focuses on the all important question of linguistic interference from the source texts. To what extent is it tolerated by the translators and to what end? This leads nicely into a treatment of translation technique, where it is emphasized that the statistical analysis of linguistic features forms only part of the picture; *a priori* assumptions regarding the

<sup>7</sup> For Amos 1:3–2:6, Dines draws on her 1992 University of London dissertation, “The Septuagint of Amos: A Study in Interpretation.” For Gen 1:2, see J. Dines, “Imaging Creation: The Septuagint Translation of Genesis 1:2,” *HeyJ* 36 (1995): 439–50.

<sup>8</sup> See M. Flashar, “Exegetische Studien zum Septuagintapsalter,” *ZAW* 32 (1912): 81–116, 161–89, 241–68.

relationship between the target and its source play a constitutive role in scholarly characterization of the texts. In this regard, Dines adverts to the increasing polarization within the field between the maximalists and the minimalists, i.e. those who view a given translation as exegetically engaged with its parent and those who demur (126).<sup>9</sup>

Dines' final chapter looks at the use of the Septuagint, ancient and modern. When she turns to the topic of interpretative elements, it receives a very brief treatment, which is bound to disappoint some (131–35). While a good sense of the methodological problems inherent in this sort of undertaking is conveyed, more attention might have been given to the substantive claims made by recent exegetes and the question of how they are to be evaluated. Here too the debate between the maximalists and minimalists could have been revisited.

To conclude, this book is a highly readable foray into what is still in some respects a frontier region within biblical studies. Dines writes in a pleasing and unaffected style. The selected bibliographies will be of great assistance to students, as will the indices. Given the small size of the book, it is not surprising to find gaps in the presentation.<sup>10</sup> Thus relatively little is said about textual criticism (still the backbone of the discipline). Dines very seldom walks the reader through an analysis of the text. Yet one can hardly fault her there; space was no doubt at a premium. She has written a compact and engaging first-introduction to Septuagint Studies, one which will no doubt become a popular choice for instructors.

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<sup>9</sup> This polarization is seen in the debate occasioned by M. Rösel's article, "The Text-Critical Value of Septuagint-Genesis," *BIOSCS* 31 (1998): 62–70. Rösel views the text as documenting an early stage of exposition. R. Hendel, "On the Text-Critical Value of Septuagint Genesis: A Reply to Rösel," *BIOSCS* 32 (1999): 31–34, argues in turn that such a position is falsified by the translation technique and verbal makeup of the Greek text. See also W. P. Brown, "Reassessing the Text-Critical Value of Septuagint-Genesis 1: A Response to Martin Rösel," *ibid.*, 35–39. It should be noted that the terms "maximalist" and "minimalist" are not used by Dines as such.

<sup>10</sup> This is compensated for by the many references to other introductory works, in particular that of Karen Jobes and Moises Silva; students with some background in Greek and Hebrew will want to follow up on them.

Gilbert DAHAN et Richard GOULET (sous la direction de), *Allégorie des poètes. Allégorie des philosophes. Études sur la poétique de l'herméneutique de l'allégorie de l'Antiquité à la Réforme, Textes et Traditions*. Paris : Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 2005. 346 pages. ISBN 2-7116-1762-9. Price €28.

Les treize études regroupées dans ce beau volume sont issues d'une table ronde internationale organisée par l'Institut des traditions textuelles (FR 33 du CNRS) sous la direction de Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé. Cette table ronde avait été précédée par plusieurs journées d'étude destinées à clarifier sa problématique qui était, précisent les éditeurs (Introduction, 5), non de « dresser une histoire de l'allégorie, mais plutôt de clarifier le concept d'allégorie ou de méthode allégorique de façon à le distinguer de phénomènes littéraires voisins et à mieux en retracer l'évolution, en identifiant toutes les déformations que l'allégorie philosophique des Grecs a connues en passant dans des univers culturels différents. »

Cet objectif est atteint. Les treize contributions concernent les étapes les plus importantes de l'histoire de l'allégorie, de l'Antiquité à la Réforme : la première, « *Explicatio fabularum* : la place de l'allégorie dans l'interprétation stoïcienne de la mythologie », due à J.-B. Gourinat, montre excellemment que, dans l'interprétation des mythes théologiques traditionnels, Chrysippe et les stoïciens ont recouru à deux méthodes distinctes : l'étymologie des noms des dieux, et l'interprétation allégorique de certaines fables, récits ou représentations picturales. Dans la dernière, Ph. Büttgen fournit, dans sa contribution, « Doctrine et allégorie au début de la Réforme. Mélanchthon », une riche information sur la critique de l'allégorie par les auteurs de la Réforme, tout particulièrement par Mélanchthon.

Entre ces deux époques, nous avons des contributions sur les commentateurs d'Homère, les exégètes judéo-chrétiens, de Philon aux Pères Cappadociens en passant par Paul, Tertullien et Origène, les traditions juive et musulmane, les commentateurs médiévaux de la Bible, les alchimistes, et les poètes anglais du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Passons en revue ces contributions dont l'importance ne saurait échapper aux philoniens qui ne manqueront pas de s'intéresser aux « Aspects rhétoriques et grammaticaux de l'interprétation allégorique d'Homère », que met en relief P. Chiron tout en se limitant à l'exégèse homérique et à un auteur principal, le Ps.-Héraclite dont il complète l'analyse par quelques éléments tirés de Cornutus et du Ps.-Plutarque.

C'est bien évidemment à la stimulante contribution de R. Goulet, « Allégorisme et anti-allégorisme chez Philon d'Alexandrie », qu'une attention toute particulière sera accordée aussi bien par les lecteurs de l'Alexandrin que par les historiens de l'exégèse de la Bible. À juste titre, car, comme le rappelle d'entrée R. Goulet, « la méthode allégorique d'interprétation de la

Bible est irrémédiablement liée au nom de Philon d'Alexandrie, et la tradition chrétienne, depuis Clément et Origène, lui est largement redevable d'un mode d'interprétation qui, au terme d'une longue évolution, a donné au Moyen Age la théorie des sens multiples de l'Écriture. »

Père et modèle de l'exégèse de l'allégorèse judéo-chrétienne, Philon l'est, et ce titre ne doit pas lui être refusé. Mais, nous avertit R. Goulet, on se gardera d'oublier que « Philon n'acceptait qu'une espèce particulière d'allégorie et qu'il pouvait se montrer franchement hostile à l'égard de certaines exégèses allégoriques qu'il rapporte parfois » : une allégorie trop radicale qui rejetterait totalement et systématiquement le sens littéral, qui nierait l'historicité des personnages et des faits rapportés dans la Bible, ne saurait être acceptable pour un juif fidèle, comme l'était Philon qui, précise R. Goulet, avait adopté une « allégorie modérée », conçue comme « une réaction piétiste à l'égard d'une entreprise allégorique beaucoup plus audacieuse ». De cette entreprise allégorique, R. Goulet retrouve les vestiges dans le propre commentaire de l'Alexandrin. Aussi convient-il de ne pas le lire de façon naïve « comme s'il avait appliqué dans son Commentaire une méthode personnelle pour exposer une philosophie originale. Si, comme nous y invite notre auteur qui l'a fait, on déconstruit le commentaire philonien pour en retrouver « les composantes traditionnelles, c'est-à-dire héritées d'entreprises exégétiques antérieures et identifier ainsi les apports, les gauchissements, les corrections propres à Philon », on découvre, au terme de ce travail, un Commentaire allégorique bien identifiable, qui fascinait Philon et l'agaçait et le retouchait, « tantôt en s'y opposant, tantôt en le remettant en perspective, tantôt en s'appropriant purement et simplement ses matériaux exégétiques. »

C'est l'Écriture qui est la source première du judaïsme, et la vérité est censée résider dans ses témoignages textuels. « C'est pourquoi, estime M. Fishbane, le décodage allégorique de l'Écriture a joué un rôle primordial dans la pensée et la culture juives ». Ce qu'il montre dans les pages où il présente « L'allégorie dans la pensée, la littérature et la mentalité juives. »

Le rôle fondateur de Paul et Origène dans l'histoire de l'allégorie chrétienne est présenté par A. Le Boulluec qui s'interroge : « De Paul à Origène : continuité ou divergence ? ». Il répond à cette question en comparant l'usage de Paul à celui d'Origène. Le premier a introduit le terme (cf. Gal 4, 24) et a fourni un exemple, sans le théoriser explicitement. Le second inaugure un système d'interprétation dans lequel l'allégorie a une fonction majeure, et, à la différence de Paul, il conceptualise sa propre pratique, la dote d'une structure méthodique et la justifie par la foi et par la raison.

Tertullien ne passe pas habituellement pour avoir été un grand exégète et « souffre de la comparaison implicite ou explicite avec Origène, son cadet

d'une vingtaine d'années », rappelle J.-C. Fredouille qui nous livre sa réflexion sur les « Réflexions de Tertullien sur l'allégorie », réflexions que le premier Père de l'Église d'Occident a été conduit à faire sur l'allégorie. Tertullien dont la terminologie allégorique n'est pas fixée, s'est montré particulièrement sensible aux dangers ou aux risques de l'allégorisme pour deux raisons. La première est le contexte historique, l'allégorisme gnostique lui paraissant plus difficile à réfuter que le littéralisme de Marcion. La seconde raison de sa défiance serait à chercher dans l'héritage de sa propre culture marquée par la pensée stoïcienne.

Sous le titre « Entre *Muses* et *Logos* : Invention de l'Allégorie et naissance de l'icône (*Sophistes* et *Pères* à la fin de l'Antiquité) », Anca Vasilu propose une analyse de la relation parole-image circonscrite au territoire du discours. Sont particulièrement bien signalées dans ces pages les deux étapes que l'on repère dans le processus de basculement de l'*eikôn* ancienne en icône chrétienne.

Le Coran est une parole divine au sens strict pour les musulmans. Il est intégralement une « dictée surnaturelle ». Il est incréé, il existe de toute éternité auprès de Dieu. Aussi l'attitude première du croyant sera-t-elle de le prendre tel quel, note P. Lory qui présente « Les refus d'une exégèse allégorique du Coran », et souligne que les grands courants de l'exégèse sunnite se sont montrés très réservés, voire franchement hostiles face à l'exégèse allégorique du Texte sacré.

Au moyen âge, l'allégorie ne constitue-t-elle pas le propre de l'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible ? C'est à cette question que répond magistralement G. Dahan dans sa contribution qui a pour titre « L'allégorie dans l'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible au moyen âge ». Après avoir déterminé de quoi l'on parle quand il est question d'allégorie au moyen âge, il nous conduit à faire le constat d'une grande complexité et d'une richesse considérable dans le matériau que nous offrent les auteurs du moyen âge à propos de l'allégorie, et nous propose de voir comment ces auteurs eux-mêmes ont abordé les problèmes nés de cette richesse et de cette complexité.

Pour illustrer quelques conceptions médiévales de l'allégorie, P. Dronke a choisi deux auteurs, Jean Scot Érigène au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle et Hildegarde de Bingen au XII<sup>e</sup> dont il présente dans « Les conceptions de l'allégorie chez Jean Scot Érigène et Hildegarde de Bingen » leurs procédés respectifs lors de leur lecture allégorique et dans leur création de nouvelles allégories. L'allégorie est, selon lui, « la salle polyvalente » de ces deux auteurs, une salle « qui héberge leurs contes platonisants ou bibliques, et leurs jeux d'allégorèse, qui peuvent aller jusqu'à l'extravagance ... »

Dans « Alchimie et allégorie scripturaire au moyen âge », Barbara Obrist montre que « le recours à l'expression figurée par les auteurs de

textes alchimiques pose le problème des pratiques de transfert de sens dans la science de l'Antiquité, du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. » Au terme d'un tour d'horizon des diverses techniques de transfert de sens dans les textes alchimiques du Moyen Âge, il apparaît que loin de se réduire à « un simple procédé rhétorique destiné à illustrer tel ou tel procédé artisanal ou telle ou telle théorie relative à la production artificielle de substances corporelles », l'introduction dans l'alchimie médiévale de thèmes christiques marque un tournant dans le rapport entre art et nature, « le modèle aristotélicien et scolastique étant sinon supplanté, du moins complété ou subverti par le recours à un modèle cosmologique christo-centrique ».

Dans « Pratiques de l'allégorie dans la poésie anglaise du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle », Aude Mairey propose « quelques hypothèses de travail sur la manière dont les auteurs qui écrivent dans une langue vernaculaire, en l'occurrence l'anglais, conçoivent leurs pratiques allégoriques ». Elle replace ces auteurs à la fois « dans leur contexte littéraire et dans une perspective historiographique », et fait apparaître que « les auteurs anglais des poésies allégoriques sont marqués par les différents modes d'interprétation de la Bible ». Ils les interrogent, les réutilisent afin de produire un discours adapté à leur public. Et l'opposition souvent mise en avant « entre allégorie des poètes et allégorie des théologiens » peut être dépassée si l'étude des œuvres est replacée dans le cadre des transformations culturelles et sociales, avec lesquelles ces œuvres sont en interaction.

Cette revue des treize contributions rend bien imparfaitement compte de leur richesse. Chaque lecteur les lira en fonction de ses centres d'intérêt. Il pourra utiliser les Tables (*Index locorum ; index nominum ; index thématique et terminologique*) qui complètent ce volume soigneusement édité.

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John J. COLLINS, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 100. Leiden-Boston: E.J. Brill, 2005. viii + 231 pages. ISBN 90-04-14438-2. Price \$113.

The prolific Professor Collins here provides another sample of his prodigious productivity. From what other scholar could we expect a collection of twelve representative and important essays, all of them published since 2000? Not to mention the fact that Collins has composed four other books in



the interim! This volume is a welcome addition to his vast output. It possesses both variety and coherence.

The subjects of the articles range from wisdom literature to the rewritings of the Exodus story, from the implications of Antiochus IV's persecution to the origins of the Great Jewish Revolt. Some deal with broad and sweeping topics like the nature of anti-Semitism in antiquity and the distinction between cult and culture in Judaea during the Hellenistic period, others explore more detailed matters like chronological questions in the Third Sibyl or in *Joseph and Asenath*. But all touch, in one form or other, on the larger issue of Judaism's relation to Greek culture and to the classical world.

John Collins' long labors in this field assure that every paper is deeply informed, thoughtful, and penetrating. One will not always agree with the conclusions. The volume contains considerable polemic, but no rancor. In certain pieces Collins defends standard views against recent criticisms, in others he advances new interpretations and provocative positions. The opinions, however, are in every case acute, well-argued, and worthy of serious consideration.

A brief review cannot, of course, engage with the argumentation in detail. But a few examples might give a sense of the diverse character and significance of the contributions. Collins' chapter five on the Third Sibyl, for instance, revives the thesis that this work possesses a core component dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E., a thesis based on three references to a seventh king of Egypt. The consensus on this topic owes much to Collins' own earlier and very influential writings, but he does more than reiterate them here. The article takes on challenges to the reconstruction with new arguments. Not everyone will find plausible Collins' notion that all three passages were composed in or shortly before the reign of Ptolemy VII, forecasting (as a body) the termination of Roman dominance and the emergence of Jewish glory after considerable turbulence in that very reign. A prediction wholly at variance with facts on the ground might be acceptable for an indefinitely distant eschatological time, but far less likely as pinpointing a date in the immediate future. Collins' case (ch. 7) against the recent effort to make *Joseph and Asenath* a Christian work of late antiquity is more compelling. The issue of intermarriage resonates with Jewish rather than with Christian concerns, and allusions to conversion that omit baptism would point to an earlier date. Collins here successfully vindicates the *communis opinio*.

Elsewhere he delivers more arresting views. Chapter four explores the question of how far the Septuagint provides evidence for the currency of messianic beliefs in Second Temple Judaism, a subject of wide importance

not only for the thinking of Hellenistic Jews but also for early Christianity. Collins' careful analysis of texts like Genesis 49 and Balaam's oracles in Numbers 23–24, with translations in the LXX, makes a cogent argument that revival of the Davidic monarchy through a messianic figure played little role in the Second Temple period before the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.E. in Judaea and even later in the diaspora. In chapter six, Collins offers a highly controversial analysis of a reference in Philo, the Jewish-Hellenistic epic poet (not the philosopher), to the Aqedah. In Collins' view, Philo's inflated and obscure language associates the binding with magic spells. As he concedes, however, the transference of spells to sacrifice would be highly unusual and without parallel. The interpretation pushes the limits of plausibility.

Collins does not shrink from controversy. That makes this volume, like many of his others, especially engrossing. But it can at times lead to tensions and strains even within his own discussions. The first two essays in the collection (the opening chapter is the only one not previously published) deserve particular commendation, on several counts. Collins properly complicates the concept of "apologetic literature" and provides a nuanced interpretation that sees texts like the *Letter of Aristeas* as steering a course between Jewish self-confidence and desire to solicit approval from gentiles. In Collins' assessment, Jewish intellectuals, however steeped in Hellenic culture and whether in Judaea or the diaspora, drew a line on crucial issues, notably on idolatry and on cultic separatism. He argues quite rightly that "Hellenistic reform" (e.g. the institution of the gymnasium) created no deep fissures among Jews and that the Maccabean revolt resisted persecution, not Hellenism, a prime instance of the distinction he draws between "cult" and "culture." One can quarrel with particulars (like the notion that Antiochus Epiphanes attacked the Jews because he perceived them as misoxenic and anti-social), but the general picture is entirely reasonable. Collins, however, oddly undercuts that picture in chapter three by interpreting Artapanus' eccentric version of the Exodus story, which includes having Moses invent Egyptian animal cults, as an authentic variety of Jewish belief. What then happened to the sharp contrast of cult and culture?

Collins' eleventh essay demonstrates the inapplicability of "anti-Semitism" to pagan attitudes toward Judaism in antiquity. He correctly observes that the presumed exemplary instance of it, the "pogrom" in Alexandria in 38 C.E., was exceptional and dependent upon peculiar circumstances. Yet he nonetheless leans to the traditional view that Jews strove, at least in Alexandria, for civic privileges without having to participate in civic cults, a source of underlying animosity. If so, why would this not apply also to

Jewish communities in other Greco-Roman cities? And why would that not count as anti-Semitism? The interpretation runs into some strain here.

A comparable tension holds in Collins' final paper on "The Jewish World and the Coming of Rome." This broad survey affirms the important point that Roman policy in general upheld the rights of subordinate peoples to pursue their own ancestral laws, a policy that applied, with very few exceptions, to Jews as well. Collins points out quite significantly that even the hostile references to Rome (as Kittim) in the Dead Sea Scrolls are few and rare. Yet, in explaining the Jewish Revolt, he places emphasis on Roman oppression, setting Jews in the category of Gauls, Germans, and Britons, and citing Tacitus' notorious remark "they make a desert and call it peace." The inconsistency is left unresolved.

Failure to iron out a few rough spots detracts not at all from the value of the volume. Any publication by John Collins is a welcome event for scholars and students of Hellenistic Judaism. May we anticipate that five years or so from now we will see yet another collection of essays to ponder and profit from?

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Hindy NAJMAN, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 77. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003. xiv + 178 pages. ISBN 90-04-11542-0. Price €60, \$82.

Najman's study can be seen as a valuable contribution in both a methodological and a practical dimension since it represents not only a pioneering attempt at the formulation of a new approach to Second Temple pseudepigrapha, but more importantly a successful application of this new methodological vision to a cluster of important text associated with a significant theological development—Mosaic discourse.

In the methodological dimension, Najman's research is an attempt to challenge the still prevailing methodological consensus that Second Temple Jewish pseudepigraphy is a combination of practices "plagiarizing and tampering" with earlier texts and traditions. The first chapter of the monograph explores the methodological roots of this perspective, which is dominated by the modern conception of fraudulence and piety toward tradition. Scholars operating on these conceptual premises envision the writers of the pseudepigraphical materials as committing what we would call forgery, an activity that is not only unhistorical but also morally tainted. Najman warns

about the danger of anachronism when reading ancient texts with contemporary assumptions about authorship. In her attempt to construct a methodological alternative, she rightly points to the historical limits of the modern notion of authorship which often pays little attention to practices of construction and legitimization in the ancient world, when the written materials were often accepted, valorized, and put into circulation without any questions about the identity of their author. Scholars are becoming increasingly aware that the various concepts of authority and authorship have long and complex histories in the Second Temple period which demonstrate various models of anonymity and pseudonymity in the Bible as well as in extra-biblical texts.

Najman is aware that it is not sufficient merely to point to the anachronism of previous studies of Second Temple pseudepigraphic traditions that have often approached ancient Jewish texts with a post-Enlightenment concept of authorship. The task is more complex and challenging; that is, to demonstrate through the scarcity of the available textual witness that a different concept of authorship was indeed operative at the time of the texts' production and/or reception. Najman's research represents an attempt at such reconstruction which focuses on late Second Temple participants in Mosaic discourse, which, she argues, originated with the gradual production of Deuteronomy.

The large bulk of the study deals with this reconstruction, which includes several important steps. In the second part of the first chapter of the book, Najman offers a schematic discussion about the origination of Mosaic discourse in the Book of Deuteronomy. She sees Deuteronomy as a paradigmatic text for later instances of Mosaic discourse since the Deuteronomists have established a model for the authoritative interpretation of tradition and for its authoritative application to new circumstances. Najman shows that the scribes behind the production of Deuteronomy operated with a conception of textual authority strikingly different from our own.

The second chapter of the monograph deals with second century B.C.E. post-Deuteronomistic participants in Mosaic discourse: the Book of Jubilees and 11QTemple, texts typically classified as pseudepigrapha. The study shows that both Jubilees and 11QTemple seek to provide an interpretive context within which scriptural traditions already acknowledged as authoritative can be properly understood. The analysis demonstrates that this is neither a fraudulent attempt at replacement nor an act of impiety, but rather a pious effort to convey what is taken to be the essence of earlier traditions, an essence that the rewriters think is in danger of being missed. In other words, post-Deuteronomistic participants in Mosaic discourse, such

as Jubilees and 11QTemple, are trying to provide an interpretive context for received revealed literature, a context whose absence might engender dangerous misinterpretations.

The third chapter of the study analyses the writings of Philo of Alexandria and his participation in Mosaic discourse. In this section of her study, Najman tries to answer an important question: under what conditions was Mosaic discourse possible? Or in other words: of what transformations was Mosaic discourse capable under varying conditions? She envisions the works of Philo as a test-case for the exploration of these questions. Najman demonstrates that, despite Philo's participation in the discourse of Moses, there are two significant contrasts between him and his Palestinian counterparts. First, while Jubilees and 11QTemple subordinate the figure of Moses to the law of Moses, Philo subordinates the law of Moses to the figure of Moses. Second, whereas Jubilees and 11QTemple, following the lead of Deuteronomy, seek to weave existing traditions and their own interpretations into a single seamless whole attributed to Moses, Philo distinguishes explicitly between Mosaic scripture and his own interpretation. The study demonstrates that Philo conceives the independence of an author in a way that was new to Judaism.

Najman's reconstruction of Second Temple participants in Mosaic discourse is convincing since it allows her to demonstrate how within a family of approaches to the question of authorization, there could be both continuity and variation. Thus, the study illustrates that Mosaic discourse was sufficiently compelling and robust to survive in Hellenistic Alexandria, under conditions, and in the presence of a conception of textuality and authorship, quite different from those in Palestine.

One of the important avenues of the study is that the monograph pays especial attention to a less explored connection between the Deuteronomic elaboration of the Torah and the figure of Moses, investigating further elaboration of those dimensions of Mosaic authority in the late Second Temple period. The study thus sees Mosaic discourse as a discourse tied to a founder. Another important feature of the book is that it underlines the importance of the progressive idealization of the figure of Moses, who becomes envisioned not only as the ultimate prophet and lawgiver, but also as the exemplary human being—serving in many ways as the representative of true humanity.

On the whole, Najman's study represents an important methodological breakthrough in Second Temple studies, a field, as she has remarkably demonstrated, still in many ways dominated by antiquated notions of authorship and authority. Najman's research challenges the very vocabulary of the field of Second Temple studies, which still operates with such

ambiguous terms as “Rewritten Bible,” showing the problematic nature of such classifications which perpetuate an anachronistic conception of the text as a fixed set of claims embodied in specific language, such that tampering with that language is tantamount to interfering with an author’s property. Najman suggests that, if one is to speak of “rewriting the Bible,” one must be clear about the status of the Bible in the period in question, and also about the motivation and significance of the act of rewriting in its historical context.

Najman’s study has lasting methodological value not only for the study of the Mosaic tradition, but also for investigations of other pseudepigraphical traditions of exalted patriarchs and prophets that were flourishing in the late Second Temple period, since the pseudepigraphic reworking found in the Book of Deuteronomy and other participants in Mosaic discourse have paradigmatic value in providing models for practices of pseudonymous attribution and rewriting developed by late Second Temple authors and editors.

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Judith LIEU, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. x + 369 pages. ISBN 0-19-926289-6. Price £61, \$99.

Lieu’s *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* is a work of daunting erudition and impeccable judgment. Rather than presenting a strong and linear argument, Lieu employs a series of models or lenses to see as many facets of the issue of Christian identity formation as possible. The basic thrust of Lieu’s analysis is that the construction of Christian identity was based on Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural phenomena, multifaceted and inconsistent, robust and self-deconstructing, and almost invariably agonistic.

Individual chapters on “Text and Identity,” “History, Memory and the Invention of Tradition,” “Boundaries,” “The Grammar of Practice,” “Embodiment and Gender,” “Space and Place,” “The Christian Race,” and “The Other” treat particular arenas in which Christians, pre-Christians, or proto-Christians constructed identity. Lieu’s strategy in these chapters is resolutely constructivist and within each of the arenas under examination, she provides a sure-handed guide to the conflicting pressures of integration and difference with Greco-Roman society that emerging Christianity faced

and the tension between continuity and distinction that it faced in relation to Judaism.

Lieu's work is strong in its wide attention and in its integration of discussions of identity from beyond the study of Christianity and Judaism. Her reading of primary sources is wide and her judgment sober. Her reading of scholarship on the primary sources she treats is unpredictable and occasionally crucially out of date (e.g. nothing on Revelation since Ronald Reagan was president). In spite of her best constructivist principles and her programmatic efforts to avoid teleologically assuming the Christian identity of which she is tracking the development, Lieu retains a disproportionate, though by no means exclusive, focus on those movements that are integrated in the trajectory of orthodoxy. So elements of devotion to Christ from the demiurgical literature and the quest for gnosis, to movements like Montanism and Marcionism get the short shrift.

Lieu's interpretation of Paul displays a nascent, but critically incomplete, sense of the instability of Paul as a foundation for later Christianity, and of the inappropriateness of the category "Christian" as a simple characterization of Pauline communities. Paul's letter to Thessalonians is thus evidence of the literary productivity of "Christianity" (p. 48). More importantly this is seen in the lack of interaction with the work of Gaston, Gager, Stowers and others who do not see Paul making a radical criticism and revision of Judaism, especially in the early chapters of Romans.

Lieu's generative question, "in what form can a cohesive Christian identity be articulated and how does that identity subsist in relation to other structural identities?" (p. 7) is answered mainly in her treatment of the panoply of arenas in which Christianity was asserted as an identity, but she does not return in detail to the second half of the question to address the relation of structural identities such as Christian/soldier, Christian/slaveholder, Christian/civic councilor, Christian/guild member, Christian/patron of non-Christians, Christian/client of non-Christians.

These are effectively mere quibbles in comparison to the larger question that Lieu's work raises for the writing of history. In taking her critical distance from the insider narratives, and in her well-founded attention to variety and conflict as well as coherence within emergent Christianity, Lieu has left herself without an easily available and simply shaped story to tell. The time has passed when one could write a stirring conclusion that tilts at old verities and proclaims "variety!" with a self-conscious radicalism. Lieu does not give into these temptations, but the challenge of making her writing a compelling whole is a deep one. In concert with her attention to the individuality of specific Christian acts of identity building, the successes of her work are largely atomistic—moments of fine judgment,

insights into particular relations, and most importantly a credible, critical, and constructivist viewpoint on the materials. Judith Lieu's work is of enduring value even without a simple metanarrative and in this its value corresponds to its method.

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Andrei A. ORLOV, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 107. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005. xvii + 383 pages. ISBN 3-16-148544-0. Price €99, \$175.

In recent years, we have seen the first volume of G. W. E. Nickelsburg's major commentary on *1 Enoch* (*1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1–36; 81–108*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001). In addition, the figure of Enoch has received a considerable, some might even say a disproportionate amount of attention. In the book being reviewed, Andrei Orlov has broached the issues raised by a later stage of the development of the tradition of Enoch than *1 Enoch*, focusing on *2 Enoch* and on the figure of Metatron. Metatron is found prominently in the Merkabah mystical work commonly known as *3 Enoch* as well as throughout the Merkabah mystical tradition and in some midrashim. In *3 Enoch*, Metatron is said to be Enoch who has been transformed into the chief being of the heavenly world, becoming God's right-hand angel, as it were.

By a study of the Enoch figure going as far back as Enoch's possible origin in the Mesopotamian ante-diluvian Enmeduranki, Orlov analyses Enoch's titles and functions and their contribution to the Metatron tradition. He readily admits the complexity of Metatron's origins, yet perceives Enoch to have played a major role in them. His interest in and access to Slavonic texts makes his work especially enlightening for those of us to whom that world is available only in translation. His results also bear on the active debate among students of early Jewish mysticism about its continuity or discontinuity with preceding speculative traditions, especially prominent (as Scholem maintained) in some Qumran texts, such as the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, and some Pseudepigrapha, such as *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Ladder of Jacob*, and *2 Enoch*. It is intriguing that such speculative traditions survive in Slavonic, whose Greek originals have been lost, and whose original context in the spectrum of the Jewish pseudepigrapha of the Second Temple Period is far from self-evident.



Dr. Orlov is to be congratulated on venturing into this difficult territory and in succeeding in casting distinctive light into a number of rather tenebrous corners.

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Gerard P. LUTTIKHUIZEN, *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions*. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 58. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006. xviii + 210 pages. ISBN 90-04-14510-9. Price € 88, \$119.

In *Gnostic Revisions*, Gerard Luttikhuisen provides what were originally several separate essays on “Gnostic hermeneutics” (spanning almost twenty years) that he has revised and refashioned in order “to form a coherent monographic study” (xi). The result is a bifurcated series of case studies in how the Gnostics read biblical and Christian traditions, with the first part (chs. 2–9) focused on the interpretation of Genesis in the *Apocryphon of John* and related writings and a second part (chs. 10–13) focusing on the interpretation of early Jesus traditions, especially his passion. (Luttikhuisen also provides a disjointed appendix examining whether the baptists of Mani’s youth were Elchasaites.)

An introduction prepares the reader for the case studies by describing two of the more important texts (*Apoc. John* for the first part and *The Letter of Peter to Philip* for the second). The introduction then attempts to identify the unifying aspect of the two parts, namely a common “Gnostic mythical thought pattern” wherein “the creator God of Genesis was transmuted into an incompetent and ignorant demiurge, and the suffering and vulnerable Jesus of the early passion accounts into the purely spiritual and therefore impassible revealer of the true God” (5–6). Luttikhuisen objects to the claim that this “mythical thought pattern” originated in a Jewish environment (specifically disagreeing with B. Pearson) on the basis that the repudiation of the creator god is a fundamentally un-Jewish move. He argues instead that it is “more plausible that we are dealing with non-Jewish intellectuals with a background in Hellenistic schools of thought who evaluated biblical and other non-Gnostic traditions in the light of their own religio-philosophical world view” (10). This world view is largely a product of Middle Platonism, especially interpretations of Plato’s creation myth in the *Timaeus*. He claims that the reworking of both the biblical creation myth and the Jesus traditions according to this world view share the same impetus, namely intra-Christian debates. Luttikhuisen avers that the

Gnostic authors “under discussion were guided by Greek-Hellenistic ways of thinking *before and after* they came to believe in Jesus (as a messenger of the fully transcendent God of their philosophical tradition)” and that they argued from this perspective against other (e.g., Pauline and Johannine) Christian groups who ignorantly continued to worship the demiurgical God and value the Hebrew scriptures (12, emphasis his). In short, Luttikhuisen claims that the philosophical lens by which the “demiurgical Gnostics” (as he calls them) read the Genesis and Jesus traditions came from an originally non-Christian and a consistently non-Jewish Hellenistic religio-intellectual milieu.

For the purposes of this journal, I focus only on chapters 2–9, the first part of Luttikhuisen’s book that deals with re-reading Genesis traditions. Furthermore, most of these chapters (especially chs. 4–8) may be summarized succinctly as they consist of careful if at times pedestrian analysis of how the *Apoc. John* and other treatises re-read the Genesis account. For a few of the chapters, I provide a more detailed synopsis with my own observations.

Chapter Two examines the relationship between the narrative frame and the body of the *Apoc. John*. The narrative frame describes how a resurrected Jesus provides a special revelation to the apostle John, while the body of the treatise relates the content of that revelation, a myth of creation and redemption that reworks the Genesis account in the light of the demiurgical Gnostic myth. Luttikhuisen disagrees with those (Pearson and Michael Waldstein especially) who deduce from the absence of Christian references in the body of *Apoc. John* that it must have a Jewish origin distinct from the Christian frame. He suggests instead that the more likely origin for the body is the debates going on among Christians about the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures and that the frame did not Christianize the body but rather “added the authority of Christ” to an already Gnostic-Christian text (20). He then traces the contours of this debate from sources outside the *Apoc. John* (briefly contrasting the positive readings of the Hebrew Bible in Paul’s letters, Justin Martyr, and the Epistle of Barnabas with the negative ones in Marcion and Ptolemy’s *Letter to Flora*). While Luttikhuisen is certainly correct that the *Apoc. John* makes sense in this type of debate, his analysis does not take into account the mechanics of *Apoc. John*’s reworking of Genesis. Pearson, Waldstein and others contend that it is not just the absence of explicit Christian content in the body of the treatise that suggests its Jewish origins, but the close affinity between the *Apoc. John*’s exegetical moves and those made by Hellenistic Jewish authors. In particular, the *Apoc. John* shares with Philo a number of similar Platonizing interpretations of Genesis that when viewed in the aggregate suggest

some type of shared perspective (though not necessarily any direct relationship). Furthermore, the first treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum* ("The Poimandres"), which is clearly not a Christian text, provides a reworking of the Genesis myth that is very similar to *Apoc. John*, suggesting that pagans could employ Jewish exegetical traditions outside of a Christian context.

Chapter three provides a helpful examination of the nature of philosophical influence on the *Apoc. John*, with Luttikhuizen arguing the treatise's theology and anthropology reflect a Platonism of a decidedly Aristotelian bent. He first canvases the reception of Aristotle's teachings in the Hellenistic period, especially among Middle Platonists, and (relying explicitly on H. Dörrie) draws a division between Platonists who were more negatively disposed toward the Stagerite and those positively disposed toward him. The former perceived a more immanent First Principle that could be known *via analogiae* while the latter perceived a more transcendent First Principle that could be known only *per abstractionem* (as such, these were also more prone to mystical experiences). Luttikhuizen argues the pro-Stagerite Platonism shaped Gnostic theology, contending "Aristotle's disconnection of the supramundane God from the rule over the world provided the condition under which Gnostic myth-makers (or their pre-Gnostic forerunners in Hellenistic schools of philosophy) could contrast God with the cosmic rulers; this alteration of Plato's cosmology enabled them to speak highly of their true God, the Invisible Spirit, while at the same time uttering negative thoughts about the demiurgical God and his powers" (36). In terms of anthropology, Luttikhuizen focuses on Aristotle's distinction between the soul and the mind. He suggests that the soul-body the archontic rulers provide the human being in *Apoc. John* reflects pre-Platonized Aristotelian doctrine, since this soul appears to be the most rarefied part of the cosmic world (though *Apoc. John* does not explicitly refer to it as *ether* or the fifth element). Luttikhuizen draws a parallel between Aristotle's view that the mind (*nous*) alone is the divine element that comes into man from outside and the *Apoc. John's* claim that humanity is ultimately of divine descent. He adds that the *Apoc. John's* soteriology gives "mythical expression" to the Aristotelian belief that humanity's "*nous*-potential...is "actualized" through contact with the always actual divine *Nous*" (41–42).

Throughout this chapter Luttikhuizen asserts there is a tension between this Aristotelian form of Platonism that devalues the demiurgical god in favor of the transcendent First Principle and biblical and other Jewish traditions which (he says) could have no part in such radical dualism or in the notion that part of the human is divine essence. He provides no support for this claim and ignores any evidence to the contrary. One thinks in particular of Philo, to whom Luttikhuizen only makes references in notes

where the Alexandrian appears as one of several witnesses to Middle Platonic doctrine. However, Philo's Logos functions as a demiurgical agent that provides (albeit positively) a buffer between God and the physical universe (see *Leg.* 3.96; *Cher.* 125–127; *Her.* 230–236). On the close relationship between the human *nous* and the Divine *Nous*, see *Opif.* 146, *Spec.* 4.123 and (again) *Her.* 230–236. To be sure, Philo's ideas may not be as "radical" as those found in *Apoc. John*, but they represent manifestly similar philosophical tendencies and do so in the context of, we note, *non-Christian* biblical interpretation.

Chapter four is a re-capitulation of the mythical narrative in *Apoc. John*, concisely and clearly demonstrating how the Genesis stories are "adapted and subordinated" to the Gnostic myth. Chapter five provides a more detailed analysis of *Apoc. John's* re-writing of the creation of Adam and Eve and chapter six does the same for the retelling of the "Paradise story" (Gen 3), adding data from *The Testimony of Truth (Testim. Truth)*. In the latter part of chapter six, Luttikhuizen again takes issue with Pearson for claiming the Genesis revision in *Testim. Truth* occurs as a result of "alleged inner-Jewish rebellion." He claims (again) that the reworking comes from Gnostic Christians that are akin to Pagan detractors who argued for the inferiority of Judaism (and Christianity) from the apparent philosophical foibles of the Hebrew Bible. He also claims Pearson errs when he refers to *Testim. Truth* as a "Gnostic midrash," claiming this uniquely Jewish literary form could not serve to undermine Jewish scripture. Perhaps he is correct in both instances; however, a perusal of the exegetical concerns and multiple perspectives preserved in Philo's writings (e.g., in *QG* and *QE*) would suggest that Pearson may not be as far off as Luttikhuizen suggests.

In chapter seven Luttikhuizen deals with the issue of the scope of salvation for Gnostics by considering how *Apoc. John* and *Hypostasis of the Archons* treat Eve's Children (Gen 4 and 5). In chapter eight, these two treatises as well as the *Apocalypse of Adam* receive consideration for how they retell the story of Noah and the Flood (Gen 6). As with all of his examinations of the Gnostic texts, here Luttikhuizen is careful in his analysis and conversant with other scholars in the field. However, he does not frequently draw attention to possible similarities or differences with non-Gnostic authors (Jewish or Christian) also engaged in rewriting the biblical stories at the same time.

Whereas the previous chapters considered how Gnostics revised Genesis traditions to cast light on the evil demiurge, chapter nine focuses the supreme, ineffable God. Luttikhuizen holds that, like Philo, the Gnostics likely saw the correspondence between the appellation "The-One-Who-Is" (used frequently in Gnostic writings for the supreme god and apparently

echoing τὸ ὄν ἀεί, “that which always is” in Plato, *Timaeus* 27d–28a) and the claim by God in LXX Exod 3:14, Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὄν. In the second half of the chapter, after showing how the Gnostic supreme god expresses the ineffable qualities of the Middle Platonic First Principle, Luttikhuizen draws upon *Apoc. John* and the *Trimorphic Protennoia* to show how that transcendent Deity revealed itself to humankind.

Luttikhuizen’s goal in *Gnostic Revisions*, which he reiterates in the epilogue, is to show that the Gnostics privileged their esoteric Gnostic mythology over the biblical and non-Gnostic Christian traditions. As such, they had little compunction in criticizing and revising those traditions. He believes that when non-Gnostic readers (from Irenaeus to the present) engage the Gnostic texts, they do the reverse: they privilege the biblical traditions and devalue the Gnostic traditions. In as much as he is a careful reader of the Gnostic material, Luttikhuizen succeeds in illuminating the Gnostic myth that controls the re-writing of the biblical material. He also provides a service in explicating some of the Hellenistic philosophical influences, especially from Middle Platonism, at work on that mythology. Where Luttikhuizen comes up short is in his inchoate arguments for the non-Jewish origin of Gnostic exegesis and his unwillingness to consider abundant evidence for the opposing view. A more careful engagement of Philo and Philonic scholarship would have strengthened this insightful yet flawed work.

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Arkady KOVELMAN, *Between Alexandria and Jerusalem. The Dynamic of Jewish and Hellenistic Culture*. The Brill Reference Library of Judaism 21. Leiden: Brill, 2005. 177 pages. ISBN 90-04-14402-1. Price \$156.

This is one of the most original studies in the field of comparative Jewish exegesis that has been published in recent years. Equipped with a rare expertise in Classics, Alexandrian Judaism as well as rabbinic literature, Kovelman offers fascinating insights into the emergence and mechanism of Midrash. Since Jacob Freudenthal’s monumental *Hellenistische Studien* (1874–75) Kovelman is one of the very few scholars investigating the relationship between the Diaspora and the homeland from a distinctly Alexandrian perspective. While it is still common to regard Alexandrian Midrash as an appendix to Palestinian exegesis, which is often considered as normative even before the rabbinic period, Kovelman regularly begins his studies with a look to Egypt. Stressing the earlier date of the Alexandrian

sources and their more intimate contact with Hellenistic culture, which subsequently permeated also Palestine, Kovelman uncovers trajectories of exegesis leading from Alexandrian to rabbinic interpreters. He does not, however, simply argue for the continuity or resurfacing of particular motifs. Assuming a somewhat Hegelian dialectic, he rather points to innovations and even revolutionary changes that informed both rabbinic and Hellenistic culture. His main argument is two-fold:

- 1) Jewish literature is characterized by the same kind of literary as well as social developments as Greco-Roman culture in general.
- 2) The Alexandrian and Palestinian types of Judaism were intricately connected with each other.

Kovelman's book teems with new and interesting ideas on virtually every page. Especially central to his overall argument are chapters two and three, where he discusses the development from the genre of Scripture or epic to rabbinic literature. In chapter two he does so with regard to the interpretation of the Esther Scroll, while in chapter three he has selected various motifs, following their exegetical trajectory from Alexandria to rabbinic literature. In both chapters Kovelman stresses the revolutionary change from epic narrative to the fantastic, often somewhat frivolous stories that the rabbis associated with the Biblical material. For this reason he describes rabbinic literature by the term *spoudogeloion*, i.e. serious-comical literature.

Kovelman explains this momentous change in two different ways. In chapter two he argues that it is part of a general trend in Greco-Roman literature. He suggests that the rabbinic image of Haman as a buffoon, accusing the Jews of engaging in excessive feasting, shares the rhetoric of Horace when blaming the Greeks for precisely the same vice (48–50). Similarly, the rabbinic motif of Esther's sexual affair with Mordechai is interpreted in light of a general interest in the erotic (56–58). Rabbinic *spoudogeloion* is thus explained as part of the contemporary Greco-Roman ambience. In chapter three, on the other hand, Kovelman identifies Alexandrian Midrash as the trigger of these crucial developments in rabbinic literature. "The transition," he says, "from biblical epic to Talmudic *spoudogeloion* cannot be understood unless we recognize the place of Alexandrian exegesis in the process" (98). Kovelman suggests that Alexandrian Judaism introduced a dialectics of change. The very fact that the Alexandrians read Scripture with a view to philosophical gravity and religious seriousness suggested that without an appropriate allegorical reading the epic may be seen as a dubious, potentially ridiculous myth. Rabbinic exegetes reacted by stressing that comic dimension rather than interpreting it away.

Undoubtedly, Kovelman has identified important characteristics of rabbinic as well as Alexandrian exegesis. Taking as an example one of my favourite Biblical figures, one may summarize by saying that Philo would never have produced the kind of scandalous image of Joseph that appears in *Genesis Rabbah*. Kovelman's overall argument is thus convincing and should inspire further research in this direction. I have some queries, however, regarding the degree of generalization that is possible and the dialectical explanation provided to account for the rabbinic tendency to *spoudogeloion*. Initially, I would like to stress that not all Alexandrians were as serious as Philo. Kovelman, of course, knows that. Highly aware of the great loss of Ancient literature, he himself reconstructs a lost Alexandrian interpretation, which shares "rabbinic" frivolity (79–80). The importance of those Jewish voices that are no longer extant has to be stressed further. There was a whole school of Alexandrian Jewish exegesis that followed Aristotle and appreciated the literary as well as mythological quality of Scripture. Their interpretations were far more playful than those of Philo, who adopted Platonic gravity. It is no surprise, therefore, that Philo had very little sympathy for these fellow Jews. He reports that they in turn were unhappy with his gravity:

Can you still speak gravely of the ordinances as containing the canons of absolute truth? For you see the so-called holy books contain also myths which you regularly deride when you hear them related by others (*Conf.* 2).

The dialectical model that Kovelman has constructed is therefore too rigid. We cannot assume a homogeneous Alexandrian Judaism characterized by solemnity, which was then replaced by a "frivolous" rabbinic literature. There was more continuity between the two than appears at first sight from the extant sources, which have survived precisely because they suited the solemn tastes of the Church Fathers. It remains to be investigated whether this continuity is phenomenological only or relies on historical connections.

Three remaining chapters of the book deal with topics that are more or less related to the main argument. The last one is most relevant as it investigates the notion of *spoudogeloion* in the context of "preaching scholarly communities," which emerged in Judaism as well as the surrounding cultures during the first centuries C.E. The semi-comic character of much of rabbinic exegesis is now appreciated as a sign of blurred boundaries between popular and elitist culture. Chapters one and four are less relevant to the main theme of the book, one dealing with typology and Peshet in the *Letter of Aristeas*, the other with the rhetoric of petitions in Egyptian papyri. Regarding the *Letter of Aristeas*, Kovelman suggests an exegetical dimension of the text, which has thus far not been noticed and

which I find difficult to see even after a careful reading of the chapter. The first chapter deals with Egyptian papyri and it is only in the last paragraph that Kovelman draws a connection to rabbinic literature without, however, fully arguing the point (36–38).

The last matter brings me to my major criticism of the book: it is very poorly edited. The articles on which it is based are still visible in their original form. On p. 32, for example, Kovelman still refers to something “discussed in the first part of this *article*.” The whole manuscript should have been submitted to serious language editing, which would also have taken care of the numerous typing mistakes that now impede upon the reading. A few examples taken at random from three consecutive pages may illustrate this point: “at list” = at least (113), “these exegesis” = this exegesis (114), “Philo’s respond” = Philo’s response (116). Kovelman’s ideas are too precious to be presented in such negligent form.

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Annelie VOLGERS and Claudio ZAMAGNI (edd.), *Erotapokriseis. Early Christian Question-and-Answer Literature in Context, Biblical Exegesis and Theology 37*. Leuven-Paris-Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2004. iv + 197 pages. ISBN 90-429-1480-7. Price €30.

This modest volume contains the proceedings of a conference held in Utrecht, The Netherlands, on 13–14 October 2003. Its aim was to further the scholarly study of a form of literature that was intensively practised in the Christian tradition up to the Byzantine period, but has been relatively little studied. It was recognized that progress could only be made through a multi-disciplinary approach. So a small number of specialists were invited to make contributions based on their diverse areas of expertise. The volume contains the following ten papers:

Claudio Zamagni, “Une introduction méthodologique à la littérature patristique des Questions et Réponses: le cas d’Eusèbe de Césarée” (7–24); Christian Jacob, “Questions sur les Questions: archéologie d’une pratique intellectuelle et d’une forme discursive” (25–54); Pieter van der Horst, “Philo and the rabbis on Genesis: similar questions, different answers” (55–70); Camillo Neri, “Le dialogue entre les Athéniens et les Méliens chez Thucydide: une Ur-Form du genre des questions et réponses?” (71–79); Claudio Zamagni, “Existe-t-il une terminologie technique dans les Questions d’Eusèbe de Césarée?” (81–98); Annelie Volgers, “Ambrosiaster: persuasive powers in progress” (99–125); Roland J. Teske S.J., “Augustine of Hippo and the *Quaestiones et Responsiones* literature” (127–144); Bas ter Haar Romeny, “Question-and-answer collections



in Syriac literature" (145–163); André-Louis Rey, "Les *Erotapokriseis* dans le monde Byzantin: tradition manuscrite des textes anciens et production de nouveaux textes" (165–180); Marie-Pierre Bussières, "Conclusions: questions (encore) sans réponses" (181–189).

Taken as a whole, the papers make a solid contribution (only the contribution of Neri seems out of place). As the title of the final paper indicates, much of the research presented has a tentative and piecemeal character, because there still remains so much to do in the vast field of Patristic literature. The opening introductory paper is a little disappointing. The distinction it makes between the literary genre (i.e. works with only questions and answers) and the literary procedure (i.e. works using the rhetorical framework of the method, but with the formal characteristics) is certainly helpful. But the procedure of analysing one work and then hoping that the description of that work might supply a general definition for the literary genre seems somewhat jejune (a subsequent paper by the same author also concentrates on the same work, but gives a very solid analysis of the technical terminology used in asking questions). The second paper by Christian Jacob is more valuable because it places the procedure of question and answer in the widest possible context, showing that are three variables involved: (1) a form of discursive organization (catalogue, dialogue); (2) implied procedures of thought (memorization, interpretation); and (3) contexts of social interaction (teaching, learned conversation, research programmes).

Strictly speaking, Philo falls outside the scope of the book, but is of course the most important predecessor of this kind of literature in the Jewish tradition. One paper is largely devoted to him. Pieter van der Horst engages in a comparative exercise involving Philo and the 5<sup>th</sup> century rabbis recorded in *Genesis Rabbah*. He notes that, although the rabbis do not use the formal method of question-and-answer, the questions they ask of scripture are the same ones that Philo poses in his *Quaestiones*. The shared assumption is that scripture is a cryptic document, the deeper meaning of which has to be teased out. We note further that Claudio Zamagni in his opening paper assumes that Eusebius stood under the influence of Philo when he, as first in the Christian tradition (as far as we know), adopted the genre of the question-and-answer (7–8). This is contested by Bas ter Haar Romeny in his excellent survey of question-and-answer collections in Syriac literature arguing that, although Eusebius certainly knows about Philo's two works (they were present in the library at Caesarea), he did not need Philo's example to develop his own work, since the genre was well-known in the schools and had recently been used by Eusebius' chief opponent Porphyry (153).

The study under review will not serve well as an introduction to the genre and method of the question-and-answer. For that purpose the focus is too specialized, with most of the contributors assuming quite a bit of knowledge on the subject. But it is useful for scholars who wish to take stock of the latest developments in this area. It also gives copious references to recent scholarly literature, which on this topic is rather scattered (see especially the lengthy notes of Zamagni's introductory essay). It is perhaps a pity that this literature is not assembled in a separate bibliography, but it is certainly there for the reader who is prepared to do some spade work.

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