

STUDIA ANTIQUA

A STUDENT JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY
OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2
FALL 2009

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

STUDIA ANTIQUA

A STUDENT JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

Editor in Chief
Angela Wagner

Faculty Advisor
Michael D. Rhodes

SANE Faculty Advisor
Dana M. Pike

Faculty Review Board
Glen Cooper
Richard D. Draper
Nick Frederick
Mark Johnson
Jared W. Ludlow
Dana M. Pike
Stephen D. Ricks
Thomas A. Wayment
Miranda Wilcox

SANE Committee
Jonathan Alldredge
Karlie Alldredge
Daniel Becerra
Josh Bodine
Audrey Brower
Audrey Crandall
Alan Taylor Farnes
David Smith
Stephen Whitaker

Printed by Brigham Young University Print Services, December 2009

ISSN: 1540-8787

Studia Antiqua is a semiannual student journal dedicated to publishing the research of graduate and undergraduate students from all disciplines of ancient studies. The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Students of the Ancient Near East, Brigham Young University, or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The continued publication of *Studia Antiqua* is made possible through an internship provided by the BYU Religious Studies Center. Additional financial contributions were made to this volume by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Students of the Ancient Near East, and Classics.

Studia Antiqua accepts manuscripts for publication year-round. Manuscripts should be sent to studia_antiqua@byu.edu, and should include a title page with the author's name, major, and year in school. For submission guidelines and other valuable resources, please visit studiaantiqua.byu.edu.

STUDIA ANTIQUA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

FALL 2009

Editor's Preface	ii
Joseph Petramalo Heresy and Orthodoxy	i
B. Stephen Kerr Finding Exodus: An Exegesis of Exodus 1:8-21	13
Michael Biggerstaff The Anointing of Aaron: The Process by Which He Became Holier than His Sons	33
Justin Soderquist They Became Fools: A Pauline Description of Apostasy in Israel and its Prescriptive Implications for both Jews and Gentiles in Romans 1:18-25	49
Christopher J. Dawe Joyful Martyr? A Brief Look at Montanistic Interpolations in Ignatius' Epistle to the Romans	61
Daniel Becerra Johannine and Gentile Self-Revelatory Passages	69
Erik Yingling Clement of Alexandria's Doctrine of Deification	93
Stephen Whitaker Asteria and Epitogia: Apocalypses, Laic Veneration, and the Formation of Mariology in Constantinople	101
Rachel Wise Riddling the Rood: The Paradox of Suffering and Glory in the Ruthwell Cross	109

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Religious Studies Center and Students of the Ancient Near East are proud to submit this issue of *Studia Antiqua*. It is a tribute to the students and facilities at Brigham Young University that a journal of this quality has continued, largely uninterrupted, for the past seven years. It carries on out of a sense of academic malaise, or discontent with present ideas about history and an itching to advance them. Every student author has done just what they ought: thoughtfully confronted historical issues and recorded their findings. In essence, this is the reason for the journal's longevity: so long as students wish to confront history, they will require an adequate venue—which *Studia Antiqua* provides. That is why I wish to thank not only the motivated students who contribute to the quality of each publication, but also the Religious Studies Center, which oversees the journal, and the several faculty members who review every piece that makes it to publication.

The new segment that was introduced in the last issue, namely an article to familiarize nonspecialist readers with important aspects of the history of the ancient world, continues in this edition with Joseph Petramalo's survey of the development of heresy and orthodoxy. If you've reviewed a historical topic, please consider submitting it.

Because of its close ties with the Ancient Near Eastern Studies program, the focus of *Studia Antiqua* has remained in and around the ancient Near East. However, it has long been the journal's ambition to provide a forum for research related to all ancient cultures, from Siberia to Mesoamerica. I am therefore very excited to present in this issue a piece on the Anglo-Saxon Ruthwell Cross. You'll find it on page 97. We readily encourage submissions dealing with other cultures. If you have some research you have been doing on an ancient culture and you would like to see it in print, please do not hesitate to submit it.

This issue would not have been possible without a number of individuals. I wish to thank Michael D. Rhodes for his continuing expertise, as well as Glen Cooper, Richard D. Draper, Nick Frederick, Mark Johnson, Jared W. Ludlow, Dana M. Pike, Stephen D. Ricks, Thomas A. Wayment, and Miranda Wilcox, who all contributed time to reviewing submissions and providing feedback to students. The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship has contributed generously to the publication of this journal, as have the Students of the Ancient Near East and Ancient Near Eastern Studies. I wish to especially thank Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Devan Jensen, Joany Pinegar and the Religious Studies Center, which provides the internship that allows us the time necessary to make the journal presentable.

Angela B. Wagner
Editor in Chief, *Studia Antiqua*

HERESY AND ORTHODOXY

JOSEPH PETRAMALO

There has been much written on the topic of heresy and orthodoxy within the scholarly community.¹ This discussion began with the work of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*² in the 1930s and has continued to the present. Because this topic has evolved and changed due to scholarship, these concepts are not viewed in the same light as they were in the 1930s. But the topic has further to go as it is analyzed and the theories are tested. As we begin our discussion, there are certain points that must be remembered and taken into consideration in regard to defining heresy and orthodoxy. According to the great French scholar Le Boulluec, the notions of heresy and orthodoxy are constructed systems and thus are not absolute.³ He argues that we must move away from the circle of value judgments implied by the word *heresy*. If we do not detach ourselves, we are unable to approach the text and subject objectively. This is an important part of analyzing the information in front of us. The purpose of this paper will be to first look at Bauer and the effect of his work on the scholarly community. Next I will look at the origin and usage of the Greek word ἁίρεσις in the contexts in which it appears. It can be found in a number of different early sources, both canonical and

1. For articles that deal with the further scholarship, see Simon Marcel, "From Greek Hairees to Christian Heresy"; Michael Desjardines, "Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of ἁίρεσις in the Early Christian Era"; Le Boulluec, *La Notion D'Heresie*; Hans Dieter Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity"; James McCue, "Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians"; Heinrich von Staden, "ἁίρεσις and Heresy: the Case of the haireseis iatrikai"; Daniel Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's 'Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity' During the Last Decade"; as well as a number of prominent books that touch on the topic as well.

2. Bauer's book was probably the single most influential work written on the topic of orthodoxy and heresy. He sets up the later discussion that would follow. While no one has proved Bauer's thesis wrong, many scholars have shown some aspects to be weak and incorrect.

3. Alain Le Boulluec, *La Notion D'Heresie dans la littérature grecque IIe-IIIe siècles* (Paris: Études augustinienes, 1985).

2 PETRAMALO: HERESY AND ORTHODOXY

noncanonical. I will focus mainly on the canonical sources and then continue with what was written by the early heresiologists in the second and third centuries C.E. My intent is to look at the way in which the word developed into its latter use as a polemic term against opposing groups. I will look at the negative rhetoric employed to force separation and then follow with the development of the concepts of orthodoxy and heresy as they came to be known.

If we are to continue our discussion and move forward, we must first look at some of the major assumptions which have been proposed previously. The history of heresy was outlined by Bauer in the following way:

Even after the death of the disciples the gospel branches out further. But now obstacles to it spring up within Christianity itself. The devil cannot resist sowing weeds in the divine wheatfield.... These Christians blinded by him abandon the true doctrine. This development takes place in the following sequence: unbelief (Unglaube), right belief (Rechtglaube), wrong belief (Irrglaube). There is scarcely the faintest notion anywhere that unbelief might be changed directly into what the church calls false belief. No, where there is heresy, orthodoxy must have preceded.⁴

James McCue identifies what he thinks are the two main theses of Bauer. Both of these are critical for our discussion. The first thesis was, "From the outset Christianity was a congeries of different groups differing profoundly in their interpretations of Jesus and in their history of religious provenance."⁵ The second thesis was, "Quantitatively the predominant form of Christianity in most places down to the end of the second century was heresy rather than orthodoxy."⁶ This last thesis is interesting considering Bauer's history of heresy mentioned above.

There is one difficult part to the second half of Bauer's statement. The question becomes when did the falling away start? Bauer's second thesis simply says that heresy existed to the end of the second century. But if we are to take Bauer's original thesis to be correct and that correct belief (Rechtglaube) must have existed before wrong belief (Irrglaube), or in other words the heresy that was so prevalent, then when did it begin? This is something that must be answered because Bauer brings up both, but they seem to contradict one another. Here I think that Bauer's thesis is incorrect. His theses contradict one another because both cannot be true. Bauer is incorrect in his assumption that unbelief (Unglaube) preceded right belief (Rechtglaube). This would assume that the earliest Christian converts would have been pagan in belief. But this obviously is not correct since all of the first Christian converts were in fact Jews. Paul and the early apostles preached first in Palestine. Jesus himself commanded that they first preach to the Jews, and it was not until the mid-first century that Peter would receive a vision (Acts 10) which would allow the preaching to spread to the non-Jewish nations as well. Thus, in his thesis Bauer could have

4. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. R.A. Kraft and G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Sigler Press, 1996), xxii.

5. McCue, "Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians," 119.

6. McCue, "Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians," 119.

argued that it was incorrect belief which was the beginning of the belief cycle, but to argue unbelief would be to equate Judaism with Paganism. For most this would no doubt be too far a stretch.

Thus Bauer's thesis needs to be reevaluated taking into consideration the early Christian converts and their religious views. A more correct thesis should perhaps read (1) incorrect belief, (2) right belief, (3) wrong belief. While the first portion of his thesis is incorrect, the second portion is not. While orthodoxy must have preceded heresy, the orthodoxy which preceded it was not what would later appear as the predominant form of "orthodoxy." Instead the true orthodoxy was that which was preached by the early apostles in the first century, and the "orthodoxy" of the second and third centuries was a heresy itself. We can definitely see a difference in teachings between the first century and what would follow in the continuing centuries as Christianity continued to develop. But because the church needed substantiation for its claim, it had to draw on authorization from the early apostles such as Peter and Paul. We can see a similar trend in the heterodox offshoots as well. They arguably contain teachings and authority from the apostolic branch. This is significant because both groups are vying for power. Bauer spends considerable time looking at this by showing the influence of Rome on the orthodox and heretical groups during the second and third centuries. I will look further into this topic when I discuss the early Christian writers.

The first place we must turn to as we begin to look at the word *heresy* is the New Testament. This provides the beginning of the change of the word that would later be evident in the writings of the Apostolic and later Apologetic Fathers. My design is to look at the word and its development within early Christianity. I will first look at the origin of the word αἵρεσις in Greek, and then analyze its development within the writings of the New Testament and other Christian documents.

Origin and Usage

To begin, the original meaning and usage of the Greek word αἵρεσις⁷ appeared in many forms. They were (a) "seizure" of a city, (b) "choice" with no negative intention but simply a general choice, and (c) "resolve."⁸ Each of these appears in a variety of texts, but the one that I would like to focus my attention on for the purpose of this paper is "choice." This was first used by the Hellenes in the philosophical sense to mean a "doctrine" or "school." In antiquity one would choose a particular αἵρεσις to follow. A good example of this is the descriptions of philosophical schools as αἵρεσις (Polyb., V, 93, 8).⁹ To show this view, Simon Marcel uses Sextus Empiricus' view: "To profess a αἵρεσις, a coherent and articulated doctrine founded on principles grounded in reason,

7. For a discussion on the different meanings of the word αἵρεσις and their usages both in the New Testament as well as Greek and Christian literature, see *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT).

8. TDNT, 180–81.

9. TDNT, 182.

4 PETRAMALO: HERESY AND ORTHODOXY

demonstrated that one was intellectually alert, fitted for reflection and philosophical discussion.”¹⁰ This was the understanding that the word carried during this period. This term was carried proudly by individuals because it showed intellectual or philosophical learning and an association with a formalized group. Von Staden defines the word as meaning “a group of people perceived to have a clear doctrinal identity.”¹¹ Von Staden has traced the development of the word back to the Greek medical profession, where it began in the third century B.C.E. He states,

Greek medicine is the more significant early nurturing ground for αἵρεσις as a doctrinal group designation. A group with fairly coherent and distinctive theories with an acknowledged founder..., and with publicly identifiable leaders who articulate (a) their rejection of rival theories through theoretically founded polemics, as well as (b) their own systematic alternatives, would qualify as a αἵρεσις.¹²

Thus the term was widely used within the intellectual community throughout the Mediterranean. While it was widely known and used, it did not have the negative connotations that would later be associated with the term. But as I will show momentarily, this traditional understanding of the word and its concept would change dramatically with the coming of the early Christian movement. However, it must be remembered that the word *heresy* had a much earlier history than orthodoxy. Thus, heresy was not a result of orthodoxy, but instead orthodoxy was a direct result of heresy. This term would be used in a neutral sense until the beginning of its change in the late part of the first century and into the second. This would happen within Christianity as well as Rabbinic Judaism. While the change in Christianity would happen much earlier, the effect within both religions would be total.

The New Testament¹³

While many scholars argue that the word αἵρεσις does not really begin to develop until the second century with Justin Martyr, I would argue against this theory and side with I. Howard Marshall, who argued that “Paul and the Evangelists combated false teachings and that the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy already existed near the end of the first century.”¹⁴ In his excellent work *La Notion D’Heresie*,¹⁵ Le Boulluec argues that Justin was the first of the heresiologists. I am not countering Le Boulluec’s theory by arguing that Paul should be considered the first heresiologist, only that the development

10. Marcel, “From Greek αἵρεσις,” 111.

11. Von Staden, “αἵρεσις” 76.

12. Von Staden, “αἵρεσις,” 80–81.

13. All scriptural references to the New Testament here will come from the Nestle-Aland *Greek New Testament* unless specifically noted otherwise.

14. Daniel J. Harrington, “The Reception of Walter Bauer’s Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity During the Last Decade,” *HTR* 73, nos. 1/2 (1980): 292.

15. Le Boulluec, *La Notion D’Heresie*.

of αἵρεσις begins with Paul. I will argue this on the premise that the word is already developing during the later part of the first century and is carrying the polemic which would later be so characteristic of the word.¹⁶ The word αἵρεσις in one form or another is used in the New Testament ten different times. I would like to look at each of them to show that the word had already begun developing during the apostolic age and not later. While I wish to show this development, it is not meant to be comprehensive or to show that the development was exclusive to the first century but simply to demonstrate that the development began not in the second century but the first.

To begin this discussion I would like to first look at the Book of Acts. Luke wrote this book probably sometime in the early 60s C.E.¹⁷ Here we find six references in the Book of Acts. Each time it is translated as “party” or “sect.” The references in 5:17, 15:5, and 26:5 all seem to be used in the neutral tone, without any polemic feeling, while those found in 24:5, 14 and 28:22 all seem to carry the negative tone. The most obvious of them is 24:15, as it “demands the translation of a non-legitimate sect or cult.”¹⁸ It is interesting to note that there is not a consistent meaning carried throughout this text. Instead, the author is implying with one word two different meanings within the same text. From this one example it is obvious that both meanings are already being used.

Paul

The next example appears in 1 Corinthians 11:19. The letter to the Corinthians was no doubt written prior to the Acts of the Apostles. Gordon Fee comments, “the letter may be safely dated in the Spring, *ca.* 53–55 C.E.”¹⁹ This is significant because Paul is, in all probability, the precedent for the use

16. Bauer in his *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianities* comments, “As we turn to our task, the New Testament seems to be both too unproductive and too much disputed to be able to serve as a point of departure. The majority of its anti-heretical writings cannot be arranged with confidence either chronologically or geographically; nor can the more precise circumstances of their origin be determined with sufficient precision” (xxv). While this is somewhat true, much has been learned in the last century since the appearance of Bauer’s work. New Testament scholarship has developed and we know much more now than we did then. However, taking Bauer’s argument into consideration as well as new scholarship, a good analysis of the information in the New Testament can provide us with more information on an important part of the discussion of heresy. While chronology in the New Testament is disputed, as Bauer said, there is still much that can be learned without relying on the factor of dating.

17. Johannes Munck argues for this dating in his commentary on *The Acts of the Apostles* The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1973). He first looks at the reasons for a late dating after the 70s with the destruction of Jerusalem, but he argues that the reasons for a late dating do not have proof and instead shows reasons why it would require a date over a decade before. F. F. Bruce agrees with Munck in his commentary on Acts by also arguing that the reader must look closely at the ending of the Book of Acts because this provides significant material that would lead to an earlier dating probably around 61 C.E.

18. Michel Desjardins, “Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of αἵρεσις in the Early Christian Era,” *SecCent* 8 (1991): 74.

19. Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* NIGTC (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1987), 15.

6 PETRAMALO: HERESY AND ORTHODOXY

of this word. Luke, as well as Peter, probably picked up the usage of the word from Paul. However, because of Luke's background in Antioch as a gentile and his medical profession, he may have come into contact with it separate of Paul. Obviously there is no way to confirm such a hypothesis, I simply state it to show the possibility. Where in the preceding verses Paul is addressing the Corinthian saints and is chastising them in regards to divisions among the saints, he follows with "For there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized."²⁰ The theological message that Paul implies here is interesting. He is telling the people that there is a need for "factions"²¹ or "heresies" in order for the truth to be recognized. According to Paul, there must be falsehoods in order to recognize the truth. Thus, different forms of heresy are a needed commodity within theology.

Next, Paul in his epistle to the Galatians²² makes reference to numerous "works of the flesh" (5:19–20). These are things which many were struggling with, and among this numerical list is the word *dissension*. This is the term he uses to show the polemics within the membership of the church during this period. The last reference that Paul makes using the word αἵρεσις is in Titus 3:10. In verse 10, Paul is making stipulations of disfellowship by saying the saints should give others ample time to repent and change, but if that does not happen, then they should no longer associate themselves with those who are "factious." Each term Paul uses carries a polemic and negative tone. Not once does he use it in the earlier Greek sense, but instead always uses it with the later developed meaning.

According to Bauer, one thing that must be remembered is that Paul was generally lenient to those committing heresies. Dieter Betz considers Bauer's statement on Paul's own view of orthodoxy, "Paul tolerates other forms of Christianity and neither rejects nor condemns them as heretical, even if he considers them to be inadequate."²³ This is because "[Paul] considered different theological thoughts as being 'legitimate varieties of the new religion.'"²⁴ While Betz argues that Bauer overlooked some important information when coming to this conclusion, it may be partially true. This is because he (Paul) saw the gospel as something evolving and constantly changing due to continuing rev-

20. Nestle-Aland, *Greek-English New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981), 459.

21. The term αἵρεσις in the Nestle-Aland translation uses the word *factions*, whereas the KJV uses the word *heresies* for its translation.

22. F.F. Bruce in his commentary *The Epistle to the Galatians* NIGTC (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982) argues that the dating of Galatians is the most difficult of any of the Pauline letters. He takes into consideration much of the controversy that has lead scholarship in the debate, but he feels the evidence does not support what many argue. While he does not give a precise date for the authorship of this epistle because of the extreme difficulty of placing it with confidence, he does argue that it is the earliest of the Pauline epistles. He puts it at least fifteen years after the conversion of Paul but before his other four main epistles to the members of the church.

23. Hans Dieter Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity," *Interpretation* 19 (1965): 308.

24. Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity," 308.

elation. If we look back at McCue's two main theses, which he identifies from Bauer's work, the second helps us to see the perspective that Paul probably had. He was just one of many "parties" or "sects." He obviously counted himself as a ἁρεσις in Acts 26:5. This he says without a negative tone. He saw the Christian sect as another among many. Thus Paul is implying the original rabbinic meaning, which held the same meaning employed by the Greek philosophers, at least until the late second century. This seems to have been the prevailing feeling among the Jews during this period. We find another example of the same usage within the writings of Josephus: "Indeed, Josephus sees all the Jewish religious schools in terms of the Greek philosophical schools, the Essenes, Sadducees and Pharisees."²⁵ From this we get the picture that many of them are carrying the Hellenistic view. The philosophical view still seemed to coexist for a period even after the Christians had picked it up and began deploying it in the negative sense. Thus, there is not an immediate change but a gradual one with both terms being used. Often this would occur by the same author in the same text. A good example of this occurring is Luke as shown above. Paul held this view because he saw the gospel as something evolving and constantly changing due to continuing revelation.

While each of these examples I have presented here is not meant to show Paul as the first heresiologist, I use it simply to show how heresy was an issue that existed in the first century and that Paul was aware of the terminology and was using it himself. It would be picked up later by the Christian apologetic writers in the second and third centuries C.E.

Peter

Only one reference to the word ἁρεσις can be found elsewhere. It is found within the writings of Peter in the New Testament.²⁶ Here, in 2 Peter 2:1, Peter draws a direct correlation between false prophets, false teachings, and "destructive heresies." One cannot miss the negative sense that this verse conveys. Peter is using the same terminology Paul uses by showing the negativity of all those that falsify the truth. Because of the lack of material in Peter, we do not get the sense of the usage as we do in Paul. One of the main reasons is because Peter would not have had the same depth of philosophy and politics as Paul had. Peter was a fisherman and did not have the educated upbringing that Paul had under Gamaliel. Thus Paul makes references that show his educated

25. *TDNT*, 181.

26. When discussing 2 Peter, we come across a number of difficulties that must be pointed out here because of where it leads our discussion. The first is because the dating for the book by scholars has been placed in almost every decade from 60–140 C.E. with the exception of 70–80. However, Richard Bauckham argues that it can be placed plausibly about 80–90 C.E. This brings up the next problem with 2 Peter. This text is considered to be pseudonymous. Because of this, the book can't be attributed to Peter himself but likely someone very familiar with the Peterine teachings. Taking this into consideration, I will discuss it as if Peter was the author. While this is not the case, he would have been the major influence on the writings attributed to him, and the book would provide us with a good basis of his teachings, whether or not he wrote it himself.

legal and political background. But even with the lack of references in Peter's writings, we can still assume that he was using it, although probably only in the negative feeling which is evident in 2 Peter 2:1.

Early Christian Writers

After looking at the development of the word in the New Testament and showing the significance of its usage, I will now turn to the early Christian writers for the continuation of the development of the word ἁίρεσις.²⁷ Following the writings of the apostles in the first century C.E., the next major players to begin using the term were Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and some of the Gnostic leaders in the mid to late second century. Much of what was written between these heterodox and orthodox leaders was in retaliation to one another's ideas. During this time, there was a contest for predominance that is evident in their writings. Their writings are very important because much that was written on the topic survived, and we are able to see the development much more clearly than those few references found in the New Testament. Much of Justin's *Apology* and Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* were focused on this subject. I will look at these to show the continuation of the development of ἁίρεσις. Because of the extensiveness of the topic of Egyptian Christianity and that of Gnostic origin, I will not be able to discuss these here. This subject would require far too much space to be look at in depth. However, later I will touch lightly on the subject to show how the development was so influential on the later division of ideas and groups that developed, as well as the significance of the outcome pertaining to the latter development of Christianity.

Justin Martyr

The first major Christian figure to begin using the term ἁίρεσις in the developed polemic form was Justin during the mid second century.²⁸ While he uses the term extensively in his major work *Apology*, as well as others, my focus of this part will not be to look at each reference, but instead to look at the goals and outcome of his usage. He is the first that goes through systematically and identifies its different manifestations. Le Boulluec argues that Justin invented the term *heresy*, but this is something that I would disagree with. As I have just shown, heresy was already a developed idea and was simply used and expanded by Justin, and later Irenaeus. One of the main ways in which Justin was able

27. For an excellent discussion and reader on Christian writings and texts in the first few centuries that deal with the heretics, see Hultgren and Haggmark, *The Earliest Christian Heretics: Readings from their Opponents* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

28. Here my focus is to simply give a brief sample of the usage as well as the purpose for it. My section on Irenaeus will be the same. To do a comprehensive look at Justin's and Irenaeus' work against the "heretics" would require more than a book. Because of the extensiveness of the topic, I will only focus on the major issues. My purpose is to give the reader a good sampling so that the significance of the later portions will be understood. Also, after Justin began deploying the term negatively, others would pick it up and use it against the heretics. Many examples of this survive, one being Polycarp when he went so far as to use the expression "firstborn of Satan" (*Phil.* 7.1).

to categorize this was by associating different Christian groups with the many various philosophical schools. Thus each group had a distinct teaching that they were associated with. Of course he uses this in a polemical way. But the main theological reason for Justin making the divisions and categorizing everything was due to the fact that he wanted to show the perfection of the church and thereby explained away the many different factions and diverse groups that existed during his time. Another way in which he uses the term αἵρεσις is to show sects who have wrongly claimed the Christian name. He argues that such people are only “so-called Christians” (*Dial.* 80.3). Many have incorrect beliefs that are shown to be contrary to the true teachings of Jesus Christ. Similar to this, he shows the digression and split made by the “heretics,” which was a decline from a distinct and primitive truth. Because of this agenda in the usage of the word, it begins to take on another meaning. He uses it frequently when he attacks the other prominent groups.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus began his work a little after Justin and was influenced greatly by him. Irenaeus took what Justin had worked on and pushed it further. He began to develop a number of ideas that Justin had used, and deployed them against the other Christian groups. One of the main things Irenaeus does in his work *Against Heresies* is to link heresy with paganism and philosophical sophistry.²⁹ He builds on Justin’s idea that only they had the true teachings of Christ, which come through the scriptures. Thus he linked the simplicity of the scriptures with truth and naturally would thus exclude those groups with philosophical teachings. He showed that because the other groups were constantly separating and fighting within themselves, they must be false, since the true church was distinguished by its unity both in doctrine and scriptures. He used rhetoric to accomplish this goal.³⁰ By arguing the need for the unity of the scriptures and the church, he begins to further develop the negative rhetoric of separation.

Another way in which he furthers the separation was by applying pagan terms and categories to describe the other groups of Christians. Of course this would have the effect that Irenaeus desired and completed the separation that followed. He argued the correctness of the Church by showing apostolic succession and tradition. He uses the Book of Acts in *Adv. Haer.* 3.12.1–7 to argue that the apostles never taught Gnostic tradition, contrary to the Gnostics’ claims. Most of Irenaeus’ arguments were against the ever-expanding Gnostics

29. It is interesting to note that while Justin and Irenaeus both argue that philosophy was used strictly by the “heretics.” However, it is interesting to note that both Justin and Irenaeus use rhetoric and philosophy to combat the heretics. Clement of Alexandria later argued that you had to be careful with the distinction between philosophy and heresy because they were very different. In fact the need to be careful was due to the fact that philosophy was the weapon which the church had to use to fight against heresy.

30. For an excellent article that deals with the rhetoric of Irenaeus, see Thomas Ferguson, “The Rule of Truth and Irenaeus’ Rhetoric in Book 1 of ‘Against Heresies,’” *VC* 55 (2001): 356–375.

and the offshoots of Valentinian and Marcionite beliefs. In PHEME PERKINS'S words, "[Ireneaus] accuses the Gnostic teachers of patching together a new garment out of the useless old rags of Greek philosophical speculation."³¹ This is interesting because he sees nothing new about Gnostic belief and takes special precautions to abstaining from correlating it with Christianity in any way. Here is a typical form of rhetoric that Ireneaus used frequently to disassociate the church with the "heretics." Ireneaus continues by claiming that the Gnostic teachings violate the "rule of faith" (*Adv. Haer.* 1.10.1–2). Because of this violation there was the need to disassociate themselves from these other groups that they considered to be false. As mentioned above, his main focus in doing so was to marginalize the other groups and using rhetoric against them.

Development of Concepts Orthodoxy and Heresy

Because of the significant development of negative rhetoric used by Paul and the apostles, as well as Justin and Irenaeus, the concepts of orthodoxy and heresy became very pronounced. No longer was there the toleration of ideas that we see from Paul in the first century, but a total and complete disassociation with anyone that was not willing to align their views with the church's. Bauer argues that the church used the wealth and power of Rome to secure itself by doing just this. This is interesting however because heretics were "the primary and dominant proponents of Christianity in several regions. Ironically, the 'heretics' often were the 'orthodox' insofar as they established themselves first in the communities, became the majority, and were seen to hold and transmit the correct belief."³² To begin this discussion I think it wise to define a heretic. Segal argues that "a heretic is someone who began in the parent group but who has put himself beyond the pale with respect to some canon of orthodoxy."³³ Thus while in many parts, and according to Bauer, in all parts, the latter "orthodoxy" was in fact the minority. While considering this, it is interesting to note Kurt Rudolph's description of Gnosticism as "a Hellenistic garment over an oriental-Jewish body, a politically and culturally marginal movement on the borderline between the East and Rome."³⁴ Thus, Gnosticism was part Hellenist philosophy and part Jewish in nature. It is interesting though that it was such an attraction to so many because of its ties between the old and the new. Because of the success that the Gnostic Christians were seeing, Irenaeus came out in his *Against Heresies* and speaks so condemningly of them. They only taught, in his eyes, false doctrine but also were a major threat to the church.

As stated above, the division of ideas became very pronounced. I attempted to outline many of these divisions with Justin and Irenaeus. These categorizations were important in the development of the groups. While the consider-

31. PHEME PERKINS, *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 179; see also Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 2.14.1–6.

32. Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 68.

33. As quoted in Desjardines, "Bauer and Beyond," 67.

34. As quoted in Franzmann, "Taking the Heretics Seriously," 125.

ation has always gone to the winning group, i.e., the latter Christian Church, Franzmann makes an excellent point in regards to the Gnostics:

The problem then for a fair hearing for the Gnostics and an honest historical view of earliest Christianity is that the effort of any religious group towards self-definition and the clear statement of identity occurs most intensely in those times of institutionalization when the focus is on what divides rather than unites groups, when the processes of defining and maintaining orthodoxy and orthopraxis are almost an obsession.³⁵

Regardless of this, the division took place. Harrington argues, “Orthodox and heretical groups used similar tactics; e.g., repeating false rumors, not recognizing false believers as fellow believers, emphasizing their weaknesses and inadequacies, and supporting or even falsifying their views.”³⁶ Were Justin and Irenaeus very different from the Gnostic and other “minority” groups? In reality the same tactics were being used. Here I would make the argument that perhaps they were no different, just another Christian “trajectory”³⁷ trying to assert its superiority. As the division widened, the rules became “as much about defining what is left out as much as what should be kept in.”³⁸ Towards the end of this division, “any groups that are not in step with the mainstream group, for spiritual, dogmatic, social or political reasons, are labeled most strongly as heretics and most severely persecuted.”³⁹ But one point that must be considered is that the heretics had let the search for truth slip and become secondary in importance. Instead they were focused on searching for the secret teachings of Jesus and the apostles, and for the gnosis that would free them from the evil, corrupt material in which they lived. But Marcel makes an excellent point by saying, “Diversity of opinions (*doxai*) is normal in the universal search for truth. For, as Plato says, ‘no one willingly goes after evil or what he thinks to be evil’” (*Protag.* 358c).⁴⁰

Because of this division of ideas, the inevitable division of groups occurred. This list could become quite lengthy. I will simply categorize it as the “orthodox” and “heretical” groups. It is apparent through history which ones made it into which category. In actuality, many of the marginalized groups ended up as part of the first due to abandonment of certain teachings or doctrines. There were many groups who seceded and soon became the minorities. Bauer argues that this was because:

a unified front composed of Marcionites and Jewish Christians, Valentinians and Montanists, is inconceivable. Thus it was the destiny of the heresies, after they had lost their connection with the orthodox Christians that

35. Franzmann, “Taking the Heretics Seriously,” 125.

36. Harrington, “The Reception of Walter Bauer,” 289–290.

37. James Robinson and Helmut Koester in their book *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971) show how there are many trajectories through early Christianity, and this is just one of many.

38. Franzmann, “Taking the Heretics Seriously,” 118.

39. Franzmann, “Taking the Heretics Seriously,” 125.

40. Marcel, “From Greek αἵρεσις,” 104.

12 PETRAMALO: HERESY AND ORTHODOXY

remained, to stay divided and even to fight among themselves, and thus to be routed one after another by orthodoxy.⁴¹

Thus, because of their own internal struggle, “History focuses on [the religious professionals who won the debates over major doctrinal issues] as the ones who define and maintain orthodoxy.”⁴²

Conclusion

In the beginning I showed what the Greek word αἵρεσις meant, both in its original form, as well as the developed one. Due to the early usage by Paul and Peter, the early Christian writers continued the development of the word into what it has become today. As I have just shown, heresy was not a Christian development, but instead a pagan one. In fact, Simon Marcel said, “We would be inclined to think . . . these Greek ‘heresies’—themselves already corrupt—in spite of their superiority in some respects, are the source of the Christian heresies.”⁴³ I continued by showing how Justin and Irenaeus used the word to specify those who had a specific belief. This was done by identifying certain individuals with the groups which they lead. These heretical groups were categorized by heresiologists and created a typological categorization that distinguished the “heretics.” Thus we see how the term marginalized the fringe groups that were no longer the majorities. This marginalization would have far reaching effects on the latter development of Christianity. In summary, because of Paul’s usage of the term, Justin and Irenaeus pick it up and employ it by using negative rhetoric for classifying and distinguishing the heretical groups. Because of this marginalization, most of the previous “majorities” became minorities and were eventually extinguished by the “orthodox” Christians.

41. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 231.

42. Franzmann, “Taking the Heretics Seriously,” 122.

43. Marcel, “From Greek αἵρεσις,” 104.

FINDING EXODUS: AN EXEGESIS OF EXODUS 1:8–21

B. STEPHEN KERR

Know well that your seed shall be strangers in a land that is not their own and they shall be enslaved and afflicted four hundred years. But upon the nation for whom they slave I will bring judgment, and afterward they shall come forth with great substance.”¹ These were the words of Jehovah to Abram as he slept and received a divine manifestation. This likely late insertion by an unknown author prepares the reader for the Bible’s watershed event: the Exodus. Perhaps no other biblical story has elicited more discussion nor been more vehemently defended. In this paper I will holistically look at the historicity of Exodus 1 as a case study for the Exodus narrative. I hope to demonstrate that elements of the Exodus are historically plausible, but by no means axiomatic historical fact. I will limit my study to the unnamed pharaoh, the pharaonic oppressions, and the midwives.

I commence my inquiry with several fundamental assertions. First, let us recognize that many of the conclusions we can come to are based, primarily, upon the questions we ask. One well-known author has written:

New knowledge depends on what questions you ask—and don’t; how the way you present research shapes the questions you can ask and how you answer them. Most important, you will understand how the knowledge we all rely on depends on the quality of research that supports it and the accuracy of its reporting.²

If I regard the Exodus as a historically reliable source, I will likely be biased in the way I collect and report my evidence. Conversely, if I reject the Exodus narrative as a source of historically reliable information, I run the risk of perpetuating grotesque errors should the source be shown to contain reliable information. A problem with much of scholarship is the unwillingness, on the

1. Genesis 15:13. The Translation comes from Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 75.

2. Wayne C. Booth and Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 4.

part of the scholar, to admit that his or her declared truth is no more than pet theory. Evidence must be weighed, new questions must be raised, and we must be willing to admit that our beliefs, our “knowledge,” may be incorrect as new sources surface. Having clarified my views, in this paper I present evidence that lends credence to my claims and that can be tested empirically. Future research will either vindicate or negate the claims I make in this paper.

A Proposed Methodology

Just as important as the questions that we ask are the methodologies that guide our work. Before we get into the text proper, permit me to outline the methodology I follow throughout this study. Let me say that I am an unabashed believer in multiple Pentateuchal sources. While I have serious concerns with the separation of the sources, I am an advocate for a multiple source theory. In this paper I will reference some of those sources. I also adhere to the theories of form criticism and rely heavily upon the contextual method. I believe that by conservatively comparing related literature and archaeological findings we can determine with greater accuracy the historical plausibility of the text. This approach does not work all of the time, but I accept as fact that these methodologies can provide us with new insights into the meaning of the biblical text.

By applying contextual, source, and form criticism to Exodus 1, we will gain greater understanding into the possible meaning of the text. We must ask questions like:

- Is the pericope or similar phraseology used elsewhere in the Bible?
- Does the text fit a recognizable genre?
- Can we corroborate the text with external sources?
- Does the story fit into the claimed context?

These questions will guide much of this study. Let us now look at the text proper.

Which Text?

Anytime we consider the biblical text, we have to be aware of variant readings found in other versions of the Hebrew Bible. The conclusions we come to are based upon what questions we ask, but *also* what text we use. Here I provide a translation of the text from the Hebrew, and provide alternative readings in the footnotes:

1 These are the names of the Israelite people who came to Egypt with Jacob; each man came with his household. **2** Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, **3** Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, **4** Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. **5** All of the persons who were born to Jacob numbered seventy. But Joseph was already in Egypt. **6** And Joseph died, and all of his brothers, as well as that entire generation; **7** yet the Israelite people multiplied, swarmed, became great, and tremendously mighty, in so much that the land became

filled with them. **8** Then a new king arose over Egypt who knew³ not Joseph. **9** And he said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people⁴ are more numerous and mighty than us. **10** Come,⁵ let us deal wisely with them⁶ lest they⁷ multiply, and if war arises, they will join with those who hate us, wage war with us, and go up from the land.” **11** Therefore they⁸ set taskmasters about them to humble them with forced labor. And they built storage⁹ cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Rameses.¹⁰ **12** And though they¹¹ humbled them,¹² they¹³ multiplied and spread, and they came to loath the Israelites. **13**¹⁴ And the Egyptians worked the Israelites severely, **14** and made their lives bitter with hard work in mortar and bricks and with all kinds of field work. All of the work with which they worked them was severe. **15** And the king of Egypt spoke to the midwives of the Hebrew women,¹⁵ the name of one of them was Shiphrah, and the name of the second was Puah, **16** and he said, “When you deliver for the Hebrew women, and see them upon the two stones,¹⁶ if it is a boy, you will kill him; however, if it is a girl, you will let her live.” **17** However, the midwives feared Elohim; therefore, they would not do as the king of Egypt had spoken to them, and they let the boys live. **18** Then the king of Egypt¹⁷ summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and permitted the boys to live?” **19** Then the midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, they are lively and before the midwife comes to them

3. The Hebrew, ידע, is sometimes to be interpreted as a term which refers to a covenant relationship. It is possible to render the Hebrew: “Who covenanted not with Joseph.” While this is possible, I do not believe that the text warrants this interpretation.

4. Here the text contains the expected ישראל בני, however, it is proceeded by the word עם. This is the same word that Pharaoh uses to describe his own people. This could hint at the idea that the writer of this text understood the Israelites to be a distinct people.

5. The MT has this verb in the singular, whereas other versions read it as a plural. Seeing as Pharaoh is referring to his own people, עם, a word which can text either singular or plural verbs, it can translated as a singular or as a plural. It is a collective plural.

6. The MT literally reads “to him.” The LXX, the Syriac, Targum secundum, and Targum-Jonathan record this as a plural. We understand this as a collective plural.

7. The MT literally reads “lest he multiply.” The Syriac, Targum secundum, and Targum-Jonathan record this as a plural. We understand this as a collective plural. It is interesting that the LXX has this in the singular. It would appear that LXX translators were using a text very close to the MT, and adjusted some words, while leaving others untouched.

8. The LXX and Vulgate have this in the singular.

9. The LXX reads, “fortified cities.”

10. The LXX adds, “and On, that is Heliopolis.”

11. Targum Onkelos adds says “the Egyptians.”

12. I.e., the Israelites.

13. I.e., the Israelites.

14. Verses 13 and 14 are usually attributed to the P source based on vocabulary. Another reason for assigning these verses to P is that the Israelites are no longer referred to in the collective plural, but in the normal 3cp.

15. This phrase can be read “Hebrew midwives” or “the midwives of the Hebrews.” While we cannot be exactly certain as to which interpretation is correct, we do know that the names of the midwives are of Semitic origin.

16. The LXX reads “when they are about to drop the child.” This is likely an interpretation of the MT and not a literal translation.

17. The Samaritan Pentateuch reads “Pharaoh.”

they give birth.” **20** And Elohim was good to the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very mighty. **21** And because the midwives feared Elohim, he made them households. **22** Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews¹⁸ you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.

The Structure

- I. Bridging the gap between Genesis and Exodus (1:1–7)
- II. Introduction of the new king (1:8)
 - A. Unnamed Pharaoh begins to rule in Egypt (1:8)
 - B. Pharaoh is worried about the increasing of the Israelites (1:9)
- III. The plot to thwart the Israelites is proposed (1:10)
 - A. Pharaoh addresses the people (1:10)
 - B. Introduces the people to the idea that the Israelites can be harmful (1:10)
- IV. The plan is carried out (1:11–14)
 - A. Taskmasters are set over the Israelites (1:11)
 - B. Initial results (1:12)
 - a. The plan backfires: the Israelites multiply even more (1:12)
 - b. The Egyptians intensify the labor (1:13–14)
- V. Introduction of the midwives (1:15)
 - A. Shiphrah and Puah enter the scene (1:15)
 - B. Pharaoh addresses the midwives (1:16)
 - a. Pharaoh’s dictates the death of the firstborn males (1:16)
 - b. The midwives disobey Pharaoh (1:17)
 - C. Pharaoh questions the midwives (1:18)
 - a. The midwives makeup an excuse (1:19)
 - b. God deals kindly with the midwives (1:20–21)

I will briefly explain this outline. I have divided the Exodus pericope into five sections and then subdivided those five sections into smaller units.

The story is not written poetically or according to any noticeable linguistic structure; therefore, I have chosen to bifurcate the narrative based upon cause and effect. Let me explain the cause and effect outline.

The first section connects the end of Genesis with the beginning of Exodus. The second section introduces the new king. Without knowledge that a new king has arisen over Egypt, the third section would make less sense and lead us to alternative conclusions. The story has been structured in a way that each piece of information is necessary in order to get to the next phase of the narrative; nothing appears arbitrary. The pericope under consideration is a smaller unit of a larger narrative: “The Exodus.” This smaller unit is necessary

18. “To the Hebrews” is not found in the MT. I have taken this from the Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, and Targumim.

to understand each of the events that follow, and though it may seem boorish to separate the Exodus narrative into smaller subunits—boorish because there is a clear-cut cause-and-effect structure as I have outlined—we can see places where the narratives transition into new sub-pericopes. For this reason I have divided based on cause and effect.

Outlining the text may give us clues as to the text's literary function. The above outline helps us to see that Exodus 1 has been strategically placed and structured. Verses 8 through 21 serve a didactic purpose in that they move the biblical narrative from one extreme to another. The Joseph stories portray a time when foreign relations between the Israelites and the Egyptians were strong and healthy. At the end of Genesis we find a kind of last will and testament of Joseph. Joseph, in contrast to the Israelites in the Exodus, receives leave from Pharaoh in order to go and bury his father.¹⁹ We note that in this instance this Pharaoh has no qualms about allowing Joseph to leave so he may keep a promise he made to his father.²⁰ This is contrasted by the Israelites' experience contained in the Exodus literature. The introductory verses of Exodus 1 assist the audience's understanding of the swift transition that is about to occur. In spite of what has previously occurred under the life of Joseph, the current Israelites encounter hardship and opposition. While this initial chapter in Exodus can be seen as an individual unit, its purpose can be recognized and understood only in the greater Exodus narrative.

Genre

In this section I will take up the problem of *genre*. Defining and using genre has been one of the major difficulties in biblical studies in past and present scholarship. In many instances generic categories have been applied too rigidly. Conversely, many scholars ignore genre completely and fall into the trap of "parallelomania,"²¹ seeing biblical parallels in every facet of Near Eastern culture. Clearly we need testable methodologies; however, literary- and history-based disciplines are not hard sciences. We cannot expect to come to the same conclusions by applying the same methodologies. Literary works are not mathematic equations! They are the creation of humans who have biases, uncertainties, and difficulties in expressing their thoughts.

The difficulty in categorizing genres is that genre is meant to be recognized without categorization. If I were to begin a story with the phrase, "Once upon a time," the reader is immediately alerted that the story is a fairy tale. The phraseology is the form the author uses to communicate the genre of the story. Modern readers are not familiar with ancient genres and therefore, are forced to categorize texts based on "their content, form, or technique."²² Jens Bruun Kofoed has convincingly written, "One cannot re-cognize something one

19. Gen 50:4–6.

20. Gen 50:5.

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

22. Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* (2nd ed.; Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003), 189.

has never seen, read, or heard before. Re-cognizing a textual genre, therefore, presupposes the previous cognition of a similar configuration of elements.”²³

As we place our pericope into a generic category, we acknowledge that such pinchbeck categories are modern innovations. The reason we assign a text to modern generic categories is merely to assist us in the comprehension of possible use and function of given text. One of genre’s major successes is that it helps prevent the possible comparison of two tremendously unrelated texts (i.e. comparing *annals* to *poetry*). We also acknowledge that our imposition of false genre upon a text does not exclude the likelihood that a text intersects into the other generic categories we have created. Genre is a false dichotomy that assists us; it is not an infallible methodology. It is a means to an end; it is not the end.

As we look for particular features that will assist us in assigning our pericope into a generic category, we will notice that there are several possible assignments we might make. I should note that the passages we are considering as part of our case study are only part of a greater whole. To separate verses and see them outside of the Exodus narrative as a whole might be a bit dishonest. Let me propose two possible genres: (1) *legend* and, (2) *historiography*.

Legend in ancient Near Eastern literature has come to refer to those texts that narrate the story of “cultural heroes and institutions.”²⁴ Relegating a text to the genre of legend is by no means an admission that the text is fictional; instead, we are admitting that the text treats the story of a communal figure that has some kind of importance for the “community.”²⁵ The Exodus narrative contains the story of Moses, his birth, upbringing, and his godly acts to free the Israelite people. The “hero” Moses and the Israelite sojourn in the land of Egypt is referred to frequently throughout the Hebrew Bible, and therefore, assigning our passage to the genre of legend is no stretch of the imagination. The stretch, admittedly, would be if we were to become dogmatic in our use of this genre, not allowing for intersections into other genres.

The second genre of possible insertion is historiography. Let me briefly explain how I use this term in this paper. Historiography normally refers to the use of sources to create a narrative of the past, a kind of patchwork made of various documents mingled with the compiler’s views and interpretation.

23. *Text History: Historiography and the Study of the Biblical Text* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 195. Kofoed continues, “It is because of this first cognition of the genre that people could now recognize it and react correspondingly” (195). Further, Kofoed says that, “We immediately know how to interpret and respond to a multitude of genres, because we are familiar with them. They are part and parcel of our culture, and learning how to interpret and respond to them is an essential part of the curriculum from elementary school to university or, in the broadest sense, from cradle to grave” (196).

24. Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 2005), 271.

25. I use the term *community* to refer to those who concocted, transmitted, wrote, and copied the text. I personally believe that those who attempt an analysis of the text’s effect on the “hearer,” what they refer to as “community,” are researching fantasy. While there may be several places in the Hebrew Bible where such an analysis is possible, the greater part of the Bible would be unfruitful. We cannot know who heard the text, how much of the text was available to each generation, and thus we are at the mercy of speculation.

While patchwork documentation without embellishment can be seen as a kind of interpretation, and rightfully so, it is difficult to glean out the compiler's motives. We find it much easier to assign a text to historiography when the text proper clearly contains the hand of embellishment. Here we look for signs of anachronism, hyperbole, tell-tale phrases like "until this day," and other interpolative tells. According to Donald Redford, "The Biblical writer certainly thinks he is writing datable history, and provides genealogical material by means of which the date may be computed. He also thinks it is possible to locate this event on the ground, and packs his narrative with topographical detail."²⁶ I fully agree with Redford.

The "Exodus Pattern"

Here I want to briefly discuss what I term the "Exodus Pattern." I use this phrase to refer to instances wherein the Bible uses the form of the Exodus to tell other stories. Let me share just one example. In Genesis 12 we read about Abram's sojourn in a foreign land, his promise of becoming a great nation, and his construction of an altar. What concerns us here is how the story is recounted. We begin in verse 10 which tells of a famine in the land, wherein Abram travels to "Egypt to reside there as an alien." In verses 14–15 the word "Pharaoh" is used three times. Clearly, as we shall see, this is anachronistic. During the time when Abram lived, the term "Pharaoh" would not have been used in the way that this text is using it.²⁷ Next we read that:

The Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, "What is this you have done to me?" And Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning him; and they set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had. So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, with all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev.²⁸

These verses clearly are meant to foreshadow the Exodus. The pattern is the same as the one we find in the Exodus narrative, and seeing as the Exodus is referred to more times in the Bible than any other event, I would argue that the current edition of Genesis 12 is later than the Exodus. The author used the Exodus form to tell other stories.

The Exodus throughout the Bible

In this section I will analyze some of the numerous biblical references to the Exodus narrative. While the majority of the references look at the Exodus holistically, that is, many of these passages do not make reference to specifics of chapter 1 but to the experience as a whole, they do apply to our study. The Exodus is the most prevalent event in the Hebrew Bible. I do not make this

²⁶ *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 409.

²⁷ See my discussion on the word "pharaoh" below.

²⁸ Gen 12:17–18, 20–13:1.

claim from my own personal bias but from the bias of the text. The Exodus is referenced more times than any other narrative in the Hebrew Bible. It is *the* watershed event.

As we look at the passages that will follow, it is important that we do not extract more than is responsible. I do not believe that other passages outside of the Exodus narrative can shed light onto the text's original meaning. Let me qualify this. We will see that later (if they are in fact later) authors use the Exodus for their own purposes, that is, to meet the needs of their own situations and the propaganda they want to promulgate. We continue to do this today as modern readers. How many times in religious settings do we hear a speaker take a passage out of context and apply it to the lives of the hearers? I am by no means arguing that this is incorrect, in fact, I see this practice as fundamental to the applicability and usefulness of the Hebrew Bible today as well as in the future. What I am arguing is that the application of an older text to later situations does not give insight into the original meaning and content; it gives insight into the lives of the later hearer.

First and foremost, the Hebrew Bible uses the Exodus narrative as the quintessential example of the suffering of the Israelites.²⁹ While the most significant way the Exodus is used is to make a comparison of the suffering of Israel and their deity's mercy, the story is most numerous referenced as a point of dating the current era. An example of this is found in Numbers 1:1, "The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt." Here I want to examine several Pentateuchal references to the "Exodus." Below is a list of passages with some commentary.

1. *Exodus 20:2, 3*: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me." Here the author uses the Exodus as a justification for the monotheistic worship of the Israelites.
2. *Exodus 22:21*: "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." Again we see the Exodus used to justify the author's beliefs. Because the Israelites were oppressed aliens in the land of Egypt, it would be wrong for them to oppress those who are aliens in their land. It all goes back to the Exodus.
3. *Exodus 23:15*: "You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread; as I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt." The unleavened bread theme is found Exodus 12:1-28. Here we see this practice being perpetuated, that is the dictate for the perpetuation of the Festival of Unleavened Bread is found in Exodus 12:14. This verse is also found in Exodus 34:18 commonly recognized as a *covenant renewal* ceremony. This chapter contains a different version of the *Ten Commandments*, which may or may not imply

29. E.g. Numbers 20:15–16; Deuteronomy 4:20; 5:6, 15; 6:12; Joshua 5:9; 24:17.

multiple authors/sources.

4. *Leviticus 18:3*: “You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you.” Our author here uses the Exodus to keep the Israelites regulated (i.e., under his command).
5. *Deuteronomy 1:30*: “The Lord your God who goes before you, is the one who will fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your very eyes.” Here in the Deuteronomistic History the author uses the Exodus to quell possible fears that would have arisen in the hearts and minds of those hearing Moses’ words.³⁰
6. *Deuteronomy 5:6*: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.” We saw this phrasing in Exodus 20. In this version of the Sinai/Horeb revelation we find varied wording (though not in this verse), which carries a possibility of multiple sources. The author is using this verse to promulgate his ideology.
7. *Deuteronomy 5:15*: “Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.” Contrary to the Exodus 20 version, which says that Sabbath came about because “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it,” the Dtr uses the Exodus narrative as the reason for Sabbath worship.

He Who Shall Not be Named

One of the most highly discussed phenomena in the Exodus narratives is unveiling the identity of the oppressive Pharaoh. Those who defend the historicity of the Biblical narrative nominate Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE) and Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) as the unnamed despot. This is a sticky matter. Whether or not we can identify the Egyptian ruler is based exclusively on how we read the text, and then where we collocate it chronologically. If we read the text as history (a difficult term in itself) or historiography then we are forced to determine the text’s chronological placement. For those who see the text as a later creation with no historically reliable information, the identification of the Pharaoh is a fruitless activity. One question we will take up in this study is whether we can determine the identity of Pharaoh. This is not merely a question of historicity. We must look at possible reasons for not mentioning the Egyptian king, reasons that include genre, literary motifs, and authorial motives. I will make no attempt at identification; rather, I will discuss

30. With this phraseology I am not giving credence to the historical reliability of the narrative. I am referring to the author’s use of the information he cites and the purpose that he is giving to his modern audience.

whether or not the question of identification is possible.

Perhaps the most important element we can analyze is the linguistics of the word *pharaoh*. Much of what we can conclude will be based upon our capacity to render the Egyptian and Hebrew phrase into a chronological time table. Let me elaborate. It would be poor scholarship indeed to dismiss the unnamed pharaoh as a later creation by ignorant authors without an analysis of the way in which the word *pharaoh* was used at various periods. Why? Because, as we shall see, the deciphering of authorial motives may lay hidden in our linguistical analysis; an attempt to determine motive without a linguistical study is to be shunned, and studies which lack this essential element are highly suspect.

We begin with the Egyptian usage of the word *pharaoh*. For modern readers the word is ubiquitously associated with the king of Egypt. This is mostly correct; however, as we shall see, the development of this word needs to be fully understood in order to properly analyze the Exodus narratives. The origin of the word has its roots in Old Kingdom Egypt (2686–2160 B.C.E.).³¹ During this period in Egypt the word, according to available material, had no reference to the Egyptian monarch but was a “designation of part of the large palace complex at Memphis wherein the king and the officers of his administration lived, the term by extension came to signify the authority of the central government.”³² Over time, as words in most languages, the word *pharaoh* took on alternative meanings. A transition can be seen in Egyptian documents during the Middle Kingdom (2055–1650 B.C.E.). During the 12th Dynasty (2000–1800 B.C.E.) the meaning of pharaoh evolved to incorporate an association with “the three wishes following the actual royal name: life, health, and power.”³³

Another transition in usage occurs around the 18th Dynasty (1550–1295 B.C.E.). By this period the word *pharaoh* begins to be associated with the ruling king.³⁴ During the New Kingdom period (1550–1069 B.C.E.) we do not yet find the title attached to the king’s royal titulary; *pharaoh* stood alone.³⁵ The addition of *pharaoh* into the royal cartouche can be seen around the end of the New Kingdom (1069 B.C.E.); it is commonplace by the 8th century B.C.E., and “from the 7th century on was nothing but a synonym of the generic ‘king,’ the older word which it rapidly replaced.”³⁶ We continue to see the word used throughout the Ptolemaic period (332–30 B.C.E.), until its usage morphs again under the Copts and Islam, who change the title into a proper name.³⁷

31. Donald B. Redford, “Pharaoh,” *ABD* 5:288-89.

32. Redford, “Pharaoh,” 289. See also Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, “Pr-‘3,” *WÄS* 1:516; Raymond O. Faulkner, “Pr-‘3,” *CDME* 89; Henri Gauthier, “per aa,” *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques* 2:62.

33. Henri Cazelles, “par3ōh,” *TDOT* 12:102.

34. Redford, “Pharaoh,” 5:289.

35. James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 87.

36. Redford, “Pharaoh,” 289.

37. Redford, “Pharaoh,” 289.

This is the information we have regarding the Egyptian usage of the word *pharaoh*. We now turn to the Hebrew Bible (MT) to look at ways in which the word was used.

Unlike the Egyptian, the Hebrew shows no sign of morphology. The Hebrew word is borrowed from the Egyptian; its phonetic value is equivalent to the Egyptian. The Masoretic Text records 274 occurrences of the word *pharaoh*,³⁸ of which 216 occur in the Pentateuch. “The LXX contains 32 occurrences beyond the MT.”³⁹ As we analyze each attestation of *pharaoh* in the Hebrew Bible, we note that the Pentateuch never associates a name with the Egyptian title.⁴⁰ This title is used as a proper noun without accompanying titulary, with several exceptions; the exceptions include verses where *pharaoh* is suffixed with “king of Egypt.”⁴¹ Outside of the Pentateuch we have 58 attestations of *pharaoh*.⁴² Of these 58 occurrences, 14 have the titulary “king of Egypt” suffixed to them.⁴³ The first time we get a proper name associated with Pharaoh occurs in 2 Kings 23:29 referring to “Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt.”⁴⁴ The second and final occurrence of *pharaoh* with a proper name is “Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt” in Jeremiah 44:30. We also note that the Bible records “King Shishak of Egypt.”⁴⁵ This is the information we have regarding the Hebrew usage of the word “pharaoh.” We now turn to several non-Masoretic sources before we make final conclusions.

This portion of the study would not be complete if we did not look at examples from the Dead Sea Scrolls. If we are to consider the usage of *pharaoh* as a possible way in which to date the Exodus narrative, then we must consider this late material. I will discuss two examples, and include a statistical analysis of numerous examples. We begin with the “War Scroll” 1QM 11:9–10. This portion of the scroll instructs the hearer on how he is to treat his enemies, “You shall treat them like Pharaoh (כפרעור),”⁴⁶ like the officers of his chariots in the Red Sea (Reed Sea).⁴⁷ This text uses the same Hebrew as the MT; however,

38. My numbering is based on the Hebrew Bible lexical functions on Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library, Version 7.0.24, 2005.

39. Cazelles, *TDOT* 12:102.

40. “Pharaoh” occurs in Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy, but never in Leviticus or Numbers.

41. Eight usages in the Pentateuch occur: Genesis 41:6; Exodus 6:11, 13, 27, 29; 14:8; Deuteronomy 7:8; 11:13. That means “Pharaoh” is used 208 times in the Pentateuch without an accompanying titulary!

42. Twice in 1 Samuel, thirteen times in 1 Kings, eight times in 2 Kings, five times in Isaiah (never in Deutero-Isaiah), eleven times in Jeremiah, thirteen times in Ezekiel, twice in the Psalms, once in the Song of Songs, once in Nehemiah, once in 1 Chronicles, and once in 2 Chronicles.

43. 1 Kings 3:1; 9:16; 11:18; 2 Kings 17:7; 18:21; Isaiah 36:6; Jeremiah 25:19; 46:17; Ezekiel 29:2, 3; 30:21, 22; 31:2; 32:2.

44. “Pharaoh Neco” is also found in 2 Kings 23:33, 34, 35; Jeremiah 46:2

45. 1 Kings 14:25.

46. Here we note the *waw* acts as a vowel, a common element found in the DSS, but not in the MT occurrences of Pharaoh.

47. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, eds. and trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1:131.

because we are dealing with a text that refers to a possibly earlier episode, dating based on this text remains difficult, if not impossible. Next we turn to “Ages of Creation” 4Q180 frags. 5–6, which reads (though quite fragmented), “[...And what is wr]itten concerning the land[...] two days’ journey [...] is] Mount Zion, Jerusale[m ...] [...]and wh[at is written concerning Pharaoh [פרעה].”⁴⁸ It is unclear as to what is being referenced, however it seems to be biblical episode considering the context of the text that precedes this one. Vital to this study is the fact that in the nonbiblical scrolls the term *pharaoh* occurs thirty-four times. Four times we find פרעו, where the dropped ה might be being substituted with the ו, what I would describe as an alternative mater lectionis, or we could be dealing with a defective spelling of a late plene spelling. Additionally, of the thirty-four attestations of *pharaoh*, four times we find פרעה spelled in the traditional MT defective spelling. This is significant because of the 274 attestations of *pharaoh* in the MT each of them is spelled in the defective. We do not have one example of “pharaoh” being spelled defectively in the Hebrew Bible (MT)! The DSS Biblical texts preserve the defective spelling in many instances, especially in the book of Exodus. The last 26 nonbiblical DSS examples of “pharaoh” are spelled פרעו. Let me discuss the significance of these data.

We have seen that in the nonbiblical scrolls the authors spell *pharaoh* differently than the MT 88.23% of the time. The MT spells *pharaoh* defectively 100% of the time. I have looked at all the DSS containing Exodus material and note that 4QExod^a, 4QExod^b, 4QExod^c, and 4QExod^d contain the word “pharaoh” twenty times altogether. Every attestation is spelled in the defective, including those attestations that are partially existent which have been reworked by the International Team of the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁴⁹ What can this tell us? Let me propose that what we may be looking at is evidence that whenever we date the Exodus narrative a later date is not to be preferred. I would argue that the DSS scribes were copying an older manuscript of Exodus. If this were not the case, we would expect to find at least one instance where the orthography matches the nonbiblical manuscript, that is, a plene spelling. I believe that this statistical analysis shows that we cannot equate the creation of the Exodus narrative to the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The purpose of this linguistic analysis is to determine, if possible, the time period when the word *pharaoh* can be placed into the Hebrew Bible. One major difficulty we encounter is knowing to what extent the Egyptian usage influenced the Hebrew usage. We know that the Hebrew word for *pharaoh* comes from the Egyptian; however, we cannot be absolutely sure if Hebrew speakers would have used the word in the exact manner of the Egyptians. Our main concern here is chronological placement. In essence, does the Hebrew follow the chronological morphology that we see in the Egyptian sources? And can we use that morphology to date the Text? One of the major concerns and

48. Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 373. Here we note a rare example of a defective spelling.

49. I make this claim only for the word “Pharaoh”; I have not examined other words.

reserves I have with those who use morphology to date the text is that they do not engage the question of usage.⁵⁰

By looking at Egyptian usage and Hebrew usage, we can conclude that the dating of the supposed Exodus could not have been before New Kingdom (1550–1069 B.C.E.). Semites living in Egypt before that period would not have associated a name with the title “Pharaoh.” This, of course, presupposes that the usage that we find in the Egyptian documents can be correlated with common vernacular—the spoken language, not merely with what was written. We also note that the text could have been written no later than the time of the DSS. I have argued that even a date to the time of the DSS is too late, based upon the overwhelming orthographical analysis. We cannot be sure how early we can date the text based upon the MT and DSS because their usage (but not orthography) is consistently uniform throughout.

Let me here insert a caveat. When an analysis of Biblical Hebrew orthography is undertaken we always look at the plene and defective spelling. There is somewhat (though not completely) of a consensus that earlier stages of biblical Hebrew was more prone to use defective spelling; whereas in later times a plene spelling was employed. The issue that we confront is the lack of early Hebrew manuscripts. We just do not have access to manuscripts that would allow us to make more definitive statements about Hebrew orthography.⁵¹ Another issue we encounter with dating based on orthography is that one word may contain both defective and plene spelling.⁵² We have an example of this in our passage in verse 12, יִקְצוּ. Here we see a Qal verb with a qibbutz under the second radical, and a mater lectionis waw in the ultimate radical. I do not believe that we can give a definite date based on orthography; however, I believe that the variants between the MT and DSS indicate a difference in the Hebrew language.

Before I conclude, I must offer other possible alternative reasons that the author left the pharaoh unnamed. If my linguistic analysis does not completely satisfy the question of pharaonical ambiguity, what other explanations exist? One alternative response to this question is that the author of the Exodus narrative purposely left the Egyptian king unnamed. Perhaps by leaving the ruler’s name out of the text, the author was trying to disrespect the king. This is, of course, speculative. Another alternative has been proposed by Hendel.⁵³

50. See Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 87–88. Hoffmeier writes, “The usage of “pharaoh” in Genesis and Exodus does accord well with the Egyptian practice from the fifteenth through the tenth centuries. The appearance of “pharaoh” in the Joseph story could reflect the New Kingdom setting of the story or if its provenance is earlier (i.e., the late Middle Kingdom through Second Intermediate Period), its occurrence in Genesis is suggestive of the period of composition.” Hoffmeier bases his conclusion on the names, “Shishak, Neco, and Hophra, while excluding the fact that those are the only instances where a name is attached to “pharaoh” or “king of Egypt” in the Hebrew Bible.

51. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 220–29.

52. Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 221.

53. Ronald Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57–73.

He argues that the motive for leaving the pharaoh unnamed was to create a mnemohistory.⁵⁴ By mnemohistory, he refers to Jan Assmann's concept:

Unlike history proper, mnemohistory is concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered. It surveys the story-line of tradition, the webs of intertextuality, the diachronic continuities and discontinuities of reading the past. Mnemohistory is not the opposite of history, but rather is one of its branches or subdisciplines, such as intellectual history, the history of mentalities, or the history of ideas . . . Mnemohistory is reception theory applied to history.⁵⁵

Hendel uses this argument to prove that the author of the Exodus narrative left the pharaoh unnamed in order to use the story as an application to Israel's current situation—that is the time when the author was living.⁵⁶ One of the difficulties that I find with Hendel's argument is that it presupposes that the Israelites could not apply a story to themselves that contained a proper name. Within the narrative we find two midwives named.⁵⁷ Using Hendel's logic Israelite women could not have seen themselves in the story because the two women are named. I am willing to entertain the idea of mnemohistory, but I reject it as an explanation of the authorial motive behind leaving the pharaoh unnamed.

In conclusion, I would argue that we cannot say for certain whether the motives behind the unnamed pharaoh are for linguistic reasons or for propagandistic purposes. The evidence for a linguistic cause is not entirely consistent, which would give us greater reason to attribute the unnamed pharaoh to the category of word usage. The arguments for applicative motive are speculative and not testable. There is no empirical datum for Hendel's reasoning, though it is enticing; therefore, a linguistic motive is to be favored over applicative purposes.

The Oppression

One of the arguments I have encountered as I have researched this topic is that the claims made in the text can fit into many different periods; therefore, we cannot know when the event occurred. Is this true? Yes. However, the question is not if the text fits into multiple places chronologically, but does the text fit into the time period claimed by the text? This should be our primary concern! This would be equivalent to arguing that the American Revolution didn't occur in the 18th century because slavery can be traced throughout later periods. Slavery did occur during later periods, but the event is said to have happened in the mid-18th century. Our question then should be, "Is that claim verifiable?" I realize this may be an oversimplification, but the point is a good one. Using this reasoning ("Does the text fit into the claimed context?"), we

54. Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, 59–60.

55. Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, 58.

56. Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, 60.

57. Exod 1:15. Their names are Shiphrah and Puah.

will analyze the question of the Egyptian oppressions.

The text clearly portrays a time during the Egyptian New Kingdom period (1550–1069 B.C.E.). The text also claims that the Egyptians were oppressing the Israelites, a Semitic people, forcing them to build “storage cities . . . with hard work in mortar and bricks.”⁵⁸ In our quest for historically reliable claims, we ask, does this claim have a footing in what we know about New Kingdom Egypt? My response is an emphatic yes. Let us briefly look at the claims made in the text.

First, was there a people known by the name “Israel” during the New Kingdom period? Yes. Here we find universal agreement among all competent Egyptologists. According to the Merneptah Stela (1208 B.C.E.):

The princes are prostrate saying: “Shalom!”
Not one of the Nine Bows lifts his head:
Tejehenu is vanquished, Khatti at peace,
Canaan is captive with all woe.
Ashkelon is conquered, Gezer seized,
Yanoam made nonexistent;
Israel is wasted, bare of seed,
Khor is become a widow for Egypt.
All who roamed have been subdued
By the King of Upper and Lower Egypt.⁵⁹

The text clearly refers to Israel as a people and not as a geographical location, as argued by Ahlström.⁶⁰ The Egyptian determinative makes this irrefutably clear.⁶¹ What this assertion does not tell us is that the Israelites sojourned in Egypt. I have not made the geographical claim based on the Merneptah Stela, only that a people called Israel existed during the New Kingdom.

The second claim asserts that these Israelites were employed in the building projects of the king. This claim is not verifiable as we have no documentation of the Israelites sojourning in Egypt. We can ask the question of whether foreign peoples were conscripted in building projects during the New Kingdom. We cite several examples that demonstrate foreigners being used in construction projects.

58. Exod 1:11, 14.

59. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 2:77.

60. Gösta Ahlström, *Who Were the Israelites?* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1986), 37-43.

61. Carol A. Redmount, “Bitter Lives: Israel in and out of Egypt,” in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (ed. Michael D. Coogan; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 97.

The first, and perhaps most known example of foreign slaves being used for building projects, comes from reliefs in the tomb of Rekhmire, the vizier of Thutm



Fig. 1. This relief from the tomb of Rekhmire shows Semites and Nubian war prisoners making bricks. The bricks were used in the construction of the Temple of Amun at Karnak.

Another example of forced labor comes to us from Papyrus Leiden 348, during the reign of Ramesses II, which reads, “the soldiers and the Apiru-folk who drag stone to the great pylon (gateway) of [the Temple] of Ramesses II Beloved of Maat.”⁶³ We also have numerous examples of human tribute from the Amarna letters, which describe foreigners being sent to Egypt.⁶⁴ The idea of forced labor in Egypt during the New Kingdom period is highly documented; therefore, we will let these few examples suffice.⁶⁵ We cannot conclude that there was a group called Israel living in Egypt during the New Kingdom who was forced to build up the storage cities of the king. What we can say is that the idea of Semites living in Egypt during the New Kingdom who were forced to build up cities for the king is not only plausible, it actually happened. Does this lend credence to the Exodus narrative? Only in so far as the claimed context fits quite well. Of course, this picture could be painted during other periods in Egypt; however, the text claims that it happened during the New Kingdom period.

62. See James K. Hoffmeier, *The Archaeology of the Bible* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008), 51.

63. Kenneth Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 248.

64. See EA 64, 268, 287, 288, 301, 309, and 369 in W.L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

65. For those who are interested in a more detailed account of forced labor and brickmaking see Kenneth Kitchen, “From the Brick Fields of Egypt,” *TynBul* 27 (1976): 143–144; James K. Hoffmeier, “Taskmasters,” *ISBE* 4:737.

Midwives

We now take up the issue of the midwives. Midwifery as a suitable female endeavor is attested as early as Middle Kingdom Egypt.⁶⁶ As stated earlier, the Hebrew leaves the identity of the midwives slightly ambiguous. Do we translate the text as “the Hebrew midwives,” or as “the midwives of the Hebrew?” Here the only indication we have is the origin of the names of the midwives. The first midwife is named Shiphrah, clearly a Semitic name. The name comes from the triconsonantal root שפר “to be beautiful, fair, and comely.”⁶⁷ The second midwife is called Puah (פועה), a name not attested in the Hebrew Bible; however, it is attested in Ugaritic documents. In one Ugaritic source, the famed Danel has a daughter with the same name.⁶⁸

Why are the names given for these two women? It has been argued that by mentioning the midwives by name “the biblical narrator expresses his scale of values.”⁶⁹ That is to say that the author was interested in showing the faith of these two women by giving us their names, and at the same time disgracing pharaoh by leaving him unnamed. Whether this is the case we cannot know; however, the idea is an entertaining one. Another question we must ask is why would there only be two midwives named for the Hebrew women? The population of Israelites according to the text is estimated to be around 2.5 million persons.⁷⁰ How could two midwives function for such a large population? How we answer this question depends entirely on how we read the text. If we read it as historiography, we are forced to come up with ways to explain this phenomenon. For those who read this as a historically reliable source, several explanations are proposed. The first says that midwives were “overseers of the practitioners, and were directly responsible to the authorities for the women under them.”⁷¹ While this could explain away the difficulty in having only two midwives, the explanation is speculative, unwarranted, and has no evidence in external sources. The second attempt at explaining the two midwives is that the two names “are those of guilds or teams of midwives called after the original founders of the order.”⁷² Like the previous explanation, this one remains suspect.

Another way to read this text would accord with Hendel’s line of thinking. We could argue (without evidence of course) that the midwives were remembered to find application in the “current” era’s audience. If this is the way that we are to read the text how would this have been played out? We might say that the text seeks to find place among a female audience by making the women more important than pharaoh. This text would have been used

66. Lichtheim, *AEL*, 1:220–21.

67. *BDB* 1051.

68. *UT* 19:2081.

69. Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Origins of Biblical Israel* (New York: Schocken Books, 1996), 25.

70. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 408.

71. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 25.

72. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 25.

to energize women's faith in their deity and give them an example of how to receive blessings from God. While this explanation is one that surely resonates with some, there is no way to prove it. Lastly, one could argue that the whole story is made up, and we are not meant to ask the question regarding the two midwives, that this question never entered the mind of the author.

We now take up the issue of the birthstool. The text literally says, "When you see them upon the two stones."⁷³ This issue ostensibly should not have incurred much discussion; nevertheless it did. Richard Elliot Friedman understands the "two stones" as euphemism for the male genitals.⁷⁴ The fact that this interpretation is even entertained is bewildering indeed. The text reads, "When you deliver for the Hebrew women, and see them upon the two stones, if it is a boy—kill him, but if it is a girl, she shall live."⁷⁵ The text does not apply the "two stones" to the males only, but to the females as well; this fact alone should have been enough. One might argue that this is an idiomatic expression for male genitalia, but the reference to the girls leaves doubt in the mind of the reader. Let us turn to external sources in order to lay this argument to rest.

Our first piece of evidence comes from the New Kingdom, Egyptian inscription from Deir el-Medina. The inscription is called *The Votive Stela of Neferabu with Hymn to Mertseger*. It reads:

I was an ignorant man and foolish,
 who knew not good from evil;
 I did the transgression against the Peak,
 And she taught a lesson to me.
 I was in her hand by night as by day,
 I sat on bricks like the woman in labor,
 I called to the wind, it came not to me,
 I libated to the Peak of the West, great of strength,
 And to every god and goddess.⁷⁶

We also note the numerous art depicting women giving birth in a squatting position, who are sitting upon birthstools. One such figurine comes to us as late as the Roman period in Egypt (2nd century CE).⁷⁷ In Jeremiah 18:3 we find the only other Hebrew attestation of the "two stones." In this context it is used to refer to the "potter's wheel." In Egyptian, a potter's wheel is "regularly linked to pregnancy in Egyptian literature and art."⁷⁸ All of this evidence combined demonstrates that the "two stones" referred in the Exodus narrative were in fact a birthstool and not a reference to testicles.

73. Exodus 1:15.

74. *Commentary on the Torah with a New English Translation and the Hebrew Text* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 171.

75. Exodus 1:15.

76. Lichtheim, *AEL*, 2:108.

77. Eleni Vassilika, "Museum Acquisitions, 1992: Egyptian Antiquities Accessioned in 1992 by Museums in the United Kingdom," *JEA* 80 (1994), 181.

78. Scott Morschauer, "Potter's Wheels and Pregnancies: A Note on Exodus 1:16," *JBL* 122 no. 4 (Winter 2003): 732.

Theological Underpinnings

This section of the paper will attempt to draw out theological tenets from the text under discussion. I will focus on the possible theological beliefs of the author of the text and not how those beliefs are found and commented on in Christian thought. I will avoid Mormon theology, for I want the text to speak for itself (as far as that is feasible). By looking at the text proper we can minimize biases, though the reader will surely sense some biases, and uncover the author's personal convictions about theology.

The text opens with a new Egyptian king who designs the enslavement of the Israelite peoples.⁷⁹ This Egyptian, through his cunning plan, is able to bring the Israelite peoples into bondage, as well as into his service. Whoever authored this text had no qualms with a deity who would allow his people to be brought under a foreign yoke. Our author seems to be less interested in the idea of God permitting his people to be subjugated by Egypt and more concerned with demonstrating God's ability to perform wonders and lay waste to his enemies. Again, we note that this text believes in a deity who allows other nations to interfere in the lives of his chosen people.

Next in our discussion of theological beliefs we find the Israelite peoples increasing their population in the face of affliction.⁸⁰ The text tells us that the "more they (Israelite peoples) were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites."⁸¹ One senses the author's attempt to show that when God is with his people, notwithstanding their situation, they can continue to grow in number and gain greater prominence. For our author the greatness of the Israelite peoples knows no bounds, and it is clearly not quelled, even in times of hardness and difficulty. Perhaps this is to show the partial fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

Finally, we find a striking claim about the disobedient midwives, who were commanded to kill all male Hebrew infants.⁸² The text informs us that the reason for the midwives actions was that "the midwives feared God."⁸³ The midwives are not punished by Pharaoh, and we are told that "God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families."⁸⁴ A major theme we draw out from this section is that dissidence is not looked upon as an infringement against God. For our author it is not only acceptable to disobey foreign leaders, but one can be blessed for doing so. We cannot say that this would have been the outcome every time; however, here a precedent is set.

We have seen that this passage contains at least three distinct theological beliefs. The first regards God's allowance of foreign involvement in the lives of his people. The second teaches that God's people can flourish under hardship,

79. Exod 1:8.

80. Exod 1:12.

81. Exod 1:12.

82. Exod 1:15–21.

83. Exod 1:17.

84. Exod 1:20–21.

and the third deals with respecting God over foreign magistrates.

Conclusion

Here I shall briefly review what we discussed up to this point. We began our study by proposing a methodology, which included looking at genre, patterns, external sources, and the application of the contextual method. We analyzed the Hebrew text of Exodus 1, noting variant readings. An attempt was then made to outline chapter 1 based upon a cause-and-effect structure. We looked at genre and concluded that the Exodus narrative likely falls into the category of *Legend* or *Historiography* or both. Then we treated the phenomenon of the Exodus pattern and cited Genesis 12 as an example. We also looked at several ways in which the Bible uses the story of the Exodus for propagandistic purposes. Our study then led us into a lengthy discussion on the usage of the word “pharaoh,” and we concluded that the Exodus was not written before New Kingdom Egypt (1550–1069 B.C.E.), nor later than the Dead Sea Scrolls; we also concluded that the Exodus was written before the DSS and was likely copied from the DSS scribes from an earlier manuscript. Next we moved into a discussion on the “oppressions.” We noted that the “Exodus” claim that Semites living in Egypt, being forced to labor on building projects making bricks is absolutely plausible. We also noted that we cannot claim that the Israelites ever lived in Egypt, but that a group calling themselves “Israel” existed is beyond dispute. Next we looked at the midwives and analyzed the text’s claims. We found hints at historical footings, but no definite claims could be made. Lastly, we extracted theological claims made in the Exodus 1.

Let me say by way of conclusion that the idea that the Exodus paints a picture that can be verified externally is inconclusive as a whole. That we can verify certain shades, and objects in that picture is an empirically testable fact. The Exodus is a tremendously puzzling text to unravel. This study has only focused on the first chapter of Exodus as a kind of case study. Many items were discussed; however, many were left untouched. We had neither the time nor space to discuss the reasons for identifying the unnamed pharaoh with Thutmose III or Ramesses II. We never addressed the historical reliability of the storage cities or the Egyptological implications of Pharaoh’s mandate that every Hebrew boy be tossed into the Nile; I have concentrated on a condensed version of Exodus 1. What this study has shown is the necessity to ask historical questions, as well as the question, how do I know what I know? We have used Exodus 1 to accomplish this task.

THE ANOINTING OF AARON: THE PROCESS BY WHICH HE BECAME HOLIER THAN HIS SONS

MICHAEL BIGGERSTAFF

“Then take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.”
(Exod 29:7)¹

“And he [Moses] poured some of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and
anointed him in order to make him holy.” (Lev 8:12)

In the ancient Near East, priests were the religious functionaries, the ones who communed with the gods. They were part of a highly specialized caste, one not open to just anybody. Although Israel was unique and distinguished from the other nations (see Exod 19:5–6; 20:3–5),² they too had a priesthood. Israel’s priesthood was founded by the Lord: “Bring near to you Aaron, your brother, and his sons with him, from among the Israelites, that he may be a priest for me” (Exod 28:1). Exodus 29:1 begins the specific procedures the Lord delineated to Moses concerning the inauguration of the priesthood: “And this is the thing which you will do to them in order to make them holy, to be priests for me.” Leviticus 8 is depicted as providing the fulfillment of these prescriptions.³ Not only is the initiation as a whole intended to hallow Aaron and his sons before the Lord, but every step of the initiation sanctified them a little more, thereby elevating them above the rest of the congregation of Israel.⁴

1. All scriptures are translated from Hebrew by the author unless otherwise stated.

2. The commandments the Lord placed upon Israel caused them to be unique among the nations, particularly the first and second commandments (Exod 20:3–5). Another unique distinguisher is that the Lord, YHWH, seems to be a deity unique to the kingdom of Israel. See also James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 241–42.

3. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 545–49 and Baruch A. Levine, “The Descriptive Tabernacle Texts of the Pentateuch,” *JAOS* 85.3 (1965), 311, for a summary concerning the dependence of Leviticus 8 on Exodus 29.

4. For anointing as a symbol of an elevation in status, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 553.

Priests functioned as intermediaries between the human and the divine.⁵ One of their chief responsibilities was to protect Israel from sin and impurity. In Moses' final blessing to the tribe of Levi, he identified three main ways priests were to accomplish this. He blessed them that "they shall teach your judgments to Jacob, and your law (תּוֹרָה) to Israel; they shall place incense before you, and whole burnt offerings upon your altar" (Deut 33:10).⁶ In other words, first, the priests taught the law of the Lord, or the Mosaic law, which included both religious purity laws and secular civil laws—there was no separation between church and state. Second, they offered incense unto the Lord. Third, they performed sacrifices on behalf of the people. Leviticus 1–7 depicts five basic types of sacrifice, three of which explicitly mention an expiation factor. Additionally, Richard Hess mentions the duty priests had in "distinguishing between what is clean and unclean" (see Lev 10:10).⁷ In order to act in these responsibilities, priests needed to be pure and holy—the very thing the consecration ceremony ensured.

Consecration of priests was a seven-day ritual. Although it is unclear what parts of the prescribed ritual were performed each day,⁸ the fact they occurred at all is telling. The ordination consisted of eleven subrituals dividable into four main groups: washing, robing, anointing, and sacrificing. In addition to initiating Aaron and his sons into the priesthood, the injunction "to make them holy" pervades each individual ritual of the ceremony (Exod 29:1). Aaron and his sons were first washed to ensure ritual purity. After their purification they were clothed with the vestments that would forever mark their office; Aaron received the elaborate high priestly robes, whereas his sons received the plain white linen of the priests. Next Aaron, but not his sons, was anointed "to make him holy" (Lev 8:12). Then a series of sacrifices were performed on behalf of all the initiates, including a sin offering for the purpose of expiation. Another of the sacrifices was a ram of consecration. During the ritual of this sacrifice, some of its blood was mingled with anointing oil and sprinkled upon Aaron and his sons, effectively anointing them, with the result that "he shall be made holy, and his vestments, and his sons, and his sons' vestments with him" (Exod 29:21). Finally, Exodus 29:33 states that, "They shall eat the food which made the atonement, to ordain them and to make them holy." Thus the ordination ceremony ordained and sanctified⁹ Aaron and his sons into the priesthood.

A casual reading of the texts of Exodus and Leviticus, as the brief

5. Patrick Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 163–65.

6. See also, Miller, *Ancient Israel*, 165–71; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 52–3; Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus* (New York: JPS, 1989), xxxiv.

7. Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 193. See also Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 290.

8. See William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40 AB 2A* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 468–69 and Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 536–40, for a short summary of the complications.

9. In Hebrew, the verb קָדַשׁ means "to be holy, to make holy, to consecrate, and to dedicate."

summary above provides, may leave a reader with the idea that Aaron and his sons were equally purified and set apart. However, that is not the case. A closer examination of these texts demonstrates that Aaron received different garments and was anointed twice (his sons only once). While the robes of the high priest are distinctive, sacred, and symbolic, they did not determine the high priest; the anointing did that.¹⁰ To this effect, both the prescription and fulfillment depict Aaron as being anointed, מִשַּׁח, and sprinkled, נָזַח, with oil that bore the scent and holiness of the Lord, whereas his sons were only sprinkled, נָזַח. Additionally, Aaron (not his sons) was anointed at a time that equated his holiness with that of the Tabernacle and its objects—most holy. Finally, the manner in which Aaron was anointed, מִשַּׁח, was the capstone to his being elevated above his sons in holiness. Whereas other texts, including some of the prescriptions, depict Aaron's sons as also being anointed (see Exod 28:41; 30:30; 40:15; Lev 7:35–36; Num 3:3), the anointing unique to Aaron further set him apart—both spiritually and authoritatively—from his sons as demonstrated by the special properties of the anointing oil itself, the location and time of his anointment, as well as the method with which he was anointed.

The Anointing Oil

Role of Scent

The olfactory sense orients individuals in life.¹¹ Just as the aroma of cooking food indicates an upcoming meal, other scents herald their associated contexts. These harbingers thus permit individuals to orient themselves in life.¹² As such, one can mentally prepare the pallet for dinner or even ascertain if a child is ill. While these two brief examples demonstrate an obvious benefit of the olfactory sense to a modern individual, the value of the sense of smell to an ancient Israelite was far greater.¹³ In addition to the modern beneficence of smell, ancient Israel affixed a rich religious context. The law of Moses consisted of strict purity laws by which one could easily become defiled. Many of these contagious impurities emanated a foreboding scent, signaling the befouled area. In this way, the role of scent was twofold: first, it aided an Israelite in avoiding a situation in which they could become impure; second, the scent identified the nature of the area. In detail, both those points are distinct. However, in reality, they are one in the same as the nature of an area either defiles or it does not. Bad smells were indicative of impure areas, being associated with disease and death (see Exod 7:18, 21; 8:10; 16:20, 24; Isa 3:24;

10. See Levine, *Leviticus*, 48.

11. See C. Houtman, "On the Function of the Holy Incense (Exodus XXX 34–8) and the Sacred Anointing Oil (Exodus XXX 22–33)," *VT* 42, no. 4 (1992): 458. I am greatly indebted to this article in providing a catalyst of thoughts and inspiration that fueled my current understanding on the role of scent to ancient Israelite society.

12. Houtman, "Holy Incense," 458.

13. Houtman, "Holy Incense," 458. Also note that on at least two occasions, the God of Israel was contrasted against the pagan gods because He could smell (see Deut 4:28 and Ps 115:6).

34:3; Joel 2:20; Amos 4:10; Ps 38:6; Eccl 10:1).¹⁴ On the other hand, pleasant aromas were associated with health and life, thus indicating places of neutral or positive purity (see Hos 14:7; Song 4:10–11; 5:5, 13).¹⁵ In short, scent was the first indicator as to whether one was heading into a ritually unclean locale, and a warning to those about to enter a place too holy for them—one in which they would become the defiling presence, such as the tabernacle.

Scent not only designated the nature of specific areas but also of individual people (see Gen 27:27).¹⁶ A unique aspect of life is that everyone has their own personal odor composed of the chemical make-up of their body as well as the lifestyle they live. Individuals have little control over their chemical composition, but they are more or less dominant over their lifestyle. The more willingly and passionately an individual works, the more embedded they become in their work, and their work in them. On the other hand, the more distanced and grudgingly an individual works, the less embedded they are in their work, and the less likely their work becomes a part of them. Each occupation has a unique scent to it; a tanner smells considerably different than a potter, both of whom have a different aroma than a farmer. Furthermore, lifestyle and work is a daily occurrence. Through repetition of actions and habits a person becomes what they do. Thus a person who farms the land becomes a farmer and someone who builds becomes an architect. Additionally, some individuals may have worked multiple part-time jobs or engaged in other personal interests. Whatever the case may have been, the things individuals do and know relate to who they are; farmers do not know as much about architecture as an architect does, and vice versa. Bringing this together, an individual has his own body odor, which is then augmented by his lifestyle, hobbies, and occupation.¹⁷ It is in this way that each person has his own unique, personalized identifying scent. This scent identifies the personality of the individual as well as their occupation and status (see e.g. Jer 48:11; Hos 14:7; Ps 45:9; Song 7:9; Esther 2:12).¹⁸

One of the best biblical examples of this is the story of Jacob and Esau. “Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a peaceful man, dwelling in tents” (Gen 25:27). Each of these occupations—so to speak—bore a unique scent as the rest of the story attests. As Isaac neared his deathbed he desired to bless Esau, his firstborn (Gen 27:2–4). However, Rebekah plotted with Jacob to steal the blessing from Esau (Gen 27:6–13). In the course of the deception, Rebekah and Jacob took several measures, not the least of which

14. See Houtman, “Holy Incense,” 458–59.

15. See Houtman, “Holy Incense,” 459.

16. See also Houtman, “Holy Incense,” 459.

17. Individuals are often born into a certain socio-economic status that sets certain bounds beyond which they cannot progress. Furthermore, children often carry on the work of their parents. How often an individual was able to obtain an apprenticeship outside of the family business (so-to-speak) is unknown. Thus, how much of their lifestyle an individual was able to choose is debatable, to a point. Even if forced into labor, one has the choice of how hard and willingly they will work.

18. See Houtman, “Holy Incense,” 459.

was Jacob's donning of Esau's clothing and having the skin of goats somehow attached to his hands and neck (Gen 27:15–16). When Jacob brings Isaac savory meat, Genesis says that Isaac "did not recognize him [Jacob] because his hands were hairy, like the hands of his brother Esau; so he blessed him" (Gen 27:23 [17–23]). However, the blessing did not actually take place until Jacob came near his father and Isaac subsequently "smelled the odor of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, 'See! The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed'" (Gen 27:27). Over time, the clothing of Esau had begun to smell like its owner. If Jacob had not worn it, he would not have smelled like Esau—like a man of the field—and Isaac would not have continued with the blessing.

The Lord's Scent

Some individuals, for the right price, would obtain perfumes and oils and subsequently rub, or anoint, them into their skin, thus masking their scent and granting a new one (see 2 Sam 12:20; 14:2; Amos 6:6; Mic 6:15; Ruth 3:3). While many rich Israelites enjoyed this luxury, so did the priests. However, the priests were the only Israelites permitted to use the "holy anointing oil" on penalty of exile by the Lord (see Exod 30:32–33). This oil bears the Lord's scent. In order to be so designated, there was a strict, divinely mandated recipe to be followed. "Take unto yourself choice spices: 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much [250 shekels] aromatic cinnamon, 250 shekels sweet cane, and 500 shekels cassia—all according to the sanctuary shekel—and a hin of oil olive" (Exod 30:23–24). That is, 1500 shekel weight of solid aromatic to 1 hin of liquid. Milgrom suggests "the proportions work out to about 1 pint olive oil to 54 pounds of dry spices,"¹⁹ while Durham claims the solid aromatics total 33½ lbs.²⁰ Which of the two is correct is not as important, or relevant, as the realization that the amount of solid matter to liquid is astounding. Durham notes how the process of production suggested by Lucas below provides a plausible explanation for how the high ratio of solid to liquid can produce a nonviscous ointment.²¹ Lucas "describes the Egyptian process of pressing gum resins with oil, then removing the oil by squeezing the resultant paste in a cloth to extract the oil. The oil thus became the base, one that absorbed and then retained the fragrance of . . . aromatic substances."²² The oil would then be kept while the solid mass is disposed of. Though Lucas is describing an Egyptian method, it is likely that the early Israelites would have used a similar process. This procedure would ensure the oil would be especially fragrant.

19. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 498.

20. John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 407.

21. Durham, *Exodus*, 407.

22. Durham, *Exodus*, 407. Durham goes on to express the likelihood of this method because of Exodus' mention of "a spice-mixer's mortar" in Exodus 30:25: "You are to blend these into a sacred Oil of Anointment, compounded in a spice-mixer's mortar, as a spice-mixer's blend. This is to be the sacred Oil of Anointment" (Durham's translation; Durham, *Exodus*, 405).

Since each ingredient itself is highly aromatic, the combination would produce a powerful, potent, and unique liquid fragrance.

Such a pungent and sacred smell would attract the rich and poor alike. As such, the Lord unequivocally forbade the duplication or use of this oil for any purpose outside that which was explicitly stated by Him. "It shall not be rubbed in an ordinary anointing upon the flesh of man, and you shall not make anything similar to its composition; it is holy and it shall be holy to you. Whoever makes an ointment similar to it, or puts any of it on an unqualified person, shall be cut off from his people" (Exod 30:32–33). Thus the Lord jealously claims and protects this recipe. Any who are anointed with this sacred anointing oil are anointed with the scent of the Lord. This scent, in light of the previously discussed role and worldview of scent, would, to some degree, transmit a level of the status and personality of the Lord to whoever, or whatever, was being anointed.²³ Since the Lord is holy (see Lev 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8; and many more), those anointed with his scent will be made holy, as Leviticus 8:12 explicitly states takes place when Aaron is anointed: "And he [Moses] poured some of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him in order to *make him holy*" (emphasis added). The Lord is also a deliverer, as evidenced by the Exodus (Exod 3–14). Thus, whoever, and whatever, is anointed will similarly function as a deliverer for the people since the priests performed, through their sacrificial responsibilities, an "atoning role [which was] essential for both forgiveness (Lev 4–5) and purification (Lev 12–15)."²⁴

Since the holy anointing oil represented the scent, personality, and status of the Lord, every drop upon an individual's skin brought that individual closer to the Lord. Thus the greater the amount of the Lord's scent one was anointed with, the greater the connection with the Lord. This connection merits greater holiness and a greater delivering role. Aaron's sons had some of the holy anointing oil sprinkled upon them (Exod 29:21 and Lev 8:30).²⁵ Thus they were partakers of a degree of the Lord's holiness placing them on a holier sphere than the unanointed congregation of Israel. Having been anointed to a degree, they also partook of the Lord's status as deliverer by presiding over sacrifices (see Lev 1–7). However, these sons of Aaron were anointed through a sprinkling of a mixture of blood and holy anointing oil upon them. Aaron was also anointed this same way, but in addition, he also had an unspecified amount of the oil poured upon his head (see Ps 133:2). Whatever this amount—it was at least twice as much as his sons—he was thereby further

23. Houtman, "Holy Incense," 464–65 phrases it this way: "Anointing oil of the prescribed composition is reserved by YHWH for use in his cult . . . By claiming the exclusive right to the composition of the sacred anointing oil, YHWH reserves its special fragrance for himself. By anointing 'his' fragrance is transmitted . . . So they are marked by his personality."

24. James W. Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 143.

25. Elsewhere the Bible refers to Aaron's sons as being anointed (see Exod 28:41; 30:30; 40:15; Lev 7:35–36; 10:7; Num 3:3). Therefore this sprinkling can be seen as a form of anointing.

set apart and placed in a holier sphere than even his sons. Likewise, Aaron participates in the delivering role of the Lord to a greater extent than his sons, as can be seen by his preeminence during the Day of Atonement (Lev 16).²⁶ In short, though Aaron's sons were anointed with the holy anointing oil, and thus with a portion of the personality and status of the Lord, Aaron was anointed with a greater amount of the oil, and thus with a greater portion of the personality and status of the Lord. Therefore the nature of the anointing oil alone depicts Aaron as being set apart beyond that of his sons.

Location and Timing of the Anointing

Tabernacle

In addition to the special properties of the anointing oil, the order and location of Aaron's anointment in comparison to his sons was an even more unmistakable sign of demarcation. As already mentioned, an impure area had the power to contaminate any who entered, thus making them ritually unclean (see Lev 14:46).²⁷ While some forms of impurity could be cured with the passing of the day (see Lev 11; 14:46; 15:5–28; 17:15), many required a priest's declaration as well as the offering of a sacrifice (see Lev 12; 13–14; 15:28–30). This was the function of the priests. But before the Lord commanded Moses to “take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office” (Exod 28:1), there were no priests authorized to purify the people.²⁸ The Lord inaugurated his priesthood after he provided for a pure and holy place in which to do it; a place set apart from the impurities of the world, a place where the Lord's holiness could be free to purify individuals as they obeyed His set laws of purification.²⁹ Until that time, there was no such place in the camp of

26. See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 54–55, in which he mentions that the Day of Atonement is part of the high priest's duty because he is responsible for all of Israel; also Hess, *Israelite Religions*, 183–84.

27. Houtman, “Holy Incense,” 460–61 discusses how impurity can be spread through breath. Thus as the unclean breath disseminates in the area around the source, it pollutes the air thereby creating a ritually unclean area. It is distinctly possible that one of the purposes of the holy anointing oil and holy incense is to combat this unclean air. As sin spreads abroad in the camp of Israel, the air becomes contaminated, threatening the Tabernacle, which in turn threatens the presence of the Lord. The Lord's scent associated with the holy incense and holy anointing oil would then be seen as combating the unclean air.

28. The author is aware that the biblical text indicates that the ritual purity laws were established simultaneously with the construction of the Tabernacle and the inauguration of the priesthood. However, the author is also aware that much of the law of Moses appears to have been a codification of traditional laws. As such, many of the laws pertaining to ritual purity were likely already practiced prior to Moses' codification of them. Thus the law of Moses, whether or not it introduced new laws, provided the Lord's approved way to be cleansed from ritual impurity.

29. See Hess, *Israelite Religions*, 183–84; here Hess identifies three concentric circles of holy space, of which the Tabernacle is the center and holiest, the place where “God's presence was made manifest in a special way and the divine life resided in all its power.”

Israel.³⁰ Thus the Lord instructed Moses, “Make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exod 25:8). The Lord did not want just any structure. He had a specific design in mind as indicated by the fact that he showed Moses the pattern—תְּבִנִית—after which the tabernacle was to be built (Exod 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Num 8:4). It is not known whether the pattern was a vision of the completed structure, a comparable structure the tabernacle was to be built in the manner of, or if it was just the blueprint detailed in Exodus.³¹ What is known is that the text explicitly states that the tabernacle was commanded and designed by the Lord.

The tabernacle was designed to be a portable temple.³² A temple, in the most literal and basic sense, is best defined by the biblical Hebrew phrase used to describe it: the house of the Lord (or God).³³ This connection between the tabernacle and the temple is exemplified by one of the Hebrew words for tabernacle, מִשְׁכָּן, which means “dwelling” or “dwelling place.”³⁴ After all, the Lord expressed to Moses: “have them make me a sanctuary;³⁵ that I may dwell among them” (Exod 25:8, emphasis added; see also Exod 29:45–46). Besides being a dwelling place of the Lord, the tabernacle was to serve several functions. It was to be a place of revelation where the Lord could commune with Moses (Exod 25:22; 29:42). Another name of the Tabernacle was the “tent of meeting,” אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, because the Lord said on one occasion, “there I will meet with you [Moses]” (Exod 25:22) and on another occasion, “I will meet the Israelites there” (Exod 29:43). The Book of Leviticus further identifies the tabernacle as the location of sacrifice, and thus atonement (Lev 1–7). Each of these functions of the tabernacle had one purpose in mind: to

30. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 129 claims that the purpose of the establishment of this religious institution was to not only worship the Lord, but to provide a way to atone for human sins. He continued by stating that it was “to this end the tabernacle was erected, so that God’s presence could become a permanent and living reality in Israel’s religious life. The tabernacle was furnished with the ark and altars, and all the other equipment necessary for making atonement.”

31. See Victor Hurowitz, “The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle,” *JAOS* 105.1 (1985), 21–30, esp. 22.

32. Hess, *Israelite Religions*, 203–5 and Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 288 provide a brief overview of Near Eastern antecedents of the tabernacle as well as briefly identifying the similarities between the tabernacle and temple. See also Levine, *Leviticus*, xxxvii where he says “the desert tabernacle described in the priestly tradition is modeled after actual temples” and later on page 48 where he links the tabernacle and Temple of Jerusalem.

33. The Hebrew has several ways of spelling “House of the Lord/God.” These are בֵּית יְהוָה (House of the Lord), בֵּית אֱלֹהִים (House of God/gods), בֵּית אֵל (House of God), בֵּית אֱלֹהִים (House of God; Aramaic), and בֵּית אֱלֹהֵינוּ (House of our God).

34. Other names for the tabernacle are אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד (tent of meeting) and מִקְדָּשׁ (sanctuary). William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, *Solomon’s Temple: Myth and History* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 18 states: “The Lord identified the primary purpose of the tabernacle as follows: ‘let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them’ (Exod. 25:8); for this reason it is called the ‘dwelling place’ (*mishkan*), ‘the house of Yahweh (or the Lord)’ (*bet Yahweh*), and the ‘sanctuary’ (*miqdash*).” See also Levine’s discussion on pages 4, 48 of Levine, *Leviticus*.

35. The Hebrew word for sanctuary is מִקְדָּשׁ from the root קדש. Thus the Tabernacle, by definition is not only the dwelling place of the Lord, but is also holy.

draw Israel to their Lord. For this purpose, the Lord is said to dwell in the tabernacle. Thus dwelling, he is able to speak to Moses as needed, commune with the Israelites when they draw near to worship, and pardon sins and purify impurities when they sacrifice. The presence of the Lord not only blesses and purges the Israelites, but also designates the tabernacle as holy.³⁶

Ritual Space

The holy area of the tabernacle was a ritual space. (In other words, it was a space in which the rituals of the Lord were performed.) The most obvious rituals were those of sacrifice and atonement, but incense rituals were also performed (for sacrifice, see Lev 1–7; 16; for incense, see Exod 30:7; 40:27; Lev 10:1; 16:12–13; Num 4:6; 16[16–17:15]; Deut 33:10). These rituals extended beyond purifying the Israelites to the appeasement of the Lord in order that his presence might remain at the tabernacle (since the Lord is holy and cannot abide the slightest impurity).³⁷ As Miller phrases it, “holiness in one area required holiness for whatever impinged upon that area, and the holiness of one thing worked to protect and safeguard the holiness of another.”³⁸ The tabernacle was the center of the camp of Israel,³⁹ and thus it impinged on the camp and the camp on it. Milgrom argues that the tabernacle is defiled when any within the camp of Israel sin, thus he proposes a concept of collective responsibility for sin (see Lev 15:31).⁴⁰ For this purpose, daily and yearly purification sacrifices were offered in order to maintain the Lord’s presence (for *תְּבִנִית* see Exod 29:38–42; for yearly, see Lev 16).⁴¹ The Lord did not himself perform any of these rituals; priests did. These priests were required to maintain high levels of ritual purity, as evidenced in Leviticus 21.⁴² Their level of holiness directly impacted the Lord’s presence because if they were impure, they would be unable to maintain the sanctity of the tabernacle.⁴³ If a priest was either ritually unclean or performed some other breach against the holiness code and was simultaneously officiating in the office of priest, one of two things would take place to ensure the Lord’s holiness would not be in jeopardy—or to ensure the Lord would not be mocked, depending upon how

36. See Miller, *Ancient Israel*, 137, 142. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 291 states that “God’s holiness rubs off ... on whatever is close to Him or belongs to Him.... It thus seems that God’s holiness is not only His salient characteristic, but one that radiates out and sticks in various degrees to everything that is His or is near Him.” See also previous note.

37. Levine, *Leviticus*, 48 states: “As the presence of God was welcomed at the Tabernacle, extreme care had to be exercised to protect it from impurity.”

38. Miller, *Ancient Israel*, 143.

39. While the Bible seems to convey differing traditions on the actual location of the tabernacle in relation to the camp (see Exod 33:7 and Num 2), there can be little doubt that the tabernacle functioned as the religious center.

40. See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 49–50, 258–61; Jacob Milgrom, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly ‘Picture of Dorian Gray,’” *RB* 83 (1976): 390–99.

41. See also Levine, *Leviticus*, xxxiv.

42. Levine, *Leviticus*, xxxiv.

43. Levine, *Leviticus*, xxxiv states, “The priesthood was charged with maintaining the purity of the Sanctuary.”

one chooses to understand the text. Either the offending priest(s) would be instantly killed, such as the case with Nadab and Abihu (see Lev 10),⁴⁴ or the presence of the Lord would withdraw until proper purification was performed (see Ezek 10–11). This is the nature of the ritual space. It is holy because the Lord is holy and present.⁴⁵

By representing the Lord's presence, the tabernacle was the center of Israelite religious life. As previously mentioned, the priesthood was inaugurated only after the tabernacle was established. The necessity of a proper holy space in order to consecrate priests underlies the sanctity of the priest's office. As already discussed, the priests were anointed with the holy anointing oil, which represented the scent of the Lord. Being thus anointed, the priests were a type of representation of the Lord. The Lord is holy; therefore the priests are holy. The Lord cannot dwell in an impure and unholy sanctuary; therefore the priests also needed a pure and holy sanctuary in which to dwell.

Like the priests, the tabernacle needed to be anointed (see Exod 30:26–29; 40:9–11; Lev 8:10–11). It is the Lord's earthly dwelling, his house. Most importantly, it is his. As such, it needed to be so designated. The role of scent in identifying personality and status has already been discussed at length. Anointing the tabernacle and everything within it with the Lord's scent would thus confer his status and personality amounting "to a formal declaration that these implements were all in the category of 'most holy,' and thus that anyone or anything coming into physical contact with them would become infectiously holy."⁴⁶ Thus the implements of the tabernacle were elevated in status above that of the mundane world to that of the Lord.⁴⁷ Equally important, the anointing prepared the accoutrements to partake of the personality of the Lord. The Lord is holy; thus they became holy. The Lord is a deliverer; thus they became deliverers. From thenceforth, the implements of the Tabernacle were to participate in rituals that were designed to deliver the Israelites from sin and impurity.

Anointing

Aaron's anointment in relation to the anointing of the accoutrements of the Tabernacle is significant. Leviticus 8 provides the order.⁴⁸ Moses began

44. See also the case of Uzzah being struck dead by the Lord because he touched the ark without the permission of the Lord; he was a holy priest, but the ark was a most holy object—having been anointed and ordained to such a status (2 Sam 6:6–7).

45. See Miller, *Ancient Israel*, 137, 142.

46. Durham, *Exodus*, 407. Durham states these to be "most holy" because of the combination of the holiness of the Lord's presence, coupled with the anointing of the holy anointing oil. However, the Lord did not dwell within the Tabernacle until after it was dedicated. Therefore this author sees the Tabernacle and its utensils as being "most holy" but in reverse order: the anointing oil makes them holy while the presence of the Lord makes them "most holy." See also Wenham, *Leviticus*, 141.

47. For anointing as a symbol of an elevation in status, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 553.

48. Milgrom finds three problems with the order of the MT, and discusses these at

by bringing Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle (vv. 2–4). Then Moses washed all of them, but dressed only Aaron (vv. 6–9); Leviticus implies that Aaron's sons were not dressed until after Aaron was anointed (cf vv. 6–9 with v. 13). Next, "Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and everything within it, and he made them holy. He then sprinkled some of it upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, in order to make them holy" (vv. 10–11). After Moses anointed the accoutrements of the tabernacle, "he poured some of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him in order to make him holy" (v. 12). Following the anointing, Moses dressed Aaron's sons and proceeded to offer sacrifices (vv. 13–30). During the third sacrifice, Aaron and his sons were *sprinkled* with a mixture of blood and holy anointing oil (v. 30)—(the text here does not use the word "to anoint" as it does with the tabernacle implements and Aaron (cf vv. 10–12; see also v. 30)). Gerald Klingbeil notes, "The repeated usage of the anointing oil on the objects of the sanctuary and the priests and the usage of the same verbal form of מָשַׁח ('anoint') suggests similar ritual states of both 'entities.'"⁴⁹ That ritual state is marked by the scent of the Lord. In other words, the objects of the sanctuary and Aaron are now holy as the Lord is holy and participants with the Lord in his works toward Israel.

While the ritual of both Aaron and his sons takes place at the tabernacle, the order and timing of the anointing of Aaron is demonstrative of his being set apart to a higher realm.⁵⁰ For one, there was a pause between the anointing of Aaron's sons and that of the tabernacle, its objects, and Aaron. That pause separated Aaron and his sons. Rather than being a visitor to the tabernacle (like the rest of Israel), or a servant (like his sons), Aaron is just as much a part of

length in *Leviticus 1–16*, 513–16. This paper deals with the MT as is and the implications it holds for the significance of the anointing of Aaron in comparison to that of his sons.

49. Gerald Klingbeil, "The Anointing of Aaron: A Study of Leviticus 8:12 in its OT and ANE Context," *AUSS* 38, no. 2 (Autumn 2000): 233. While Klingbeil holds that Aaron's sons were also anointed in Leviticus 8:30, the text obviates that by "priests" Klingbeil can mean only Aaron, since Leviticus 8 does not use the verb "to anoint" in regards to the priests, only in reference to the Tabernacle, its accoutrements, and Aaron (see also Levine, "Tabernacle Texts," 311). It is true that the holy anointing oil is used upon Aaron's sons, but this text does not explicitly state that they were anointed. Elsewhere in Exodus and Leviticus, Aaron's sons are described as having been anointed. In light of such texts, Leviticus 8:30 provides the best textual representation of when that anointing took place; however, that verse does not use the verb מָשַׁח, as Klingbeil seems to imply in this quote. See also John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (WBC 4; Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 112. Furthermore, Levine states that "Most of chapter 8 (vv. 6–36) is devoted to a description of two distinct yet related ceremonies: the consecration of the altar and tabernacle and of Aaron, the high priest (vv. 6–12); and the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests, which was accomplished by a series of sacrificial and purificatory rites, performed over a period of seven days (vv. 13–36)" (Levine, *Leviticus*, 48; also Levine, "Tabernacle Texts," 311). In light of all this, there seems to be an unequivocal differentiation made between the anointing of Aaron, which was the same as took place with the altar and the Tabernacle, and that of his sons.

50. See Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21 n. 28.

the Lord's house as is the altar.⁵¹ Secondly, Aaron's sons were *sprinkled* with a mixture of anointing oil, whereas Aaron was specifically *anointed*. As previously mentioned, that anointment placed a greater amount of the Lord's scent upon Aaron, thus demarcating him as more holy and connected to the Lord than his sons. Furthermore, how he was anointed attests not only to his being set apart from his sons but also to his being an accoutrement of the tabernacle.⁵²

Method of Anointing

Ambiguity of the Anointing

The method of anointing is not explicitly stated in either Exodus or Leviticus. The prescription reads: "Then take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him" (Exod 29:7). The fulfillment reads: "And he [Moses] poured some of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him in order to make him holy" (Lev 8:12). In both Exodus and Leviticus, there is nothing telling about the verbal forms for "to pour" (יָצַק) and "to anoint" (מָשַׁח). However, in both passages, each of the verbs are prefixed, and thus separated, by a *waw*. Depending upon how this *waw* is read, this ritual of anointing could be seen as either a single act or a double act. Jacob Milgrom is a proponent of the single act anointing. He reads the *waw* as being "purposive, not conjunctive" thus rendering a translation of "thereby anointing."⁵³ Other scholars, such as Baruch Levine, read this *waw* as conjunctive rather than purposive.⁵⁴ Such a reading renders a translation of "poured and anointed." While there is not a definitive answer for how the *waw* is to be read, treating it as conjunctive provides a much richer meaning for the ritual of anointing.

By its meaning, the verb to anoint (מָשַׁח) exacerbates this ambiguity while simultaneously eradicating it. In Hebrew, מָשַׁח "denotes the act and process of wetting, rubbing, smearing, or anointing something, exclusively and usually with oil."⁵⁵ Thus, by definition, proponents of single action anointing can be appeased because pouring a liquid is synonymous with "the act and process of wetting." However, if מָשַׁח already connoted a process of wetting, there

51. Klingbeil states: "The anointing of Aaron . . . marks a crucial point inasmuch as it puts both the location and its objects and the person(s) on a par" (Klingbeil, "Anointing of Aaron," 236). While Klingbeil makes this claim in regards to Aaron's sons as well, I would argue that they are excluded from this equal relationship on grounds that they are anointed differently, with less oil, and only after a purposeful break in the anointing of the tabernacle and its accoutrements.

52. Levine declares, after mentioning the unique vestments of Aaron as high priest and stating his being anointed with the same oil as the tabernacle and altar, that "in effect, he [the high priest] was the human counterpart of the altar" (Levine, *Leviticus*, 48). In his article "Descriptive Tabernacle Texts," Levine states that "the High Priest is a sacred vessel and is consecrated as such" (Levine, "Tabernacle Texts," 311). See also Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1–16, 518.

53. Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 518.

54. See Levine's translation of Leviticus 8:12 in his commentary (Levine, *Leviticus*, 52). See also Hartley, *Leviticus*, 105–6 and Wenham, *Leviticus*, 135.

55. Seybold, "מָשַׁח," *TDOT* 9:43–54.

would have been no need for Moses to be commanded to pour the oil because anointing would have already entailed that. But, if anointing referred to a distinct and separate action, the use of both *יצק* and *משח* would not have been redundant.

Whether *משח* marked a separate action, oil was poured upon the head of Aaron (see Exod 29:7 and Lev 8:12). Both Exodus and Leviticus are silent as to the quantity of anointing oil poured. Psalms, however, records a tradition that a copious amount was used: “Just as the precious oil upon the head is running upon the beard, the beard of Aaron; it is running over the opening of his garments” (Ps 133:2). The significance of the holy anointing oil has already been discussed at length. The pouring of the oil equated with a pouring of the scent, and thus the personality, of the Lord upon Aaron. If the tradition of Psalms is accurate, then much of Aaron’s body may well have been inundated with both the scent and personality of the Lord. Since the sons of Aaron were only sprinkled—which Aaron was as well—this inundation would have conferred a much more sublime consecration upon Aaron, further setting him apart from his sons.

The Symbol of the Anointing

If *משח* marked a separate action, it would have been a “rubbing” or “smearing” of some sort.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, nowhere in the Bible is this action explicitly identified. However, the Babylonian Talmud records the tradition that priests were anointed “in the shape of a chi” (b. Hor. 12A).⁵⁷ The *chi* is a Greek letter which takes the shape of an X. Before delving into the implications of this tradition, however, the credence of the Babylonian Talmud must first be established. The Babylonian Talmud dates to post–Second Temple Era, no earlier than 500 C.E. Currently, scholarship is divided over whether or not the anointing ritual of the High Priest dates to pre– or post–exilic Israel.⁵⁸ If it is considered pre–exilic, then the Babylonian Talmud is separated from Leviticus by over one thousand years. If the anointing ritual is considered post–exilic, the Babylonian Talmud is still distanced by up to one thousand years.⁵⁹ However, since the temple had already been destroyed for four hundred years prior to the compilation of the Talmud, the rabbis could not have been discussing a contemporary practice. Therefore, they must have been preserving an earlier tradition, perhaps from the Second Temple Period.

The Book of Ezekiel preserves a tradition that may link the Babylonian Talmud with the anointing ritual of the High Priest, whether or not the ritual

56. Seybold, *TDOT* 9:45.

57. Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary: Bavli Tractate Horayot* (vol. 26; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1994), 76.

58. As a sample of the scholarly debate, see: Hartley, *Leviticus*, 110; Daniel Fleming, “The Biblical Tradition of Anointing Priests,” *JBL* 117, no. 3 (1998): 401–14; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 554; and Klingbeil, “Anointing of Aaron,” 231–43.

59. Rooke, *Zadok’s Heirs*, 21 mentions how the Babylonian Talmud designates a difference between the anointing of a king and priest; she also mentions how the Talmud dates from a considerably later period.

is of pre- or post-exilic date.⁶⁰ In chapter 9 Ezekiel has a vision in which he sees six men, one of which is clothed with white linen and is commanded by the Lord to “pass through the midst of the city—the midst of Jerusalem—and mark a mark upon the foreheads of the men who are sighing and groaning over all the abominations performed in the midst of her” (Ezek 9:4). In the Bible, linen is almost exclusively associated with sacred cloth, which includes priestly garments (see Exod 27: 9, 16, 18; 28:5, 6, 8, 15, 39, 42; Lev 6:10; 16:4, 23, 32; 1 Sam 2:18). As such, the man being addressed by the Lord is likely a priest, albeit a heavenly priest. This priest is instructed to “mark a mark” upon those who are righteous, those who detest the abominations and groan because of the wickedness of Jerusalem. Whatever this mark is, it is to be a sign to the other men Ezekiel saw in vision that those with the mark are not to be destroyed (see Ezek 9:6). The Hebrew word for this mark is *taw*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In proto-Hebrew, pre-Aramaic block script, the Hebrew *taw* had the shape of an X, or a cross.⁶¹ Thus the passage could read “mark an X upon the foreheads.” The parallelism between the Babylonian Talmud and the vision of Ezekiel is that both depict a mark in the shape of an X with an individual deemed righteous by God.⁶² Despite the Babylonian Talmud depicting a priest and Ezekiel depicting any righteous individual, the conceptual tradition seems to be the same.

In light of this, it is probable that after pouring holy anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, Moses then anointed him in the shape of an X. The significance of the X is found in the ancient custom where “the taw also served as a mark of ownership.”⁶³ In the context of the anointing of Aaron, Moses was commanded by the Lord to perform the anointing. As elsewhere demonstrated in the Bible, and as Leviticus clearly states, “Moses did as the Lord commanded him” (Lev 8:4; see also Exod 40:16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 27, 29, 32; Lev 8:, 9, 13, 17, 21, 29). Thus Moses was clearly acting for God. As such, Aaron was effectively anointed in such a way that God marked his ownership of him. Put another way, the anointing of Aaron in the shape of an X represented the Lord’s signature.⁶⁴ A signature marks approval and sanction of an action. It stands as a witness of the signer’s authority and presence wherever the signature goes.

Aaron’s sons were sprinkled with oil. While that may have been a form of anointment, in the same sense that the word מִשַּׁח can denote “an act and

60. Ezekiel depicts a period of time prior to the Second Temple Period and the Babylonian Talmud preserves a tradition from either the First or Second Temple Period, or possibly from both. As such, if Ezekiel and the Babylonian Talmud share this tradition, it is highly probable that the ritual of anointing as depicted in Exodus and Leviticus also shares this tradition.

61. See Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 307.

62. The reason for the difference in calling the shape a *taw* or a *chi* was likely because the Rabbis, writing in the Hellenistic age, used the *chi* for the sake of familiarity; though it is distinctly possible they may have forgotten what the proto-Hebrew *taw* looked like.

63. Block, *Book of Ezekiel*, 307.

64. Block, *Book of Ezekiel*, 307.

process of wetting,”⁶⁵ it was not as distinct a form of anointment as Aaron received by having oil first poured on his head, then being anointed with it. Thus, though the sons of Aaron were anointed, that anointment did not set them apart in the same way Aaron’s anointing did.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Aaron was elevated above the status of his sons by his unique anointment. This has been demonstrated in three ways: (1) the holy anointing oil and its function as the scent of the Lord; (2) the tabernacle as the abode of the Lord and Aaron’s anointing in direct succession to it; and (3) Aaron being anointed in the shape of a *taw*, signifying the Lord’s signature and approval. Each of these arguments validates Milgrom’s statement that, “the anointment ‘sanctifies’ the high priest by removing him from the realm of the profane and empowering him to operate in the realm of the sacred, namely, to handle the sancta.”⁶⁶ Since the Lord claims the holy anointing oil as his own (Exod 30:31), it becomes holy because “God’s holiness rubs off . . . on whatever is close to Him or belongs to Him.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, holy things in general confer their holiness upon those who touch them (see Exod 29:37; 30:29; Lev 6:27–29). Therefore, as soon as the holy anointing oil touched Aaron, he became holy. Likewise when the tabernacle was anointed it too became holy. Aaron was in the tabernacle precinct when he was anointed (see Exod 29:4; Lev 8:2–4, 10–12); therefore not only did the oil make him holy, but so did his vicinity to the holy artifacts of the Lord; Aaron was doubly holy. Finally, the shape with which Aaron was anointed was the pinnacle of the entire ritual. It unequivocally signified the Lord’s acceptance of what Aaron was anointed with, where he was anointed, and how he was anointed.

While Aaron’s sons also had holy anointing oil sprinkled upon them in the tabernacle precinct, the amount of the oil placed upon Aaron and the timing of Aaron’s anointment during the dedication of the tabernacle clearly distinguished between him and his sons. Aaron’s sons—along with Aaron—were sprinkled with a combination of holy anointing oil and sacrificial blood. There is no doubt this ritual sanctified all who were thus sprinkled (see Lev 8:30). However, Aaron was additionally anointed with an amount of oil that may well have soaked through his entire raiment, thus bathing him in the holy anointing oil (see Ps 133:2). Aaron’s sons—along with Aaron—were sprinkled in the tabernacle precinct towards the end of the three sacrifices of the inauguration ceremony. However, Aaron was earlier anointed in the nonstop chain of anointings that dedicated the tabernacle and its accoutrements into the Lord’s service. Thus Aaron became a vessel of the Lord’s house and an instrument to help bring about the purity and atonement of Israel. All this was ultimately sealed upon Aaron during his anointment when the Lord, through Moses, signed his name in the shape of the *taw*.

65. Seybold, *TDOT* 9:45.

66. Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1–16, 554.

67. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 291.

THEY BECAME FOOLS:
A PAULINE DESCRIPTION OF APOSTASY IN ISRAEL AND
ITS PRESCRIPTIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH JEWS AND
GENTILES IN ROMANS 1:18–25

JUSTIN SODERQUIST

Though “Paul was no systematic theologian,”¹ his letter to the Romans comprises his most carefully constructed extant work. This study will examine the small pericope (1:18–25) immediately following his thesis statement in 1:16–17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, The one who is righteous will live by faith.”² While many are the topics which could be addressed in consideration of this brief portion of Pauline diatribe, the current examination will focus on just one—the identity of those to whom Paul is primarily referring in the passage. Following a careful examination of the available evidence including a survey of prevailing scholarship, the discussion will conclude with a look at the implications of Paul’s words for both Jew and Gentile alike.

To Whom

Despite the inclusion of Paul’s typical salutation in the beginning of Romans, his ambiguous wording has led scholars to a “little dispute over the ‘to whom’ question.”³ Though he specifically mentions the Gentiles in 1:5–6, he then says in verse 7, “πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις,” possibly expanding the meaning to include Jewish Christians as well. Commenting on the issue, J. D. G. Dunn notes, “We do know . . . that there was a large Jewish community in Rome in the first century (estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000)” and also that “there was an active

1. Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004), 164.

2. All biblical quotations in English will be from the NRSV and all those in Greek will be from the UBS4 unless otherwise noted.

3. J. D. G. Dunn, “Romans, Letter to the,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, (ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 838.

Christian mission among ‘the circumcised’ (Gal 2:9).⁴ This leaves the possibility open that Paul was not only addressing the Gentiles in Rome. That this is the case becomes quite obvious once he starts to single out the Jews in 2:17, but the preceding verses (especially 1:18–32) have proven to be more of a gray area. Many commentators have taken the position that immediately following what has come to be known as his thesis statement (1:16–17), Paul begins a rhetorical diatribe against the Gentiles in which he berates them for their idolatry, immorality, and suppression of the truth only to turn around and place similar blame on the Jews for these same sorts of deeds in the subsequent chapter.⁵ Several of those who hold such a view maintain that these verses contain passing allusions to the Jews throughout, but the bulwark of the attack is aimed at the Gentiles. A closer examination will, perhaps, reveal that the opposite could actually be the case—that Paul is primarily arguing against the Jews with only occasional reference to the Gentiles.

First the Jew, Then the Greek

It is important to note that Paul is clearly speaking to both Jews and Gentiles about both Jews and Gentiles, but the distinction to be made is that he is talking *primarily* about the Jews and only *secondarily* about the Gentiles. This follows the established motif set forth in 1:16: “to the Jew first and also to the Greek,” repeated throughout the epistle (see Rom 2:9–10; 3:29; 9:24; 10:12; etc.). This is especially apparent in 11:11–24 where Paul describes how the gospel will go to the Gentiles as a result of the Jews’ apostasy. The Jews are the natural branches of the olive tree and the Gentiles are the outsiders being gifted with the chance to become a part of Israel through the grafting process. The story of Romans is the story of Israel,⁶ and it may only discuss the Gentiles

4. J. D. G. Dunn, “Romans,” 838

5. A considerable number of scholars uphold this view to one degree or another. Notable among them are A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God’s Righteousness* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 25–6; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1985), 27; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 1988), 51; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans AB 33* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 270; and N. T. Wright, “Romans,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. L. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:413. Wright claims that “though the spearhead of this attack (1:18–2:16) corresponds to regular Jewish polemic against the pagan world, Paul sharpens it up with specifically Christian notes, and he hints that Israel itself is included in the general indictment. He turns in 2:17–29 specifically to his own people, the Jews.” The “regular Jewish polemic” he mentions is largely encapsulated in Wisdom 13–14, a source from which Paul seems to have drawn quite heavily in his formulation of this section of Romans. However, Paul does not point to the Gentiles as being most guilty of the listed offenses (as the attack in Wisdom does), but rather to the Jews themselves, his own former people.

6. To clarify terminology, I refer to Jews as those to whom the covenant was originally given. Gentiles, conversely, are those to whom it was not originally given. By “Israel” I refer more broadly to God’s covenant people as a whole who, in the end, will comprise both Jews and Gentiles depending on their acceptance or rejection of the covenant as attested by their faith in Christ (or lack thereof—again, see Rom 11:11–24). I realize that this distinction of

only insofar as they accept (or reject) the invitation to become members of covenant Israel and live in faith. Though Paul may not be talking primarily about them in this section, they need to pay very close attention because they are about to be invited into the same covenant relationship. The same conditions that applied to the Jews—both promised blessings and promised cursings—will now apply with equal efficacy to themselves. The implicit hope is that they will learn from the Jews' mistakes and not do likewise.

Identifying the "Truth"

Let us now turn our attention back to the text at hand (Rom 1:18–25). Careful examination will show that those against whom God's wrath is revealed in 1:18 are primarily the Jews. They, then, are the antecedent for every instance of the words "they" or "them" (αὐτοί in its various forms) not only through verse 25 but continuing on to the end of the chapter and even further throughout the majority of Romans.

"Natural" or "General" Revelation

In 1:18, the phrase to which the various versions of αὐτοί refer throughout 1:19–32 is, "ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων." The key to determining the identity of the people who are suppressing (κατεχόντων) the truth here is to first identify the "truth" itself being suppressed. This question has given rise to a lot of speculation including what has come to be known as "natural" or "general" revelation. The forms of this "revelation" are sundry and vast. Richard Alan Young gives a good overview of proposed theories by suggesting that they be classified into three overarching categories:

- (1) Some say that the Creator left behind clues or 'tracks' in creation from which all persons can logically reason to a thematic knowledge of God...
- (2) Some say that God personally reveals the divine presence through the medium of creation to all persons . . . [and] (3) Others say that all persons have a vague, unthematic awareness of God by virtue of recognizing that they are finite creatures living in a contingent world. The recognition of creaturely finitude awakens a faint, intuitive awareness that there is something beyond. It depends on neither ratiocination nor divine self-disclosure.⁷

Young concludes that Paul is asserting some sort of a universal knowledge or understanding, but it is in the form of the third category—the "unthematic awareness" or what he calls a "felt ignorance."⁸ He goes on to differentiate this

terms, especially the definition of "Israel," is a major presupposition with which some will disagree. Thus, for the sake of the argument and given the bounds and scope of this paper, I will simply assert it as a working assumption throughout.

7. Richard Alan Young, "The Knowledge of God in Romans 1:18–23: Exegetical and Theological Reflections," in *JETS* 43 no. 4 (2000): 695.

8. Young, "Knowledge of God," 705. See this reference and the corresponding discussion in Young for a better understanding of the premises that led to this conclusion. I found them, for the most part, unconvincing.

type of knowledge from what he calls the “true knowledge of God” which, according to his examination of Hellenistic Jewish and Greco-Roman literature, “can only come through God’s personal self-disclosure.”⁹

The problem with the assertion that Paul is referring here to a mere “felt ignorance” can be seen by taking this variable and reinserting it back in to the original equation. In other words, does the theory adequately fit within the context of the text? In 1:19, it reads that the knowledge (γνωστόν)¹⁰ of God is plain or manifest (φανερόν) among them because God showed it to them (ἐφανερώσεν). Rom 1:20 talks about aspects of this knowledge being understood (νοούμενα) or clearly seen (καθορᾶται). The terms employed here lexically contradict Young’s concept of a vague awareness or ignorance. In 1:21, Paul renders “God” as the direct object of the participle γνόντες. He does not say that they had some sort of overtly mystical and indefinable cognizance concerning God, but rather that they *knew* him.¹¹ The fact that they consciously failed to honor or give thanks to him (ἐδόξασαν ἢ ὑψοῦν) suggests that they knew he was an actual being to whom honor and thanks were due. This is further evident from verses 23 and 25, where it says that “they exchanged the glory of . . . God” for “images” of man, “the truth about God for a lie.” The term “truth” in this context simply fails to correspond to Young’s notion of a “felt ignorance.” It seems, rather, to connote more of a special type of revelation or knowledge—one more conspicuously Jewish.

Lexical and Grammatical Evidence

Further evidence for the view that Paul had primarily the Jews in mind in this section can be seen by looking closely into the lexical and grammatical nuances of the terms τοῖς ποιήμασιν in verse 20, γνωστόν in verse 19, and ὁργή in verse 18.

Instrument or Agent?

In 1:20, Paul says that the unseen¹² things of God (his “eternal power and

9. Young, “Knowledge of God,” 707.

10. More on the lexical intricacies of this hermeneutically slippery word will follow below.

11. The fact that the word meaning “to know” is employed here may also be seen as evidence for a closer relationship with and understanding of God as more than Young’s “felt ignorance.” The concept of “knowing” in the Bible often implies a more intimate relationship than we mean when using the word today. For example, in Genesis 4:1 it says, “Adam knew [γινώσκω in the MT or ἔγνω in the LXX] Eve his wife; and she conceived” (KJV). Often throughout the Bible, marital imagery is employed to describe the relationship between Jesus Christ (the bridegroom) and the church (the bride), connoting a much more intimate relationship than mere acquaintance or Young’s “unthematic awareness” upon which the theories of “natural” or “general” revelation seem to be based. Rather, the implied relationship is both stronger and more intimate, reinforced by the fact that it is based on covenants.

12. I translate ἀόρατα as “unseen” rather than the popular “invisible” because the adjective does not necessarily imply ability (or inability, as the case may be) in this context. The semantic range of the verb can definitely include the concept of ability, but it is

divine nature”) are clearly seen “so that they are without excuse.” The participially subordinated phrase “τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα” modifying καθορᾶται offers at least four different lexical and grammatical possibilities. First, Paul could be talking about the created world itself (nature) as an instrumental dative. However, to assume this would be to interpret Paul as describing the idea of “natural” or “general” revelation mentioned above, which was shown to most likely *not* be the case. The second possibility is that Paul is still using an instrumental dative, but instead of referring to nature with ποιήμασιν, he is actually referring to the people God has created. This would not be the only time where Paul had used the word ποίημα to refer to a human being. He also does so in Ephesians 2:10, where he says, “αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἔσμεν ποιήμα” (we are his creation).¹³ This would align well with the biblical passages asserting that Israel is to be a light to the Gentiles (see Isa 42:6; 49:6; 60:3 and their echoes in Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; and 26:23).¹⁴ A third option assumes that, just like in the previous example, the word ποιήμασιν refers to the people God has created, but instead of employing an instrumental dative, Paul is actually using the dative of intermediate agent. Wallace lists what he considers to be the “four keys to [the] identification” of this rare dative: (1) “*Lexical*: the dative must be personal.” (2) “*Contextual*: The person specified by the dative noun is portrayed as exercising volition.” (3) “*Grammatical*: the only clear texts involve a perfect passive verb.” And (4) “*Linguistic*: a good *rule of thumb* for distinguishing between agent and means is simply this: the agent of a passive verb can become the subject of an active verb, while the means normally cannot.”¹⁵ The usage of τοῖς ποιήμασιν as a dative of agency fulfills all of these requirements except for the fact that the participle (νοούμενα) is in the present tense, not perfect.¹⁶ However, given that the perfect implies the present effect of a

not warranted in many cases, thus context must dictate usage. It is, in fact, theoretically possible to “see” God’s δύναμις (power) and θεϊότης (divinity) as evidenced by the use of καθορᾶται, which emphasizes the fact that they really are seen—fully and/or clearly. Of course, this depends on how one interprets Paul’s nuance of the idea of seeing. This could just be a play on words on his part, but the evidence does not necessarily warrant it given the context, thus it is exegetically unsound to rule out “unseen” as plausible in this instance, and it is actually preferable given that it doesn’t unfoundedly imply ability.

13. This assumes, of course, Pauline authorship of Ephesians, which I accept.

14. Whether or not they actually were that light depends on one’s personal interpretation of the events. I assert that they were a light only to the extent that they did what God commanded them to do and that the opposite was also the case. This does not greatly reflect on them given their history of disobedience. However, I also hold that the story of Israel continues on in our day and that those prophecies and promises made of old that have not been fulfilled will yet find efficacy and completion.

15. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 164. See also Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., “ποίημα,” n.p., in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains on CD-ROM*, Version 8.0.1, 2008 (domain number 42.30).

16. As for volition, Wallace says in the “debatable” example of 1 Tim. 3:36 that “no volition is required in the act of seeing” by which he seems to also imply other verbs of sense perception such as the participle νοούμενα (165). However, this is not the case. Consider

past action and also that Paul seems to be emphasizing the “present-ness” of the participle νοούμενα in this instance, the example must surely not be dismissed as implausible even by Wallace’s own standards.¹⁷ A fourth option could be that Paul again is using τοῖς ποιήμασιν as an instrumental dative as in the first two options above, only this time there is a difference in the object for which the substantive ποιήμασιν stands. He could be referring to the covenants God made with Israel instead of the things (nature) or the people he created. In other words, God makes his unseen power and divinity evident by means of the covenants he makes with his children. In the context of the passage—the Jews’ incurrence of God’s wrath as a result of their turning away from the covenant and the truth he offered them—perhaps this option would be most fitting.

Known vs. Knowable

Next we turn to Paul’s use of γνωστός in 1:19. According to Louw and Nida, there are six nuanced semantic ranges listed for this word in the New Testament.¹⁸ One of them (domain number 28.21) refers simply to anything that is known. Four others deal more precisely with the notion that that which is known is actually *well* known, even to the point of connoting a friendly or even familial relationship with the knower (28.30, 28.32, 34.17, 58.55). The last one (28.57) involves the ability or potentiality of a thing to be known. This is the one commonly chosen in modern translations to represent the occurrence of γνωστός in Romans 1:19.¹⁹ However, this is the only passage cited as evidence for such a usage which makes one wonder why it was singled out as such in this instance alone. A note in *The Oxford Study Bible*, commenting on the phrase translated “all that may be known” (connoting the idea of potentiality) says, “i.e. except God’s special revelation to Jews and Christians.”²⁰ It seems like the editor is going out of his way to justify what is clearly an obscure rendering by New Testament standards. Why change the meaning in this isolated instance? Why not let it share the semantic range of the other examples in the New Testament? Granted, the word can be found to indicate potentiality as can be seen in several instances of its classical usage,²¹ but its immediate context and its overall sense in the New Testament seem to warrant otherwise. As for its usage in other *koine* Greek literature—namely Philo and the Septuagint—every single occurrence of γνωστός connotes the “well known” idea.²² Based on the foregoing evidence, the occurrence of γνωστός in Romans

for example the situation in Numbers the where Jews who were bitten by poisonous snakes were commanded to look to the serpent on the stick to live. If they did not show volition by doing so, they died (21.8–9).

17. Though Wallace does not include this passage in his clear nor even in his debatable examples for the dative of agency.

18. Louw and Nida, “γνωστόν,” n.p.

19. See, for example, the NIV, NRSV, KJV, NKJV, NAB, CEV.

20. M. Jack Suggs, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, and James R. Jueller, eds., *The Oxford Study Bible: Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford, 1992), 1432.

21. Though not once in the New Testament, at least that I have found.

22. These occurrences often connote the notion of friendly or familial relation as

1:19 does not merit its own special category, but instead should retain the nuance of “well known” as is fitting in view of its biblical context.²³ Accepting such as the case, the verse could be rendered thus: “For what was well known of²⁴ God is manifest among them, for God revealed it to them.” The idea that γνωστός means “well known” rather than “knowable” rules out the option that Paul is talking about the Gentiles in this passage (the Gentiles at large, that is, not including those who may have converted to Christianity), among whom the widely manifest knowledge of God would indeed be a hard case to make.

Wrath and Covenants

Another evidence that the Jews are the primary addressee Paul had in mind can be seen by the implications conveyed in the word ὀργή in 1:18.²⁵ In his commentary on Romans, Dunn writes, “In the OT [where the audience is clearly Israel] the wrath of God has special reference to the covenant relation.”²⁶ He then goes on to explain that he does not think that is the case in this instance because he sees it as a reference primarily to a more universal audience (the Gentiles). “However,” he says, “if the covenant is seen as God restoring Israel to man’s proper place . . . then Creatorly wrath can be seen as the full scope of the other side of the coin from covenant righteousness (cf. Isa 63:6–7; Sir 5:6; 16:11); and see also [Rom] 2:5.”²⁷ The immediate context of this passage—Paul rebuking the Jews—suggests that the concepts of wrath and covenants really are two sides of the same coin. G. L. Borchert asserts that “Yahweh’s wrath is . . . aimed at Israel for failing to live by the covenant which Yahweh established with the chosen nation (e.g., Ex 32:10; Num 11:1, 33;

mentioned above. Rudolf Bultmann argues that there is, however, one instance of the word in the Septuagint that carries the nuance of potentiality: Sir 21:7 (Rudolf Bultmann, “γνωστός,” *TDNT* 1:718–719). However, this is debatable as evidenced by the translation “widely known” in the NRSV and “known from afar” in NETS.

23. Contra Cranfield (113) and others who maintain that the word should be rendered “knowable” following the tradition of key interpretational figures such as Origin, Thomas Aquinas, and others.

24. It is tempting to translate “τοῦ θεοῦ” as “from God” (seeing it as a genitive of origin), but the context is insufficient to support the idea with any degree of certainty.

25. I will not go into full detail about the specific timing implied by ὀργή, but rather focus primarily on the audience to whom Paul focuses primarily. But as for the matter of timing, a small note may suffice for our purposes. Paul seems to be indicating both the present situation (meaning both OT and NT times) as well as the eschatological outpouring. Brendan Byrne writes, “In early parts of the OT the destructive force of God’s wrath is directed against Israel (see, e.g., Exodus 32). The prophetic literature associated wrath with a coming judgment destined to fall upon either unfaithful Israel or oppressing foreign nations. In the symbolic world of Jewish apocalypticism ‘wrath’ in this sense became a key factor in the scenario of the anticipated eschatological judgment: the righteous could expect deliverance (salvation) from the wrath; its full force, however, would fall upon those who oppress them, whether foreigners of the unfaithful in Israel” (Brendan Byrne, *Romans* [Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996], 73). The extent to which Paul is talking about the present vs. the future is difficult to unpack with certainty.

26. Dunn, *Romans*, 108, 154.

27. Dunn, *Romans*, 108, 154.

Amos 2:6).²⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson argues that “Paul’s purpose here is less to show a universal condition of humanity than to describe *for the people of his own world* how the rejection of God leads to destruction and despair.”²⁹ In this sense, Romans is all about Israel which, in turn, is all about covenants.

Romans 1:18–25, it would seem, is directed toward the Gentiles only to the extent that they have entered into a relationship with the God of Israel and thus also become part of Paul’s “own world,” whether it be a covenant relationship or the type described in 2:14–15. Bruce E. Shields argues the contrary. He asserts that Paul’s conclusion, “and actually the main purpose for the argument...is simply and clearly stated by the closing infinitive clause of verse 20”—“εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους” (so that they are without excuse). This, he says, is “Paul’s assessment of the Gentiles.”³⁰ However, the Gentiles arguably have the most excuse since they were *not* the ones “entrusted with the oracles of God” (Rom 3:2). This emphasizes one of Paul’s major arguments throughout Romans—that the Jews are under greater condemnation precisely for the fact that they are the people to whom the law was given. They are under sin because “through the law comes the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20). Paul further asserts that “sin is not reckoned when there is no law” (Rom 5:13). Indeed, how can there be sin without a law to indicate what is and is not acceptable to the lawgiver?³¹ For a law to have effect it must be made known to those who are to be under its jurisdiction. Katherine Grieb states, “Action that is ‘righteous’ or done ‘in righteousness’ is action done ‘in right relationship’ with one’s covenant partner. It is ‘doing the right thing by’ someone.”³² Thus the unrighteous men mentioned in 1:18, those against whom “the wrath of God is being revealed,” are they who have the law given to them and then sin against it—these are the Jews. It could be argued that the only substantial allusion to the (non-Christian) Gentiles in this entire passage comes later on in 2:1 where Paul says, “ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς.” This is the point at which many commentators hold that Paul switches from talking about the Gentiles to the Jews more

28. G. L. Borchert, “Wrath, Destruction,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 991.

29. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 31 (emphasis added).f

30. Bruce E. Shields, “The Areopagus Sermon and Romans 1:18ff: A Study in Creation Theology,” in *Restoration Quarterly* 20 no. 1 (1977): 29–30.

31. Although the Mosaic Law was fulfilled in Christ, this does not mean that there was no more “law.” For example, Paul said, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom 8:2), suggesting that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” continued after the Mosaic Law was fulfilled. Furthermore, after Paul concludes in chapter 11 that “all Israel will be saved” (v. 26), he continues on in the following chapters to give exhortation to the people according to what he considered to be the commandments of God, no differently than he did throughout the earlier portions of Romans as well as every other epistle of his that we have. Perhaps it could be said that faith does not replace commandments, but rather vivifies them insofar as the are obeyed with an eye single to God’s glory, the possibility of which is only made possible in and through the Atonement of Christ.

32. Grieb, *Story of Romans* 21.

specifically,³³ but read in the light of the previous discussion it would appear that the opposite may well be the case.

Where Much is Given, Much is Required

The notion that the Jews were under greater condemnation because they were “entrusted with the oracles of God” (Rom 3:2) is reminiscent of the mini-parable of the faithful and unfaithful slaves in Luke, one of Paul’s former missionary companions (12:47–48). It reads, “That slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not prepare himself or do what was wanted, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating. From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.” Much was required from the Jews because they had been given much. As the Lord’s covenant people, they were supposed to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 42:6, 49:6; 60:3; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47, 26:23).³⁴ They were the ones who had the truth to suppress (1:18, 25), who knew God (1:21), and who had the “glory of the immortal God” to exchange (1:23). They are the ones who “[knew] God’s decree, that those who practice such things deserve[d] to die” and yet “they not only [did] them but even applaud[ed] others who practice[d] them” (1:32).³⁵ It is important to point out here that “such things” in verse 32 refers not only to the homosexuality that Paul condemns in 1:24–27, but rather to every indictment that he has wrought against the Jews throughout the entire passage (1:18–32).

Echoes of Idolatry

As a final piece of evidence that Paul is speaking primarily to the Jews, one can examine the Old Testament echoes in his rhetoric. Romans 1:23 and

33. Though not as specifically as in 2:17 where he says, “Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπὶ νόμῳ ζῇ.” Some may argue that Paul refers to the Gentiles in 1:18 where he also uses the word “all,” but in this instance “all” modifies “ungodliness and unrighteousness,” not “men.” In fact, he uses the participle κατεχόντων to significantly narrow down the category of men of which he is speaking (πάσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων). Thus 1:18, as with the rest of the verses in the pericope, refers primarily to the Jews.

34. See also Grieb, *Story of Romans*, 26.

35. Those who argue a case for “natural” or “general” revelation among the Gentiles must claim that such a vague form of revelation, made evident to them by either their observation of nature or of their own existence, holds them accountable for such a specific edict as this—a claim that seems rather unlikely. The more plausible option is that he is not talking about them, but rather about the Jews.

As regards homosexuality among the Jews, the Archaeological Study Bible offers the following commentary: “Indecent acts’ [ἀσχημοσύνην in 1:27] refer to sodomy, for which Sodom had become noted (Gen 19:5). God strictly forbade this practice (Deut 23:17)...and its presence was a sign of departure from the Lord (1 Kgs 14:24). Both Asa (1 Kgs 15:12) and Jehoshaphat took measures against this sin (1 Kgs 22:46), but its practice continued, until in the days of Josiah it was being practiced even in the Lord’s house (2 Kgs 23:7)” (*The Archaeological Study Bible* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005], 1835).

1:25 echo Psalm 106:19–21: “They made a calf at Horeb and worshiped a cast image. They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt.” These two verses in Romans also echo Jeremiah 2:11: “Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit.” A third example can be seen in Psalm 81:11–12 which is reminiscent of Rom 1:24, 26, and 28: “But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.” In each of these three instances, Israel is rebuked for turning from God to follow after idols.³⁶ Idolatry is man’s worship of anything other than God. At times the idols take the form of something in nature or a type of inanimate object. Other times the idolatry consists of exchanging the image of God—man—for God himself. This is the ultimate act of “the ax vaunt[ing] itself over the one who wields it” (Isa 10:15). Byrne comments on this backward phenomenon, “Idolatry represents the summit of ‘futility’ [Rom 1:21] in that it has human beings submitting themselves in worship to the creatures over which they were meant to rule.”³⁷ Such “exchang[ing] the truth about God for a lie” is parallel to exchanging natural intercourse for unnatural (Rom 1:25–27). Thus homosexuality is a form of idolatry which God strictly forbids just like all the other vices mentioned in this section (1:18–32),³⁸ and as such will likewise be a catalyst for the ushering in of God’s wrath. As Johnson indicates, wrath “is a concept that derives precisely from the prophetic warnings against idolatry” (see Isa. 51:7; Jer. 6:11; 25:25; Hos. 13:11; Zeph. 1:15).³⁹

Concluding Reflections

Although much has been said in this study to differentiate between Jew and Gentile, it seems as though the broader context of the Bible reveals much more of a fluidity between and interdependence of these terms. While the Bible reveals much of the story of the Jews throughout the years, how did the Gentiles come to be “Gentiles”? Were they always without the covenant, or was there, perhaps, an original unity of faith in the world? If such were the case, it could be argued that the Gentiles became “Gentiles” in the first instance by at one point being privy to the “truth” only to then refuse to honor or give thanks to God as such, thus “suppressing the truth” (κατεχόντων) in favor of a lie (Rom 1:18, 25). Hence ensued the wrath of God by which “their senseless

36. Again, the language here is very close to that found in Wisdom 13–14, but Paul does not address the Gentiles specifically as the Wisdom text does.

37. Byrne, *Romans*, 68. See also Rom 1:25 and Gen 1:26–28. Many commentators have made connections between idolatry and the story of Adam in Gen 3. I have a different take entirely on this matter, but the discussion that would result from the treatment of that view falls without the scope of this paper, thus I am intentionally avoiding the issue.

38. See Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 43.

39. Johnson, *Reading Romans*, 32.

minds were darkened” (1:21).⁴⁰

In this sort of a hermeneutical context, Paul is, as mentioned above, telling the Jews their own story. In essence he is saying that because of their faith~~less~~ness they will become “Gentiles” in the sense that they will be without the covenant. At the same time, he is telling the Gentiles that because of their faith~~ful~~ness they will become Jews, or rather, “Israel”—God’s covenant people, all of whom will be saved (11:26). The faithless Jews-turned-Gentiles (the natural branches of 11:21–24) will still be given the opportunity sometime in the future to return and enjoy the covenant nourishment flowing from the “rich root of the olive tree” (11:17) so long as “they do not persist in unbelief” (11:23). This fulfills the “first shall be last and last shall be first” imagery scattered throughout the Bible. The instances of this sort of language can be divided into two basic categories: those that talk about individuals or groups of people who will experience a reversal of roles on the one hand, and those that describe God himself on the other (see Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Matt 19:30; 20:16; Mark 9:35; 10:31; Luke 13:30; 1 Cor 15:45; Rev 1:11, 17; 2:8, 19; and 22:13 just to name a few). It is interesting to note the correlation here between the two types of passages: the former can be compared to the Jews and the Gentiles while the latter refer, instead, to a single being. Paul follows this imagery carefully in Romans: both Jews and Gentiles, to the extent that they are faithful, will become one united covenant people in Christ—Israel. Again, this resounds with the marital imagery found all throughout the Bible (See Psa 19:5; Isa 61:10; 62:5; Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11; Joel 2:16; Matt 9:15; 25:1–10; Mark 2:19–20; Luke 5:34–35; John 3:29; Rev 18:23, etc.).⁴¹ Christ is the bridegroom and the church is his covenant bride, Israel. The two come together to produce the good fruit of the gospel both at the present time and more especially at the eschaton.⁴² In such a scenario, the story Paul is telling becomes the same story told by all the holy prophets since the world began—the tale of Israel and her salvific and glorious reunion with God through Jesus Christ.

Following the tradition of the apostle Paul, it seems somewhat fitting to conclude with a paranetic plea. If what has been argued is true, one can gain a better appreciation for both the glory and the severity of God’s covenants by reading the story of Israel in light of both its successes and its failures. The promised blessings are real and are based on the law of Christ through faith. God remains faithful and will surely bring to pass every promise he has made.

40. Such an assertion would obviously assume an intrinsic unity between the Old and New Testament accounts, fusing the stories and teachings together as evidence of one divine whole. Thus the superimposition of the “Christian” interpretation would not be out of place within the “Jewish” context. Perhaps the terms “Christian” and “Jew” are also more fluid than people think.

41. See note 10 above.

42. This will come about following a period in which the bride (church) was abandoned “for a brief moment” (Isa 54:7—see the whole chapter for more on this sort of imagery).

The story of Israel persists today and will continue to flourish until the bridegroom comes again for his covenant bride. If we are to secure membership for ourselves in covenant Israel, we must reject idolatry in all of its decadent manifestations and strive to “live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4; and Luke 4:4).

JOYFUL MARTYR?
A BRIEF LOOK AT MONTANISTIC INTERPOLATIONS
IN IGNATIUS' EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
CHRISTOPHER J. DAWE

The Apostolic Father, Ignatius of Antioch,¹ was executed by the Roman Empire circa 100 C.E. En route to Rome, where his sentence was enacted, Ignatius wrote seven letters to various Christian churches in the Roman world. While six of these letters deal with relatively mundane matters, the *Epistle to the Romans* details the eagerness with which Ignatius faced death. Ignatius was certainly not the first Christian martyr, but he was the first to approach death with what amounts to glee. He also appears to be the first to counsel others to follow suit and seek martyrdom. This is surprisingly odd for a first century Christian. In that era there is no canonical or extracanonical indication, aside from Ignatius, that martyrdom was sought, much less encouraged. Ignatius' letter stands conspicuously alone—not only is it completely at odds with other authors, it is also out of place with his other writings. How then, is Ignatius' unique letter explained?

While martyrdom as an ideal is not in keeping with first-century Christianity it is quite at home in the second century. That century had been inundated with Montanism, a Christian group whose teachings gave rise to a movement that welcomed death and ecstatically embraced it.² Many a critical

1. Ignatius, or Theophorus ("Bearer of God") as he styled himself, was bishop of Antioch, a post previously held by Peter and Evodius. His claims to have been a disciple of John and to have been appointed to his bishopric by Peter have largely been accepted by the divergent Christian strains, notably the Catholic and Greek Orthodox faiths. During the reign of the Emperor Trajan, Ignatius was condemned to death and sent to Rome. Though there are accounts of Ignatius' actual death none appear authentic (Andrew Louth, introduction to Ignatius' *Epistle to the Romans*, (trans. Maxwell Staniforth; New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 55.).

2. While there is some debate as to whether Montanus, founder of Montanism, encouraged martyrdom (with Christine Trevett correctly pointing out that no existing primary sources show a connection), there is no argument that succeeding generations of Montanists considered martyrdom an ideal. Indeed, W. H. C. Frend claims that martyrdom, prophecy, and asceticism were "the hallmarks of Montanism" (W. H. C. Frend, *The Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 254.).

eye has been cast at the epistles of Ignatius concerning their credibility.³ These have felt that it is likely that the *Epistle to the Romans* was contaminated in later centuries by the fervor for martyrdom connected with Montanism.

The Epistle to the Romans

As already noted, Ignatius composed six other letters, all of which encourage submission to ecclesiastical leadership and attack the newly developed beliefs that were plaguing the orthodox Church.⁴ Like other public correspondences, these epistles were designed to promote Christian virtue. The *Epistle to the Romans*, however, stands distinctly apart from his others as it centers not on ecclesiastical matters but Ignatius' personal life. Indeed, his letter makes no reference to his bishopric, and "his usual warnings against error are absent from the epistle, for error itself, he wrote, had been 'filtered' from the Roman church."⁵ Indeed, the *Epistle to the Romans* is strikingly unique in that Ignatius deals only with his impending death. He longs "for his fate with a lover's passion"⁶ and requests that none, Christian or heathen, interfere with his execution. "I am," proclaims Ignatius, "truly in earnest about dying for God."⁷

I must implore you to do me no such untimely kindness; pray leave me to be a meal for the beasts, for it is they who can provide my way to God. I am his wheat, ground fine by the lion's teeth to be made the purest bread for Christ. Better still, incite the creatures to become a sepulcher for me; let them not leave the smallest scrap of my flesh, so that I need not be a burden to anyone after I fall asleep. When there is no trace of my body left for the world to see, then I shall truly be Jesus Christ's disciple. . . . How I look forward to the real lions . . . if they are still reluctant [to kill me], I shall force them. (Ignatius, 86)

Ignatius' letters were widely circulated through the ancient world and, given his status, proved to be quite influential to the early Church. Therefore, it is not surprising someone would try to use that influence to their own ends.

Early Martyrs

A brief look at other martyrdom accounts previous to or contemporaneous with that of Ignatius would be beneficial in determining if the letter to the Romans was tainted. These are generally considered authentic and are indicative of the general mood at the time. The martyrdom of Stephen, as recorded in Acts 7, is the first known incident of martyrdom. The narrative places Stephen in the hands the Sanhedrin and shows his attack on the religion

3. See Louth's notes in *Early Christian Writings* (55), Rius-Camps' *The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius, the Martyr* (14), and Richardson's *The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch* (4).

4. All seven were compiled by Polycarp and published posthumously (Ignatius, 55).

5. Christine Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius of Antioch in Syria and Asia* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992): 91.

6. Louth, *Introduction*, 84.

7. Ign., *Rom.*, 1.4.

of the time. It concludes with his vision of God the Father and God the Son and Stephen's request that he be received into the arms of Christ. At no point does Stephen eagerly demand death or incite others to follow him.

Acts 12 tells of the death of James the Greater and the near-martyrdom of Peter. Peter had been imprisoned by Herod Agrippa after the king executed James which was popular with the populace. Peter and James were both captured by Herod Agrippa. They did not voluntarily go to death. Indeed, when Peter was presented with the opportunity, he happily escaped death. Likewise, Paul in his initial imprisonment brandished his citizenship in an effort to avoid torture and condemnation (Acts 22). Another Apostle, James the brother of Jesus, was, according to Josephus, stoned by the Sanhedrin.⁸ Eusebius differs slightly, and states that James was initially thrown from the roof of the temple and then stoned. Neither account shows a desire for martyrdom.

Polycarp,⁹ who was acquainted with and praised the "perfect fortitude . . . [of] the blessed Ignatius," provides a more detailed account of his own encounter with martyrdom.¹⁰ Like Ignatius, he suffered the martyr's death. Unlike his predecessor, however, there remains a direct account. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* records that, far from eagerly demanding that the Romans speed up his death, he fled the authorities and "made his way quietly to a small country property."¹¹ Polycarp did not deny the faith and approached death without trepidation. Even so, he did not eagerly await martyrdom.

Further, Polycarp was apparently told of a man named Quintus who surrendered himself and others to the authorities only to have his "courage fail at the sight of the beasts" and "was induced by the Governor to take oath and offer incense."¹² This story is followed by an editorial comment stating, "We do not approve of men offering themselves spontaneously. We are not taught anything of that kind in the Gospel."¹³ These accounts all demonstrate the same concept. While martyrdom may occasionally be a necessary sealing of service to Christ, it is not something to be pursued. At Ignatius' time there was no widespread desire for martyrdom. It is only with the advent of Montanism that martyrdom begins to be seen as an ideal.

8. Joseph., *Ant.*, 20.

9. Though the martyrdom of Polycarp occurred years after that of Ignatius, it should still be considered in a study of this question. Polycarp also came from the generation that had come into direct contact with Christ's Apostles. He evidently had a high esteem for the spiritual nature of Ignatius and is the man credited with first collecting his letters. His is, all in all, perhaps the best indication of the notion of martyrdom at the time of Ignatius' death.

10. Pol., *Phil.*, 1.9.

11. *Mart. Pol.* 1.5.

12. An obvious recantation of the faith.

13. *Mart. Pol.* 1.4.

Montanism

Half a century after the death of Ignatius, a new strain of Christianity began to flourish in the area of Phrygia: Montanism.¹⁴ Founded in the middle of the second century by Montanus, a self-styled prophet claiming to be the *paraclete* that Jesus promised a century and a half earlier. Montanism proclaimed the imminent arrival of Christ. A systematic review of Montanus' theology is unnecessary—it is sufficient to say that his belief system spread rapidly in the second and third centuries throughout the Roman world and that the clergy of the dominant faith were not pleased.¹⁵

Montanus' message contains the first systematic call for martyrdom as a means to salvation. Though his sect would dwindle and face persecution from its orthodox counterpart, it influenced the Church. Frend claims that, through the writings of Tertullian¹⁶ martyrdom would be seen as increasingly acceptable:

Thanks to [his] genius . . . it was the sectarian of charm of Montanism that was to inspire the outlook of the new Latin Church. The Gospel message had sufficed for Christianity's youth. The New Prophecy spoke for [a new] age. . . . The consequences of this conviction for the future . . . of the Church were to be incalculable.¹⁷

According to Tertullian, "Who on inquiry does not join us, and joining us does not wish to suffer, that he may purchase for himself the whole grace of God, that he may win full pardon from God by paying his own blood for it."¹⁸

Martyrdom, to the Montanists, was not only good for the soul, it was "the life blood of the Church." In his work on Tertullian, T. D. Barnes states that for Tertullian, a man had "to face martyrdom cheerfully" as opposed to "a recent catholic 'martyr' who died only because he was too drunk to deny being a Christian."¹⁹

A Reexamination of the *Epistle to the Romans*

The epistles of Ignatius have long been a subject of debate, "provoking an endless series of reactions in favor of, or against, their authenticity."²⁰ While

14. Arriving at a specific date for the beginnings of Montanism is difficult. Eusebius places it during the twelfth year of Aurelius' rule, 172. Epiphanius claims 156. Trevett takes the middle road, saying the 160's (Trevett, *Montanism*, 41.) An exact date is unnecessary for this paper as long as it is accepted that the development of Montanism took place some decades after the death of Ignatius in 107.

15. Frend, *Church*, 70.

16. Tertullian, at first an outspoken foe of heresies, was a passionate proponent of Montanism.

17. Frend, *Church*, 71.

18. Tert. *Apol.* 15:16.

19. Timothy David Barnes, *Tertullian: a Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971): 135–136.

20. I Rius-Camps, *The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius, the Martyr* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1980): 15.

the text that we use today²¹ is generally accepted as authentic, “Challenges to Ignatian authorship have not ceased.”²² Indeed, allegations of interpolations aside, arguments have claimed that the entire text of *Romans* is a forgery.²³ It is easy to see why. *The Epistle to the Romans* “is in striking contrast”²⁴ when placed in apposition to the other six letters credited to Ignatius. Ignatius’ other writings all have the express purpose of encouraging strict obedience to ecclesiastical leadership and denouncing heresies. In *Romans*, however, far from instructing the parishioners (instructions never being far in his other epistles), Ignatius congratulates them on being “purified from every alien and discolouring stain” (Ignatius, 85).²⁵

Further, Ignatius is concerned here only with his glorious death and making sure the congregation knows to “keep [their] lips sealed,” claiming that martyrdom is his best “chance . . . of getting to God” (Ignatius, 85). Not only should the Christians not “lend him assistance” they should “take part instead, for it is the part of God.” His encouragement of martyrdom seems opposite of his more benign instruction to “abjure all factions, for they are the beginning of evil . . . Make sure that no step affecting the Church is ever taken by anyone without the bishop’s sanction” (Ignatius, 85).

Montanistic Influence

It is possible that at some point Montanistic interpolations were added to the *Epistle to the Romans* if, in fact, the text is not a complete forgery. The connection between Ignatius and Montanism is not new. W. M. Calder, in his study of Montanism, and commenting on another of Ignatius’ letters, suggests “that the letter of Ignatius to the Philadelphians be examined in the light of the connection of Philadelphia with the origin of Montanism.”²⁶ Trevett laments that his suggestion “has never been taken seriously.” She further comments,

21. “The text of Ignatius has come down to us in three very different recensions: Long, Middle, and Short. The *Long* recension consists of thirteen letters, of which seven are also found in the *Middle* recension, but with a notably more concise text. The *Middle* recension contains only seven letters. Finally the *Short* recension has only three, with a much shorter text than the *Middle* one . . . after a period of more than four centuries of extended polemics we have come to recognize as *textus receptus* that which is known as the *Middle* or *Eusebian* recension, consisting of seven letters with a middle text between the *Longer* (interpolated and forged) and the *Shorter* (epitomized) form” (Rius-Camps, 13–14).

22. Trevett, *Study*, 11.

23. Trevett, *Study*, 11.

24. Louth, *Introduction*, 84.

25. This statement itself should raise eyebrows. It seems incredibly out of place coming from an author whose work consists mainly of instruction and refutation of heresy. It is especially odd coming from a Christian when viewed in the light of Paul’s more famous epistle to the Romans in which he takes pains to warn against heresies. Rome as the seat of the Church was constantly being inundated with all manner of unorthodoxy. Of course, the possibility exists that the Roman Church managed to cleanse itself of all falseness in the years that intervened between Paul and Ignatius or that Ignatius thought all was bully with the Church. It is, however, unlikely. That statement is highly suspect and seems to circumstantially confirm interpolation.

26. Trevett, *Study*, 192.

I regret the fact that so little study has been made of a possible relationship between the writings of Ignatius and the Seer . . .²⁷ (however unappealing the idea to those who regard Ignatius and his catholic co-religionists as the bastions of orthodoxy and the representatives of canonical 'apostolic' traditions). The possibility should be considered.²⁸

Though they see the correlation, Calder and Trevett fail to properly identify causation; they are of the opinion that Ignatius inspired Montanism. This is highly unlikely for a number of reasons. First, by the earliest dating, Montanism was not founded for half a century after the death of Ignatius. By other estimates Montanism began at least seventy years after the martyrdom. Either way, quite a few decades had elapsed between the two events. In between them, there are no epistolary indications of joyful martyrdom. Second, though Ignatius had been to Phrygia, the area that produced Montanism, there is no record stating that he had been particularly influential. Finally, though Ignatius had interacted with John, his teachings, and the areas in which he taught, generally fell under the influence of the Petrine Church. This is not so with Montanism. Phrygia fell deep in the heart of Johannine territory. It is quite clear that John's teachings heavily influenced Montanism. According to Frend, "the place of the paraclete in Montanist theology, *their hopes of martyrdom*,"²⁹ and the coming of the millennium are surely Johannine."³⁰ There is no evidence of Ignatius (or Peter for that matter) having had the same influence.

When the *Epistle to the Romans* is viewed with its contemporary documents and other writings of Ignatius, the interpolations become clear. Martyrdom for salvation is not in keeping with his cultural tradition. It is, however, perfectly consistent with Montanism. Tertullian, wrote that "no one, on becoming absent from the body, is at once a dweller in the Lord, except by the prerogative of martyrdom, he gains a lodging in Paradise, not in the lower regions."³¹ This is clearly quite similar to Ignatius' claim that "it is going to be very difficult to get to God" without martyrdom (Ignatius, 85).

Though it is unlikely the treated document was written by Ignatius (at least in its entirety), its importance is not to be discounted. The *Epistle to the Romans* remains an important work in studying second and third century Christianity and helps to explain the prevalence of the martyrdom idea. Further, the influence it had on the early Church is not to be negated.³² For several decades, from about 170–210,³³ until the Church leadership clamped

27. Montanus.

28. Trevett, *Study*, 192.

29. Emphasis added.

30. W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 254.

31. Tert. *De An.*, 58.

32. Johannes Quasten calls the epistle "the most important of all." Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: Volume I: The Beginnings of Patristic Literature From the Apostles Creed to Irenaeus* (Allen: Christian Classics, 1983): 64.

33. Once again, dating is hard to pin down.

down on the practice,³⁴ Christians happily threw themselves into the arms of martyrdom. It was the *Epistle to the Romans* that provided episcopal justification for these actions. As stated by Edward Gibbon,

Stories are related of the courage of martyrs who actually performed what Ignatius had intended, who exasperated the fury of the lions, pressed the executioner to hasten his office, cheerfully leaped into the fires which were kindled to consume them, and discovered a sensation of joy and pleasure in the midst of the most exquisite tortures.³⁵

Christians who grew tired of waiting for Jesus no longer had to; with the perceived backing of Ignatius the Apostolic Father, they could simply go to Christ.

34. As the years passed it became obvious that the Montanists' proclamation of an imminent *parousia* were false. The apostolic tradition triumphed over the prophesizing of Montanism. The apostolic advent allowed the various bishops to exercise an increasing control over their congregations: no more seeking of martyrdom.

35. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Volume II* (New York: Macmillan, 1914): 111.

JOHANNINE AND GENTILE SELF-REVELATORY PASSAGES

DANIEL BECERRA

The Gospel of John contains fifteen instances, almost one per chapter, in which Jesus Christ reveals his true identity to his listeners. It is generally agreed upon among scholars that the audience of the Gospel of John consisted of both Jewish and Gentile Christians;¹ therefore the significance of these fifteen passages is paramount for understanding Johannine² Christology and the Jewish/Gentile perception of Jesus. Many scholars have written concerning how Jewish Christians, with a sound knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures, would have understood said passages. Symbols, themes and allusions to ancient Israelite stories found in these “self-revelatory” (SR) passages, such as the manna from heaven and the “I AM,” have received much attention. But one sees the neglect of similar rhetorical and symbolic parallels found in popular Greek literature of the era, such as in the writings of Plato and Homer. My study will examine SR passages in the Gospel of John and in its contemporary, popular Greek literature in an effort to show how John used common rhetorical themes found within Homeric and Platonic SR passages to paint a different picture of Jesus for the Gentile reader/listener. It must be understood that I am focusing on the rhetoric of John, not so much looking at the words of Jesus.

I have used a comparative methodology, looking at the context, themes, motifs and significance of each SR passage. First, I have identified all the SR passages in the Gospel of John and analyzed them, searching for common rhetorical themes and motifs. I have likewise analyzed the writings of Plato and Homer and similarly identified common rhetorical themes and motifs within their respective SR passages. Finally, I have compared and contrasted the Johannine and the popular Greek literature, identifying their rhetorical similarities and differences. For both *corpora*, I have focused on those instances

1. Brown shows that a great number of the constituency would have been of Gentile stock. See Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 55–58. Also Raymond Brown, “Other Sheep Not of This Fold”: The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity in the Late First Century,” *JBL* 97 (1978): 14–18.

2. The word Johannine refers to the writings of John.

in which the self-revelation is significant to the story, and have chosen to leave out those SR passages that are arbitrary. An example of this might be answering “I am,” to the question “Who is going to the market?” I was also not able to search the entire body of Greco-Roman literature and since the audience of the Gospel of John would have resided in the Greek-speaking eastern Mediterranean region,³ my research has excluded all popular Latin literature of the period. I have concentrated on texts and stories with which even unlearned Greeks would have been familiar, namely the writings of Homer and Plato.⁴ Because of the page constraints of this article, I have often only cited one or two examples of each rhetorical theme. The example cited should be considered illustrative of the rhetorical theme and, for convenience, the appendix will show further examples organized according to rhetorical theme.

What is a Self-Revelatory Passage?

A self-revelatory passage as I define it is simply a passage in which a character identifies who he or she is. The revelation is always given to another individual or group of individuals and suggests a deeper meaning than what is explicitly revealed. Such an example is found in the Gospel of John when Christ answers to those who seek Jesus of Nazareth, “I am he” (18:5–6). This passage would seem rather standard were it not for the events which ensue, namely that his accusers, upon hearing this declaration, fall down to the ground (18:6). Thus we see the revelation suggests a deeper level of meaning with regards to Jesus’ true identity. The fact that the men fall to the ground seems out of the ordinary unless who Jesus truly *is* warrants such a reaction.

SR passages can likewise be figurative declarations in which the character takes on a representative or symbolic identity to more accurately portray his or her role. For example, in Plato’s *Apology*, Socrates identifies himself as the “gadfly” who constantly awakens the state. Plato describes the state as a great horse “though large and well bred, is sluggish on account of his size and needs to be aroused by stinging.”⁵ Here we see that the figurative rhetoric helps the reader to better understand Socrates’ role to awaken the state from ignorance to wisdom. Jesus also reveals himself in this manner by taking on the titles “bread of life,” “good shepherd” and “true vine.”⁶

Significance

This section will address the rhetorical importance of SR passages in the Gospel of John, as well as their potential for being understood in various ways.

3. Brown, *Community*, 56.

4. Pelikan portrays the Greek myths and stories as so common among the Gentiles that they were used for “the amusement of the children.” For evidence of the later Christian familiarity with such works. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 16–17.

5. Plato, *Apology*, 18.26–31.

6. See John 6:35; 10:11; and 15:1.

Number and Achievement of Purpose

While each individual SR passage plays its own role in its respective context, the rhetorical importance of the SR passages in the Gospel of John is seen generally in their quantity and their role in light of the author's purpose for writing the Gospel itself. John wrote his Gospel so that the reader "might believe that Jesus is the Christ; Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name" (20:31). Of the twenty-one chapters in the Gospel, fifteen contain SR passages, all of which work together to reveal who this man Jesus truly is. As a consequence of the large quantity of SR passages, the narrative portions of the Gospel contain many examples in which people persecute Jesus of Nazareth on account of their misunderstanding these self-revelations. In a book where the primary reason for the death of the Son of God was a misunderstanding and disbelief of his identity, knowing his true identity as set forth in the SR passages is of paramount significance for the believer and the theological purposes of John.

Explicit and Implicit Portrayals

A characteristic of the Johannine SR passages is John's explicit and implicit portrayal of Jesus, or "dualism." In other words, this describes what John said and what he may have implied. These dualistic revelations help to explain why Jews and Gentiles might have understood Jesus' identity differently. Through his unique rhetoric, John "communicates a profound depth of meaning,"⁷ often portraying Jesus as two different characters. For example, consider the implicit nature of the following passage.

16 And when evening was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, **17** And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. **18** And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. **19** So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. **20** But he said unto them, it is I; be not afraid. **21** Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. (John 6:16–21)⁸

Raymond Brown noted the dual implications, saying,

The disciples in the boat are frightened because they see someone coming to them on the water. Jesus assures them "*Ego eimi*; do not be afraid." . . . however divine theophanies in the OT often have this formula. . . . John may well be giving us an epiphany scene, and thus playing on both the ordinary and the sacral use of *ego eimi*.⁹

7. Robert Kysar, "John, The Gospel of," Anchor Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 3:916.

8. All translations are mine except for those quoted in the appendix. They are from the KJV.

9. Raymond Brown, "The Gospel According to John" AB (New York: Doubleday,

Here we see a SR passage in which Jesus reveals himself explicitly as Jesus of Nazareth and implicitly as the God of the Old Testament. This latter interpretation obviously would have been understandable only to a reader with a firm foundation in the Israelite tradition. The question then logically arises, what about the Gentiles who would not have been familiar with Israelite history and scripture. What possible parallels might they have understood in these SR passages?

Issue of Reception

Tied into the portrayal of Jesus is the issue of reception. The issue of reception deals with how different individuals would have understood the portrayal of Jesus in the SR passages. For example, in the aforementioned passage, only an individual familiar with the stories of the Torah would have understood John's rhetorical parallel to Old Testament theophany scenes. Perhaps the Gentile's mind would have been taken back to another story about a man who similarly revealed his identity while exercising control over the waters. In Homer's *Odyssey*, it is Neptune whom John's Jesus parallels. Homer writes: "And a huge blue wave arched itself like a mountain over them to hide both woman and god. . . . Rejoice! . . . I am Neptune."¹⁰ What implications might this have had on the Gentile perception of Jesus?

Similarly, titles such as "Lord," "Savior," and perhaps most famously, the rich philosophical baggage of "the word"¹¹ would have surely had different connotations to a Jew than they would to a Gentile. John's thoroughly diverse audience would have understood Jesus' self-revelations according to their particular religious affiliation, nationality, ethnic background, and education. For example, consider the title of "Son of God" (9:8–41). The Jewish interpretation of the title "Son of God," differs from that of the Gentile. Cullmann explains that this title in Judaism was understood in three different ways. He writes, "The whole people of Israel is called the 'Son(s) of God;' kings bear the title *and* persons with a special commission from God, such as angels."¹²

Conversely, we learn that in the Hellenistic context, "anyone believed to possess some kind of divine power was called a 'son of god' by others or gave himself the title."¹³ Not only that, but during the life of Jesus "the Roman Emperors were entitled *divi filius*,"¹⁴ or "sons of god." With the abundance of soothsayers and fortune tellers in the Greco-Roman world "the designation thus did not have the connotation of uniqueness which is characteristic of New Testament use."¹⁵ Therefore we have various interpretations of the same self-

1966), 533–34.

10. Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.

11. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 371.

12. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), 272–73.

13. Cullmann, *The Christology*, 272.

14. Cullmann, *The Christology*, 272.

15. Cullmann, *The Christology*, 272.

revelation. The issue is thus, there are five ways to understand what Jesus meant when he revealed himself as the Son of God.

The title holds connotations to a man with divine powers, an emperor, a man from the house of Israel, a king, and a divine messenger. The Gentile reader would most likely not have been familiar with the Jewish interpretations and vice versa. Out of these five interpretations, we see one overlapping possibility for the congruent understanding of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth, namely that of a man possessing royal blood. Thus we see the problem of reception and the need to more fully explore not just what was said, but who John's readers were, and how they would have understood his Gospel. Because the SR passages were subject to interpretation, it is highly likely that a Gentile Christian would have understood them in light of the stories and rhetoric with which they were most certainly familiar¹⁶ and not with the Hebrew scriptures.

The Johannine Audience

An understanding of the Gentile constituency of the Johannine audience is necessary to appreciate the relevance of this study. I accept the traditional locale for the Johannine community as being at Ephesus.¹⁷ Though there is a possibility it was not centered here, the disciples of the Apostle John, namely Papias at Hierapolis and Polycarp at Smyrna, suggest a definite Johannine presence in Asia Minor. This is sufficient for the purposes of this paper.

The Johannine community inhabited the fourth largest city of the Roman Empire.¹⁸ It housed a large majority of the Christians living in the west and was the "primary commercial and trade center of Asia Minor."¹⁹ The principal language and ethnicity of the people would have been Greek with some "Lydians, Jews and Romans."²⁰ Like any other city in the Empire, the majority of the citizens would have fallen into the lower subsistence category, while a select minority was wealthy and well educated. Though educated Greeks would have been schooled in grammar, rhetoric, and literature, even the lay citizen would have been familiar with certain texts. Plato²¹ and Homer were perhaps two of the most well known authors in the history of the hellenized Near East and their respective dialogues and stories would have been well known to the Gentile Christians at Ephesus.²²

16. It is noteworthy that later Christian authors used parallels to characters in Greek stories to present Jesus to other Gentiles. See the last section and end notes concerning Justin Martyr.

17. Brown, *The Community*, 56.

18. John W. Welch and John F. Hall, *Charting the New Testament* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 6-2.

19. Welch and Hall, *Charting*, 6-2.

20. Welch and Hall, *Charting*, 6-2.

21. Betz writes that the "the Socratic tradition, was definitely 'detectable as early as the New Testament.' See Hans Betz, "Socrates," *AB* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:99.

22. Pelikan portrays the Greek myths and stories as so common among the Gentiles that they were used for "the amusement of the children." For evidence of the later Christian familiarity with such works. See Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 16-17.

As if acknowledging this very fact, John addresses his Gospel account to those of both a Semitic and Hellenic background. Once termed as the “Hellenistic Gospel,”²³ clear signs of this dual audience can be seen throughout his Gospel. Brown, for example, writes that “the author stops to explain terms like ‘Messiah’ and ‘Rabbi’—terms which no Jews, even those who spoke only Greek, would have failed to understand.”²⁴ Similarly, the Gospel’s “usage of abstract ideas like light and truth; its dualistic division of humanity into light and darkness, truth and falsehood; its concept of the Word—all these were once held to be the product of Greek philosophical thought.”²⁵ By this period of time, it is likely that even Jews would have been familiar with allusions to Greek stories and uses of rhetoric, since Judaism itself had undergone the process of hellenization.²⁶ The Hebrew Bible had been translated in Greek some two centuries prior and Greek philosophy was already one medium by which Judaism was shared.²⁷ Substantial evidence points to the fact that John was fully aware of his Gentile readers and that the composition of his Gospel was at least in part an “effort towards comprehensibility towards non-Jews.”²⁸

Johannine Self-Revelatory Passages

As mentioned before, there are fifteen instances in the Gospel of John in which Jesus reveals his true identity to his listeners. Within these fifteen instances, there are rather consistent rhetorical themes and motifs. This section addresses the most common themes and examines how they worked independently within the Johannine context. They include an affinity with divinity, an appeal to authoritative writing, a figurative identity and qualifiers. I have italicized the parts of the SR passage which illustrate these motifs. It should also be understood that more than one motif can exist with a single phrase or sentence. For example, “I am the true vine” includes two devices, the figurative identity and qualifiers. I don’t have the space to address all SR passage rhetorical motifs; some of those I will not address include a premature abstract

23. Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (ABRL; U.S.A: Doubleday, 1997), 371.

24. Brown, *The Community*, 55.

25. This dualism refers to the symbolic usage of light and darkness and is not the same dualism which was spoken of in the “Significance” section of this paper. Also see Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 371.

26. The Old Testament was translated into Greek and was part of the primary scriptures of second generation Early Christians. The vast majority of the Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament are not from the Hebrew Bible but from the Greek Septuagint. Philo of Alexandria, who was very popular among early Christians, was known for his method of allegorical exegesis. He employed Greek philosophy to explain and defend the Jewish faith. These views would have funneled down into the masses, which perhaps would have used them to proselytize or to similarly defend the faith. For Jews and Christians who spoke Greek, like John and his community, they would have not only been familiar with popular Greek ideas and rhetoric, but at least in part, with this hellenized version of Judaism.

27. For an example, see Philo’s use of logos, see Eugene Boring, *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 241–42.

28. Brown, *The Community*, 55.

revelation (often in the third person), a supernatural act, foreknowledge, and the speaker as the author of life/salvation. Further examples of the SR passages discussed in this section can be seen in the appendix.

Affinity with Divinity

The most prevalent motif within the Johannine SR rhetoric is the mention of the speaker's close relationship with deity. In thirteen of the fifteen passages in the Gospel of John, Jesus makes mention of either his familial relationship or subservient status to God the Father. Alluding to his divine kinship justifies his position as one who is truly on God's errand. The following examples will be sufficient to illustrate this theme. John 8:12–20 records Jesus teaching at the treasury of the temple where he reveals himself as the "light of the world." He proclaims, "I am the light of the world, he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (8:12). Upon hearing this, the Pharisees claim that his testimony could not possibly be true because he testifies of himself and provides no other witnesses (8:12–13). John records the following exchange:

16 I am not alone, but *I stand with the Father that sent me*. **17** It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. **18** I am one that bears witness of myself, *and the Father that sent me bears witness of me*. **19** Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor *my Father*: if ye had known me, ye should have known *my Father* also. (John 8:16–18; emphasis added)

Jesus here is obviously referring to God the Father, whom he claims bears witness to his divine mission. Rhetorically speaking, mentioning his divine kinship lends Jesus authority in that a second witness qualifies his self-revelation as being true according to the law of Jews.

Another prime illustration of this common motif is found in the tenth chapter of John. Jesus here reveals himself as the "sheep door" and the "good shepherd." John writes in 10:14–18:

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. **15** *As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father*: and I lay down my life for the sheep. **16** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. **17** *Therefore does my Father love me*, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. **18** No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. *This commandment have I received of my Father*. (emphasis added)

Once again we see the mention of a close relationship with Deity. Jesus is to lay down his life for his sheep, a mission and gift given to him from the Father. Rhetorically, Jesus' kinship with God justifies his mission to his sheep.

An Appeal to Authoritative Writing

Another prevalent motif within the body of Johannine SR passages is the appeal of the speaker to a body of authoritative literature. John's main character Jesus often draws upon the Hebrew Bible to lend credence or authority to his words, to defend himself, or to allude to prophecy to aid in his coming self-revelation. For example, in John 6:22–70, Jesus is teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum. His listeners have sought him not because they saw his miracles but because they had eaten of his bread the previous day and were filled (6:26). Jesus in this SR passage reveals himself as the “bread of life” and the “living bread” (6:35, 51). In order to help them understand his role, he references an authoritative book of the Torah, namely the book of Exodus. John 6:29–33 reads:

29 Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent. **30** They said therefore unto him, What sign do you show then, that we may see, and believe you? What do you work? **31** Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. **32** Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.* **33** *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and gives life unto the world.* **34** Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. **35** And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. (emphasis added)

Here Jesus references the story of Moses and the Exodus into the wilderness to draw a comparison between himself and the bread sent down from heaven by the Father. Rhetorically speaking, John's inclusion of an appeal to authoritative writing strengthens Jesus' self-revelation by associating it with an already familiar life-sustaining symbol in Israelite history.

Another good example of the appeal to authoritative writing can be seen in John 7:12–31. Here Jesus is teaching at the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. His listeners are antagonistically questioning his doctrine and accuse him of having a devil. Jesus claims that they seek to kill him and judge unrighteously. This whole event seems to be in the wake of Jesus' healing of an invalid on the Sabbath (5:8–9). Notice how his appeal to the authoritative law of Moses strengthens his final self-revelation of “I am from him (God), and he has sent me” (7:29). John writes:

19 *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keep the law? Why do you go about to kill me?* **20** The people answered and said, you have a devil: who goes about to kill you? **21** Jesus answered and said to them, I have done one work, and you all marvel. **22** *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and you on the Sabbath day circumcise a man.* **23** *If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are you angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?* **24** Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. **25** Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to

kill? **26** But, lo, he speaks boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? **27** Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is. **28** Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, You both know me, and you know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom you know not. **29** But I know him: for I am from him, and he has sent me. (John 7:19–29; emphasis added)

Rhetorically, once again we see that Jesus' appeal to law here strengthens his claim that he is indeed sent to do the will of the Father. The appeal elevates Jesus to the status of a doer and speaker of truth. His argument is essentially that if you circumcise on the Sabbath according to the law of Moses and it is okay, healing on the Sabbath according to the will of God who sent me it is likewise okay.

Figurative Identity

Another common rhetorical motif which John utilizes is the figurative identity. This means that Jesus identifies himself not as a person, but figuratively with a title that describes his role. For example, in John 11:1–57 Jesus reveals himself as “the resurrection and the life” (11:25). In this chapter he has come to Bethany at the behest of Mary and Martha because Lazarus, their brother, has died. Upon arriving the following dialogue ensues:

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. **21** Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died. **22** But I know, that even now, whatsoever you ask of God, God will give it to you. **23** Jesus said to her, your brother shall rise again. **24** Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. **25** Jesus said to her, *I am the resurrection, and the life*: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. (11:20–25; emphasis added).

Jesus' figurative self-revelation suggests to the reader that it is he who is in control of both life and the power of resurrection, a fact he later demonstrates by raising Lazarus from the dead (11:43–44). By using a figurative title, John can show not only who Jesus is but what he can do to help others. Other examples of this usage include Jesus as the “bread of life,” “light of the world” and “way, the truth and the life” (6:35; 8:12; 14:6). Rhetorically, John does more to reveal Jesus' true identity by speaking figuratively than he could have done with a literal declaration.

Qualifiers

A very significant rhetorical element for our study is what I will term “qualifiers.” Qualifiers are adjectives which set apart the character to an idealistic status. They suggest that whatever thing Jesus claims to be, he is the ideal version of that thing. For example, Jesus is not just the shepherd but the “good” shepherd (10:11). This qualifier both portrays Jesus as the ideal and

suggests that there were likely those leaders among the flock who were not “good.”²⁹ Jesus as the “true” vine likewise reflects the ideal while suggesting that there were those who claimed to be such, but were not. We similarly see the “living” bread, set up in rhetorical antithesis to that bread which if a man eats, it will not provide him with life eternal (John 6:51). All of these qualifiers rhetorically raise Jesus’ identity status to the ideal in a world full of that which is imperfect and artificial.

Greek Self-Revelatory Passages

Throughout the SR passages in the writings of Homer and Plato, one can see similar rhetorical themes and motifs to those found in John’s Gospel. These not only appear regularly, but abound and allow for allusions and parallels to be drawn in the mind of a Gentile, much like allusions and parallels might have been drawn to the Hebrew scriptures in the mind of a Jew. Evidence of affinity with divinity, an appeal to authoritative writing, a figurative identity and qualifiers are all found within Homer and Plato’s popular works. This section will address these common themes and analyze how they work within their respective context. It should also be understood that more than one motif can exist with a single phrase or sentence. For example, “I am the true lover” includes two devices, the figurative identity and qualifiers. I will not be able to address all SR passage rhetorical motifs. Some of these include the author of truth/wisdom, supremacy, old age or very rich, reference to regional and familial origins, and the inclusion of a supernatural act. Further examples of the themes addressed in this section can be seen in the appendix.

Affinity with Divinity

Like the Johannine examples, many of the SR passages in Greek literature make reference to the main character having a close relationship with a god or being a god himself. This device is used to justify the position of the character. Consider, for example, Socrates in Plato’s *Apology*. In the *Apology* Socrates is put on trial for corrupting the youth and teaching them not to believe in the gods of the state. His defense is that he has been sent by the gods to awaken the state to its erroneous actions. If convicted for his crime, he will be exiled or put to death. Socrates responds, “If you put me to death you will not easily find another as I am. . . . *I am a kind of gift from god.*”³⁰ Socrates’ main defense is that he has been sent from god and is led by his *daemon* or “divine being” and thus is justified in his actions regardless of the state’s opinion.

Examples of the affinity with divinity are likewise prevalent in the writings of Homer. Achilles, the main character of the *Iliad*, similarly declared his relationship with deity within the context of a SR passage. In the twenty-first book of the *Iliad*, Achilles has engaged in a fight with Asteropaeus, who claims

29. P. M. Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God* (Cambridge: Westminster/James Clark & Co., 1991), 30.

30. Plato, *Apology*, 18.24–41

that he is “of the blood of the river Axius” and will kill Achilles.³¹ After having struck him with a fatal blow, Achilles, justifying his position as the rightful victor, makes the following self-revelation:

Lie there begotten of a river though you be, it is hard for you to strive with *the offspring of Saturn's son*. You declare yourself sprung from the blood of a broad river, *but I am of the seed of mighty Jove*. My father is Peleus, son of Aeacus ruler over the many Myrmidons, and Aeacus was the son of Jove. Therefore *as Jove is mightier than any river that flows into the sea, so are his children stronger than those of any river whatsoever*.³²

Achilles' victory over his foe is based upon the fact that he enjoys a kinship with Jove, the head of the gods. Rhetorically in the *Apology* and the *Iliad*, we see that the affinity with divinity justifies the “rightful” or “just” position the character has taken, be it legally, as in the case of Socrates, or in combat, such as the passage with Achilles.

An Appeal to Authoritative Writing

Another commonality that exists between the Johannine and Greek SR passages is the appeal to authoritative writing. The individual appeals to some type of authoritative source familiar to his listeners, in an effort to lend credence to his words. In the Gospel we saw that Jesus referred to the law of the Jews. In the Platonic dialogue *Phaedrus*, Socrates reveals himself to Phaedrus as “a lover of knowledge.”³³ To justify his point that he doesn't have time to dabble in vain inquiries, he declares, “I must first know myself, *as the Delphian inscription says*, to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous. And therefore I bid farewell to all this.”³⁴ Socrates does the very same thing in many of Plato's dialogues. In the *Apology* he appeals to the law of the state.³⁵ In *Lesser Hippias*,³⁶ *Ion*,³⁷ and *Theaetetus* he appeals to great poets and philosophers such as Homer, Hesiod and Archilochus.³⁸ All appeals to authoritative writing lend credence and authority to the speaker's words. This rhetorical device strengthens his position and clarifies his self-revelation.

We also see the appeal to the words of the gods. In ancient Greece, the will of the gods was made known by divinatory arts such as consulting with oracles, casting lots, and examining the innards of animals.³⁹ Their revealed word became the sure authority and often was the pretext under which wars

31. Homer, *Iliad*, 21.184–91.

32. Homer, *Iliad*, 21.184–91.

33. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 230.

34. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 229–30.

35. Plato, *Apology*, 18.24–41.

36. Plato, *Lesser Hippias*, 372a.

37. Plato, *Ion*, 532.5–7.

38. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 39.

39. Flaceliere, R., “Divination,” *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 487–88.

were begun and battles were fought. Homer's *Iliad* illustrates the authority of the word of the gods in book 7 as Helenus attempts to convince Hector to engage in single combat. He pleads with Hector, saying, "I am your brother, let me then persuade you."⁴⁰ After divining the will of the gods, he makes his appeal, saying, "Bid the other Trojans and Achaeans all of them take their seats and challenge the best man among the Achaeans to meet you in single combat. *I have heard the voice of the ever-living gods, and the hour of your doom is not yet come.*"⁴¹ Helenus being a blood relative suggests that he is one in whom Hector can trust and who would not knowingly send his brother to his death. His appeal to the authoritative words of the gods strengthens his self-revealed position as brother and lends authority and truthfulness to his words.

Figurative Identity

The figurative identity is very prevalent in the popular Greek literature, especially in the works of Plato. Socrates, like Jesus, often identifies himself figuratively to emphasize his role in relation to his listeners. This device paints a more accurate picture of how Socrates can help others. In Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus*, Socrates declares "you are the person who is in labor, and I am the barren midwife."⁴² The image of a barren midwife leads the mind to the nurturing role of a woman who can no longer bear children but finds joy in helping other women do so. Plato used this device in order to emphasize Socrates' role as one who is "thoroughly examining whether the thought which the mind of the young man bears is a false image or a noble and true birth."⁴³ The figurative identity strengthens the comprehension of the self-revelation by illustrating not just who the character claims to be but what he does for his listeners.

Similarly in his *Apology*, the man Socrates proclaims, "For if you put me to death you will not easily find another as I am . . . as a gadfly who attaches himself to the city."⁴⁴ He is one who constantly awakens the state which is as a great horse "though large and well-bred, is sluggish on account of his size and needs to be aroused by stinging."⁴⁵ Though superficially the image of a gadfly seems somewhat negative, in the context of the story it becomes a very positive figure. The state was in a position of stagnant ignorance, and Socrates the means by which it was awoken to wisdom and knowledge. Socrates is much like a man who yells in your ear because the house is burning down.

Qualifiers

Much like John's Gospel, qualifiers are abundant in Greek literature. As mentioned before, qualifiers are adjectives which set apart the character to

40. Homer, *Iliad*, 7.47–55.

41. Homer, *Iliad*, 7.47–55.

42. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 151.

43. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150c.

44. Plato, *Apology*, 18.24–41.

45. Plato, *Apology*, 18.26–31.

an idealistic status. For example in Plato's dialogue *Alcibiades*, Socrates is in engaged in conversation with Alcibiades concerning the nature of the "true" lover. At the conclusion of the dialogue, Socrates finally declares, "I am he."⁴⁶ The qualifier "true" sets the lover apart from false lovers who, as Socrates says, "love not Alcibiades, but the belongings of Alcibiades," and "go away when the flower of youth fades."⁴⁷ Similarly, Socrates is figuratively described as the "true midwife" and "the purple in a garment."⁴⁸ He is unique and serves as not just any color but the most excellent of all colors. He is the excellence of the state and essentially the "salt of the earth."

The ideal in the works of Homer takes on the mask of age and birthright. Older men and individuals of noble birth are seen as the ideal. The qualifiers include "older" and a host of other words which suggest the privileged upbringings of a royal son. Phrases such as "*I am older* than either or you; therefore be guided by me,"⁴⁹ and "in counsel I am much before you, for *I am older* and of greater knowledge"⁵⁰ are common throughout Homer's *Iliad* and establish an authoritative precedence. In the *Odyssey*, the portrayal of the ideal man is seen in statements such as "*I am by birth a Cretan*; my father was a *well-to-do man*"⁵¹ and "*I too was a rich man once*, and had a *fine house of my own*."⁵² The qualifiers in both these instances strengthen the self-revelation and elevate the main character to an ideal status in the eyes of the listener.

Jesus through Gentile Eyes

How might Gentile Christians reading or listening to the Gospel of John have seen Jesus of Nazareth differently from their Jewish brethren? The striking rhetorical similarities found in the SR passages of both bodies of literature allowed for a uniquely Greek view of Jesus of Nazareth that eventually filtered down into later Christianity. The parallel rhetorical themes of affinity with divinity, an appeal to authoritative writing, figurative identity and qualifiers, work to place Jesus within the Greek concept of perfection and idealism. Jesus truly was who he claimed to be in a world of those who were not. He was a speaker of truth and one who could assist others in reaching a more ideal or perfect state.

The portrayal of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John fits firmly into the Greek concept of the ideal and perfection. For Plato and Aristotle, this world and all in it are a shadow of a higher, more perfect, or "ideal" world. Perfection has its own independent existence even within an imperfect world. For these early Greek philosophers, this perfection and ideal represent that which *truly is* rather than that which appears to be. For them, the possession of wisdom and

46. Plato, *Alcibiades*, 1.131.

47. Plato, *Alcibiades*, 1.131.

48. Epictetus, *Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae*, 3.23.

49. Homer, *Iliad*, 1.25.

50. Homer, *Iliad*, 19.215–20.

51. Homer, *Odyssey*, 14.200–205.

52. Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.74–75.

knowledge is the way to understand perfection and ultimate happiness. Perfect or ideal objects also had the capacity to elevate others to a more idealistic and perfect state. For example, Plato compared the ideal with the sun, which shines upon all plants and animals, enabling them to grow and reach their fullest potential.⁵³ The ideal or perfect object was likewise seen as unchanging and original in form.

The affinity with divinity and qualifiers *rhetorically present Jesus as one who was who he claimed to be in a world of those who weren't*. The characters Jesus, Socrates, Achilles and Ulysses all claimed to have a special relationship with Deity. For Jesus it was the Father, for Socrates it was his *daemon*, while Achilles and Ulysses held kinship with Jove and Minerva.⁵⁴ At closer rhetorical examination one sees that these declarations of kinship are used in an effort to portray the character as being the rightful, true, or "ideal" form of what they reveal themselves to be. For example, Achilles' claim to divine sonship was the reason for which he was the rightful or true victor of the battle between him (Achilles) and Asteropaeus.⁵⁵ In the story of Ulysses and the *Odyssey*, it is Ulysses' help from the goddess Minerva which finally allows him to exact judgment on those who had wronged his family and take his place as the rightful king of Ithaca. Finally, it was Jesus' claim to divine affinity which added God's testimony to the truthfulness of his words, "I am the light of the world," thereby establishing him not just as one who claimed but one who truly was (8:12).

The qualifiers specifically add the element of the outside world by portraying the ideal character in contrast to others. In *Theaetetus*, Socrates as the "true midwife"⁵⁶ is separated in rhetorical antithesis from those midwives who know nothing of childbearing from personal experience.⁵⁷ The characters in Homer's *Iliad* are "older" and therefore the rightful orators among an audience of younger, less experienced men. I wonder if this Homeric ideal echoed in the mind of the Gentiles who read Jesus' words "before Abraham [ca. 2800 B.C.E.] was I" (8:58). We see Jesus as the "good shepherd" and the "true vine" in contrast to those who offered only lip service.⁵⁸ He similarly reveals himself as the "light of the world," which as Brown wrote, was "probably by way of contrast with the festal lights burning brightly in the court of the women at the temple."⁵⁹ And thus we see Jesus is likewise portrayed as the ideal in a setting of that which is not.

The appeal to authoritative writing establishes the character Jesus as a speaker of truth and wisdom. By drawing upon the words of the Torah, Jesus establishes himself as the speaker of truth according to the law of his listeners. By quoting scripture and aligning himself with the law of Moses, his listeners

53. Plato, *Republic*, 2.

54. Homer, *Odyssey*, 16.155–75.

55. Homer, *Iliad*, 21.184–91.

56. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150a.

57. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150.

58. Brown, *John*, 534.

59. Brown, *John*, 534.

were unable to challenge his self-revelation without challenging the law, or “truth,” by which they themselves were governed. The same holds true in the stories of Helenus and Hector, and Socrates. Hector cannot question the words of Helenus without doubting the gods themselves. Similarly, Hippias cannot challenge the words of Socrates without challenging the Oracle at Delphi. The appeal to authoritative writing rhetorically sets these characters as speakers of that which is right and true.

Finally, the figurative identity illustrates Jesus’ ability to help the listener approach a more ideal or perfect state of existence. Within both the Greek and Johannine *corpora* of SR passages, there are no examples of negative figures such as “I am death” or “I am hunger.” Titles such as the “bread of life,” “living water,” “gadfly,” and “midwife” all seek to improve the situation of the listener and bring them into a more ideal state of existence. Consider the logic of Jesus’ figurative self-allusion to bread and water. The reason a person eats and drinks is so that they might not hunger or thirst. Within the context of the pericope, this is the ideal state. Jesus is the living bread and water to whom which if a person should come, they “shall never hunger . . . and shall never thirst” (6:35). Similarly, Socrates is the god-sent facilitator of wisdom and truth, who not only awakes people to their ignorance but offers knowledge much as a caring midwife “soothe[s] . . . and offer[s] you one good thing after another.”⁶⁰ Each figurative identity allows Jesus to both be the ideal and offer the listener more idealistic existence.

Evidence for the reception this Greek understanding of Jesus can be seen in the writings of later Christian authors like Justin Martyr, St. Basil, Origen, and Gregory of Nazianus.⁶¹ Their writings reflect this unique Gentile understanding of Christ. For example, Gregory described Jesus of Nazareth as the “model of the original form” and “the image of God in person.”⁶² Justin Martyr, who was likewise of Gentile stock, often made allusions and comparisons to the works of Plato, Homer, and other Greek authors. He even went so far as allude to the similarities between Jesus and Socrates writing that Christ was “partially recognized in Socrates.”⁶³ In his *Second Apology*, he wrote of the truthfulness and grandeur of Jesus’ words, speaking of such as “greatest of all human teaching” and describing Christ as the “perfect rational being in body, reason and soul”⁶⁴ and the “instrument of human reason.”⁶⁵

Finally, Origen wrote that Christ was “in all respects incapable of change or alteration, and every good quality in Him being essential, and such as cannot be changed and converted.”⁶⁶ These ideas of wholeness, originality and

60. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 151.

61. Gregory wrote that Christ was the “model of the original image.” See Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 286.

62. Pelikan, *Christianity*, 286.

63. Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*, 10 (ANF 1:191).

64. Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*, 10 (ANF 1:191).

65. Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*, 10 (ANF 1:191).

66. Origen, *De Principiis*, 1.10 (PG 11).

completeness all relate to the concept of the ideal and perfection and reflect the uniquely Gentile understanding of Jesus.

Conclusion

I have shown in this study that the interpretation of SR passages in the Gospel of John widely varied among individuals and was primarily based upon each person's respective ethnic background and religious affiliation. Just as Jewish Christians would have been rhetorically drawn to the Old Testament when reading certain passages in the Gospel of John, Gentiles would have similarly had a unique view and understanding of the man Jesus based on the stories of Socrates, Achilles, and Ulysses. Common rhetorical themes such as the affinity with divinity, an appeal to authoritative writing, a figurative identity, and qualifiers found in the SR passages of the Gospel of John and the various works of Homer and Plato, worked together to paint a uniquely Gentile view of Jesus.

With the propagation of Christianity accomplished primarily by Gentiles to Gentiles, it is easy to understand how this idea stayed in Christian theological literature. Jewish convert Christians in the years after Jesus' death were notably less in number than those of a Gentile background and the early Fathers and prominent writers of the growing church were virtually all of Gentile stock. Evidence can be seen for the concept of Jesus as the ideal in later Christian circles, as well as comparisons between Jesus of Nazareth and Greek idealistic characters such as Socrates. Thus we see that many Gentile Christians understood him as one who is who he claims to be among those who aren't (affinity, qualifiers), a source of truth/wisdom (appeal to authoritative writing), and one who could help others reach a more perfect or ideal state.

APPENDIX

This appendix organizes the most illustrative Johannine and Greek SR passage examples according to rhetorical motif. Due to the length of some of the passages, I will include only selections that demonstrate the rhetorical device in question and will designate it in italics for further clarification. After the verse reference I will note who the character reveals himself to be, but will not always show it in the passage cited. At the conclusion of the appendix, I have listed some less common rhetorical devices mentioned but not prevalent enough for the purposes of this paper.

Affinity with Divinity

John 4:4–42 (The Messiah): **9** Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” **10** *Jesus answered and said unto her, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”* **11** The woman saith unto him, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?”

John 6:22–70 (Bread of life/living bread): **36** “But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. **37** All that *the Father giveth me* shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. **38** *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* **39** *And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me,* that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. **40** And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” **41** The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.”

John 7:12–31 (from God): **15** And the Jews marvelled, saying, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” **16** Jesus answered them, and said, “*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* **17** If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. **18** He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. . . . **29** *But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.*”

John 8:12–20 (Light of the World): **16** “And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but *I and the Father that sent me.* **17** It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. **18** I am one that bear witness of myself, and *the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*” **19** Then said they unto him, “Where is thy Father?” Jesus answered, “Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known *my Father* also.”

John 8:21–31 (Son of Man): **23** And he said unto them, “Ye are from

beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.” **25** Then said they unto him, “Who art thou?” And Jesus saith unto them, “Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning. **26** I have many things to say and to judge of you: *but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.* . . . **29** *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone;* for I do always those things that please him.”

John 8:33–59 (I am): **38** “*I speak that which I have seen with my Father.* and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.” **39** They answered and said unto him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus saith unto them, “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. **40** But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. **41** Ye do the deeds of your father.” Then said they to him, “We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.” **42** Jesus said unto them, “If God were your Father, ye would love me: *for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*”

John 9:1–7 (Light of the World): **2** And his disciples asked him, saying, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” **3** Jesus answered, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but *that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* **4** *I must work the works of him that sent me,* while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”

John 10:1–40 (Sheep door/Good Shepherd): **15** “*As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.* and I lay down my life for the sheep. **16** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. **17** Therefore *doth my Father love me,* because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. **18** No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. *This commandment have I received of my Father.*”

John 11:1–57 (Resurrection and the life): **21** Then said Martha unto Jesus, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. **22** But I know, that even now, *whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*” **23** Jesus saith unto her, “Thy brother shall rise again.” . . . **41** Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, “Father, *I thank thee that thou hast heard me.* **42** *And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*”

John 13:12–19 (I am he): **19** “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. **20** Verily, verily, I say unto you, *He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*” **21** When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.”

John 14:1–6 (Way, truth, and life): **1** “Let not your heart be troubled: ye

believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

John 15:1–25 (True vine): **1** "*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*"

Plato, *Apology*, 18.24–41 (Gift from god): "For if you put me to death you will not easily find another as I am . . . *I am a kind of gift from God!*"

Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150–151 (Barren midwife): "And like the mid-wives, I am barren, and the reproach which is often made against me, that I ask questions of others and have not the wit to answer them myself, is very just—the reason is, that *the god compels me to be a midwife*, but does not allow me to bring forth. And therefore I am not myself at all wise, nor have I anything to show which is the invention or birth of my own soul, but those who converse with me profit."

Homer, *Iliad*, 5 (Of a fearless race): Diomed looked angrily at him and answered: "Talk not of flight, for I shall not listen to you: I am of a race that knows neither flight nor fear, and my limbs are as yet unwearied. I am in no mind to mount, but will go against them even as I am; *Pallas Minerva bids me be afraid of no man*, and even though one of them escape, their steeds shall not take both back again." . . . With this he hurled his spear, and *Minerva guided it on* to Pandarus's nose near the eye.

Homer, *Iliad*, 21.184–91 (Great and goodly): "Patroclus fell, and he was a better man than you are. I too—see you not how I am great and goodly? I am son to a noble father, and *have a goddess for my mother*, but the hands of doom and death overshadow me all as surely. The day will come, either at dawn or dark, or at the noontide, when one shall take my life also in battle, either with his spear, or with an arrow sped from his bow."

Homer, *Iliad*, 19.215–20 (Seed of Jove): Then Achilles set his foot on his chest and spoiled him of his armour, vaunting over him and saying, "Lie there—begotten of a river though you be, it is hard for you to strive with the offspring of Saturn's son. You declare yourself sprung from the blood of a broad river, but *I am of the seed of mighty Jove.*"

Homer, *Odyssey*, 14.200–205 (A Cretan): "*Mars and Minerva made me doughty in war*; when I had picked my men to surprise the enemy with an ambuscade I never gave death so much as a thought, but was the first to leap forward and spear all whom I could overtake."

Homer, *Odyssey*, 15 (Son of Ulysses): They set the mast in its socket in the cross plank, raised it and made it fast with the forestays, and they hoisted their white sails with sheets of twisted ox hide. *Minerva sent them a fair wind that blew fresh and strong to take the ship on her course as fast as possible.* Thus then they passed by Crouni and Chalcis.

Appeal to Authoritative Writing

John 6:22–70 (Bread of life/Living bread): **44** “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. **45** *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.* Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. **46** Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.”

John 7:12–31 (From God): **19** “*Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?*” **20** The people answered and said, “Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?” **21** Jesus answered and said unto them, “I have done one work, and ye all marvel. **22** *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.* **23** If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?”

John 8:12–20 (Light of the world): **16** “And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. **17** *It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.* **18** I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.”

John 10:1–40 (Sheep door/Good shepherd): **33** The Jews answered him, saying, “For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” **34** Jesus answered them, “*Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, Ye are gods?’*” **35** If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the *scripture cannot be broken.*”

John 13:12–19 (I am he): **17** “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. **18** I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but *that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.* **19** Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.”

John 15:1–25 (True vine): **24** “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. **25** But this cometh to pass, *that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’*”

John 18:1–9 (I am he): **8** Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: **9** *That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*”

Plato, Apology 18.24–41 (A man): “My friend, I am a man, and like other men, a creature of flesh and blood, and not of wood or stone, *as Homer says; and I have a family, yes, and sons.* O Athenians, three in number, one of whom is growing up, and the two others are still young; and yet I will not bring any of them hither in order to petition you for an acquittal.”

Plato, Ion, 532.5–7 (Speaker of truth): Soc. “*And you say that Homer and the other poets, such as Hesiod and Archilochus, speak of the same things, although*

not in the same way; but the one speaks well and the other not so well?” *Ion*. “Yes; and I am right in saying so.” *Soc*. “And if you knew the good speaker, you would also know the inferior speakers to be inferior?” *Ion*. “That is true.”

Plato, *Phaedrus*, 229–30 (Lover of knowledge): “Now I have no leisure for such enquiries; shall I tell you why? *I must first know myself, as the Delphian inscription says*; to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous. And therefore I bid farewell to all this; the common opinion is enough for me.”

Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150–151 (Barren midwife): “*But great philosophers tell us* that we are not to allow either the word “something,” or “belonging to something,” or “to me,” or “this,” or “that,” or any other detaining name to be used, in the language of nature all things are being created and destroyed, coming into being and passing into new forms; nor can any name fix or detain them; he who attempts to fix them is easily refuted.”

Homer, *Iliad*, 7 (Brother): Minerva assented, and Helenus son of Priam *divined the counsel of the gods*; he therefore went up to Hector and said, “Hector son of Priam, peer of gods in counsel, I am your brother, let me then persuade you. Bid the other Trojans and Achaeans all of them take their seats, and challenge the best man among the Achaeans to meet you in single combat. *I have heard the voice of the ever-living gods*, and the hour of your doom is not yet come.”

Figurative Identity

John 6:22–70 (Bread of life/Living bread): **34** Then said they unto him, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” **35** And Jesus said unto them, “*I am the bread of life*: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

John 8:12–20 (Light of the world): **12** Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, “*I am the light of the world*: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” **13** The Pharisees therefore said unto him, “Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.”

John 9:1–7 (Light of the world): **4** “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. **5** As long as I am in the world, *I am the light of the world*.”

John 10:1–40 (Sheep door/Good shepherd): **7** Then said Jesus unto them again, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, *I am the door of the sheep*. **8** All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. **9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. **10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. **11** *I am the good shepherd*: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. **12** But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. **13** The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. **14** *I am the good*

shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”

John 11:1–57 (Resurrection/Life): **24** Martha saith unto him, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” **25** Jesus said unto her, “*I am the resurrection, and the life*: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: **26** And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

John 14:1–6 (Way/Truth/Life): **5** Thomas saith unto him, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” **6** Jesus saith unto him, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

John 15:1–5 (True vine): **1**. “*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman*. **2** Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Plato, *Apology*, 18.24–41 (Gadfly): “For if you put me to death you will not easily find another as I am . . . *as a gadfly who attaches himself to the city*.”

Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150–151 (Barren midwife): “You forget, my friend, that I neither know, nor profess to know, anything of! these matters ; you are the person who is in labour, *I am the barren midwife*; and this is why I soothe you, and offer you one good thing after another, that you may taste them.”

Qualifiers

John 6:22–70 (True bread): **32** Then Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the *true* bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. . . . **51** I am the *living* bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

John 10:1–40 (Good Shepherd): **13** “The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. **14** I am the *good* shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”

John 15:1–25 (True vine): **1** “I am the *true* vine, and my Father is the husbandman. **2** Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Plato, *Alcibiades*, 1.131 (True lover): *Soc.* “But he who loves your soul is the *true* lover?” *Alc.* “That is the necessary inference.” *Soc.* “The lover of the body goes away when the flower of youth fades?” *Alc.* “True.” *Soc.* “But he who loves the soul goes not away, as long the soul follows after virtue?” *Alc.* “Yes.” *Soc.* “And I am he.”

Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150–151 (Barren midwife): “Certainly not; but midwives are respectable women who have a character to lose, and they avoid this department of their profession, because they are afraid of being called procuresses, which is a name given to those who join together man and woman

in an unlawful and unscientific way; and yet the *true* midwife is also the true and only matchmaker.”

Homer, *Iliad*, 1.25 (Older): “Of a truth,” he said, “a great sorrow has befallen the Achaeon land. Surely Priam with his sons would rejoice, and the Trojans be glad at heart if they could hear this quarrel between you two, who are so excellent in fight and counsel. I am *older* than either of you; therefore be guided by me.”

Homer, *Iliad*, 19.215–20 (Much before you): Ulysses answered, “Achilles, son of Peleus, mightiest of all the Achaeans, in battle you are better than I, and that more than a little, but in counsel I am much before you, for I am *older* and of greater knowledge. Therefore be patient under my words.”

Origins

John 7:12–31 (From God): **27** “Howbeit we know this man *whence he is*: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.” **28** Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, “*Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.*” **29** But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.”

John 8:12–20 (Light of world): **13** The Pharisees therefore said unto him, “Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.” **14** Jesus answered and said unto them, “Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: *for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.*” **15** Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.”

Homer, *Iliad*, 21.184–91 (Of the blood of the river Axios): When they were close up with one another Achilles was first to speak. “*Who and whence are you,*” said he, “who dare to face me? Woe to the parents whose son stands up against me.”

Homer, *Odyssey*, 15 (Son of Ulysses): “Friend” said he, “now that I find you sacrificing in this place, I beseech you by your sacrifices themselves, and by the god to whom you make them, I pray you also by your own head and by those of your followers, tell me the truth and nothing but the truth. *Who and whence are you?* Tell me also of your town and parents.” Telemachus said, “I will answer you quite truly. *I am from Ithaca, and my father is ‘Ulysses, as surely as that he ever lived.’*”

Supernatural Act

John 6:16–21 (I am he): **18** And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. **19** So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see *Jesus walking on the sea*, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. **20** But he saith unto them, “It is I; be not afraid.”

John 9:1–7 (Light of world): **6** When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, **7** And said unto him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,” (which is by interpretation, Sent.) *He went his way therefore, and washed, and*

came seeing.

John 11:1–57 (Resurrection/Life): **42** “And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” **43** And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, “*Lazarus, come forth.*” **44** *And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin.* Jesus saith unto them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

Homer, *Odyssey*, 11 (Neptune): Neptune, disguised as her lover, lay with her at the mouth of the river, and *a huge blue wave arched itself like a mountain over them to hide both woman and god*, whereon he loosed her virgin girdle and laid her in a deep slumber.

Homer, *Odyssey*, 16.155–75 (Your father): “You are not my father, but some god is flattering me with vain hopes that I may grieve the more hereafter; *no mortal man could of himself contrive to do as you have been doing, and make yourself old and young at a moment’s notice, unless a god were with him. A second ago you were old and all in rags, and now you are like some god come down from heaven.*”

“YE ARE GODS”: CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA’S DOCTRINE OF DEIFICATION

ERIK YINGLING

Clement of Alexandria (150 C.E. to 215 C.E.) was born into a pagan home. His full name was Titus Flavius Clemens. He came from ancestry that was believed to have had considerable wealth and property.¹ Clement spent much of his younger life in Athens, where he was introduced to many Greek philosophical schools such as Platonic, Stoic, Cynic, Pythagorean, and Epicurean thought. When Clement became a Christian he denounced Epicureanism, although he never abandoned all Greek philosophy.² He traveled exploring Greek mystery cults³ and increasing his knowledge of both philosophy and Christianity. Clement reached Alexandria, where he eventually became the leader of the Alexandrian church. Clement became one of the Alexandrian church’s most influential theologians. He also left a theological legacy that is still influential in Orthodox churches today. One of Clement’s doctrines which influenced the theology of Christianity was his belief in the deification of man/woman. The thesis that this article will endeavor to advance is that Clement of Alexandria’s model of deification exalts a deified individual to the status of a god who is less than the Father in honor, similar to Christ, and superior to all other beings in the cosmos.

Deification was a very significant concept for Clement of Alexandria. Though he borrowed themes from Justin and Irenaeus, he became the father of much of the specialized vocabulary pertaining to deification used by later Christians.⁴ Clement made claims of humankind’s eventual deification that were anything but subtle. “I say, the Word of God became a man, so that you might learn from a man how to become a god”⁵ and “men are gods and gods

1. R. B. Tollington, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Liberalism* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1914), 2.

2. Tollington, *Clement*, 2.

3. Tollington, *Clement*, 8.

4. Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 121, 115.

5. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), 174.

men.”⁶

For Clement, mortals who turn to the truth become gods,⁷ and those gods never cease being gods.⁸ Deification is the object of existence and the archetype of perfection in the afterlife. Clements choice scripture used to defend the doctrine of deification is Psalms 82:6, in which he emphasizes the fact that the believer becomes an adopted son of God through following the example of the Lord: “This is what happens to us, whose model the Lord made Himself. When we are baptized, we are enlightened; being enlightened, we become sons; becoming adopted sons, we are made perfect; and becoming perfect, we are made divine. ‘I have said,’ it is written, ‘you are gods and all of you the sons of the most High.’”⁹

Clement’s attitude seems very optimistic. According to Clement, God gives mortals a model to follow. Mortals who follow that model receive further knowledge until they are adopted as sons of God who become perfected and divinized. However, does Clement *really* believe that the faithful believer can become as the Supreme Creator? For example, he states that “God alone created, since he alone is truly God.”¹⁰

The question becomes more problematic when we realize that for Clement God is imageless, beyond space and time, not made of material matter, not subject to limit or division, not found in any section, and having no natural attitude toward us.¹¹ In fact, mortals cannot understand God by words or thoughts. Even scriptural teaching is incapable of describing God, for he is entirely ineffable.¹² God cannot be described by what he is, only by what He is not. Furthermore, although one can reach the pinnacle of progress by being called his son, we are not his children by nature.¹³ Even Clement himself asks the question, “how could a creature subject to birth draw near to the unborn

6. Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the Educator* (trans. Simon P. Wood; New York: Catholic University, 1954). 200.

7. Clement, *Clement of Alexandria: The Seventh Book of Stromateis* (trans. Fenton Hort and Joseph Mayor; London: Macmillan, 1902), 99.

8. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 167.

9. Clement, *The Educator*, 26.

10. Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks, the Rich Man’s Salvation, and a Fragment of an Address Entitled to the Newly Baptized* (trans. George W. Buttersworth; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1919), 143.

11. Clement, *Clement of Alexandria: Books One Through Three* (trans. John Ferguson; Washington: Catholic University, 1991), 160. See also Henny F. Hagg, who makes a list of the most common negative adjectives found in *Stromateis*: invisible, eternal, indivisible, incomprehensible, infinite or without limit, unknown, unbegotten, without name, inexpressible and unspeakable, unutterable, unmade, without beginning, without form, uncontained, without passion, without need, incorruptible, and incapable of being circumscribed (p. 159).

12. Clement, *Clement D’Alexandrie, Les Stromates* (trans. Pierre Voulet; Paris: Sources Chretiennes, 1981), 133.

13. Clement, *Books One Through Three*, 207. See also 208. Unfortunately, Clement believes “puzzling questions must have puzzling answers.” For example, Clement quotes the following dialogue told by an Indian Gymnosophist “How [is it possible that] any one of men could become a God?” The answer is: “if he does what it is impossible for man to do” (Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 493).

and uncreated?”¹⁴ Clement puts us in a theological quandary by combining a “highly optimistic anthropology with an apophatic theology.”¹⁵ So how can Clement’s seemingly disparate ontological and eschatological beliefs be reconciled?

First, we have to consider that Clement uses terms of deified beings in two different contexts. In the first context, Clement believed that one could become a god during mortality. In the second context, he believed one could become an immortal god in the afterlife. Clement explains mortal deification lucidly towards the end of *Stromateis* when he says:

And just as Ischomachus will make those who attend to his instructions husbandmen, and Lampis sea-captains, and Charidemus commanders, and Simon horsemen, and Perdix hucksters, and Crobylus cooks, and Archelaus dancers, and Homer poets, and Pyrrho wranglers, and Demosthenes orators, and Chrysippus logicians, and Aristototele men of science, and Plato philosophers, so he who obeys the Lord and follows the prophecy given through Him, is fully perfected after the likeness of his Teacher, and thus becomes a god while still moving about in the flesh.¹⁶

Clement’s reasoning is practical. If God lives the teachings he gives, and mortals fully live those teachings, then mortals become like God through imitation. Just as the disciples of Plato become philosophers, the disciples of God become gods. Clement posits his belief that mortals can be a god in this life similar to the Son by mentioning many similarities between mortals and the mortal Logos. Mortals can have the same beauty as the mortal Logos (*Educat.* 3.2)¹⁷. The faithful Christian can also receive the new name or title of “sons of God” which is similar to Christ being the Son of God. Clement explains that “this is the greatest progress of all.”¹⁸ Just as Christ was washed in baptism, so his followers are washed.¹⁹ Just as the Christ was anointed with the oil of gladness, so are his followers “anointed with the oil of gladness, the incorruptible oil of good odor.”²⁰ Mortals should exert themselves so that they may receive a crown just as Christ, the true athlete will be crowned in the theater of the universe.²¹ Clement even goes so far as to say that one should be like Christ by being clothed in white garments and thus “put on Christ.”²² For Clement the goal is to be as far as possible assimilated to God. Clement believes that one may even acquire the character of the Logos. One may do this by simply “practicing to be a god.”²³ Clement sees us as having in the Lord “an unmistakable

14. Clement, *Books One Through Three*, 160.

15. Russel, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 136.

16. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 179.

17. Clement, *The Educator*, 200.

18. Clement, *Books One Through Three*, 208.

19. Clement, *The Educator*, 26.

20. Clement, *The Educator*, 87. See also Psalms 45:7 and Heb 1:9.

21. Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, 7.

22. Clement, *The Educator*, 242-43.

23. Clement of Alexandria, *Clement D’Alexandrie, Les Stromates VI*, 287.

model for how to live our lives";²⁴ in fact, we are "treading in the footsteps of God."²⁵ For Clement, wearing white garments is a symbolic expression of commitment to Christ.²⁶ Clement seems to believe that while one could never fully be like the Father, it is entirely possible to be very close to the Son during mortality. After all, he stated that humankind was not really created after the image of the supreme God, but rather after the image of his Son.²⁷

For Clement the theme of deification like Christ also exists in the afterlife. Clement believes that the faithful are to become immortal as the resurrected Christ is immortal.²⁸ Because mortal men/women are beautiful as the mortal Christ is beautiful, immortal beings will also become beautiful because they are after the image of God. Furthermore, Clement believed that the immortal believer could be similarly free from passions as the immortal Christ.²⁹ Clement helped to clarify what he meant by being a god when he said:

This knowledge leads us on to that perfect end which knows no end, teaching us here the nature of the life we shall hereafter live with gods according to the will of God, when we have been delivered from all chastisement and punishment, which we have to endure as salutary chastening in consequence of our sins. After this deliverance rank and honors are assigned to those who are perfected, who have done now with purification and all other ritual, though it be holy among the holy; until at last, when they have been made *pure in heart* by their closeness to the Lord, the final restoration attends on their everlasting contemplation of God. And the name of gods is given to those that shall hereafter be enthroned with the other gods, who first had their station assigned to them beneath the Savior.³⁰

Clement believed that those who sought godly knowledge, paid the price for their sins, and became free from passion, would be similar to the Savior in the afterlife. The faithful would be assigned rank, honor, thrones and everlasting knowledge. Not only would the faithful have similar characteristics and honors, but they would be given a new name similar to Christ's name. They would be assigned the name of a god. Astonishingly, Clement asserts that the righteous will even become judges in the afterlife.³¹ However, though immortal beings are similar to the immortal Christ in many respects, they will still always be lower in honor and rank. Nevertheless, Clement confessed that those deified

24. Clement, *The Educator*, 87.

25. Clement, *The Educator*, 242–3.

26. Clement, *The Educator*, 243–4. Clement says that wearing white from head to foot symbolizes the following: staying spiritually clean, putting away all wicked dispositions, being a person of peace and light, it is the color of truth, and lastly "there is no deed more indicative of a good [person] than wearing such a garment" for that is how we "put on Jesus Christ."

27. Clement, *The Educator*, 13.

28. Clement, *The Educator*, 26.

29. Clement, *Clement D'Alexandrie Stromate IV.*, 311.

30. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 99.

31. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 504.

will be “assimilated as far as possible to the Second Cause,” who is Christ.³²

Although it seems that Clement believed that an individual could be deified below the Father and the Son, Clement’s concept of deification can still seem ambiguous unless it is put in the proper context of his idea of the heavens and cosmos. For one’s deification to be understood, it must be compared to the highest rank of beings (the Father and the Son), and also to any lower creatures or stages of salvation. After all, Clement believed in a universe filled with multiple gradations of saved beings and many mystic stages of advancement.³³ The question that must be asked in order to fully understand Clement’s concept of deification is where does a deified individual fit in the context of these different levels of advancement and salvation? Before the latter question can be answered, Clement’s different levels of salvation must be defined.

In *Stromateis*, Clement specifically describes three stages of advancement and salvation.³⁴ In the afterlife there are those who are “beyond salvation,” those who are saved, and those who “are dignified with the highest honor after being saved.”³⁵ In two passages, Clement elucidates what the cosmos are like and defines the roles of the many beings at work in the process of Salvation. Clement uses a wrestler in an amphitheatre to help elaborate his doctrine:

Here then we find the True wrestler, who in the amphitheatre of this fair universe is crowned for the true victory over his passions. For the president is God Almighty, and the umpire is the only-begotten Son of God, and the spectators are angels and gods, and our great contest of all arms is *not waged against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual powers* of passionate affections working in the flesh. When [a person] has come safe out of these mighty conflicts, and overthrown the tempter in the combats to which he has challenged us, the Christian soldier wins immortality. For the decision of God is unerring in regard to His most righteous award. The spectators then have been summoned to view the contest; the wrestlers are contending in the arena, and now the prize is won by him amongst them, who has been obedient to the orders of the trainer. . . . And the maxim *know thyself* means in this case, to know for what purpose we are made. Now we are made to be obedient to the commandments, if our choice be such as to will salvation.³⁶

And [the Son] pilots all in safety according to *the Fathers will*, rank being subordinated to rank under different leaders, till in the end *the Great High Priest* is reached. For one original principal, which works in accordance with *the Father’s will, depend the first and second and third gradations*; and then at the extreme end of the visible world there is the blessed ordinance of angels; and so, even down to ourselves, ranks below ranks are appointed, all saving and being saved by the instrumentality of One. . . . Again [the gods] ordained that the soul that at any time improved

32. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 27.

33. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 99.

34. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 505.

35. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 505.

36. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 33.

as regard the knowledge of virtue and increase in righteousness, should obtain an improved position in the universe, *pressing onwards* at every step to a passionless state, until it *comes to a perfect man*, a preeminence at once of knowledge and of inheritance. These saving revolutions are each severally portioned off. According to the order of change, by variety of time and place and honor and knowledge and inheritance and service, up to the transcendent orbit which is next to the Lord occupied in eternal contemplation.³⁷

In the preceding passage, Clement seems to have given angels and gods the same gradation of salvation. Clement's discussion seems to point to angels fulfilling similar responsibilities as God. Out of the three gradations of progression mentioned in the passage, it is implied that angels and gods pertain to the highest order because their role is just below the Father and his Son. Those who eventually receive the stewardship of angels and gods assist the Father and the Logos in bringing to pass the advancement and salvation of those who are mortal. Clement explains that those who reach the end of perfection are resurrected and immortal. Thus gods have resurrected bodies. Furthermore, gods can be contrasted with angels who do not have a body.³⁸ If one wishes to merely be saved, one must have faith in Christ, but if one wishes to become a son of God, one must suffer until he is purged of each transgression.³⁹ Thus the sons of God, which are gods, pass through greater suffering to obtain their godhood.⁴⁰

Clement describes the order of Christ's earthly church as having three grades, namely bishops, presbyters, and deacons. He states that these offices are "in imitation of the angelic glory."⁴¹ Interestingly, even the heathen could know a bit of heaven by considering the sun, moon, and stars.⁴² Clement did not believe the soul would be a god or angel in an instant. Souls must pass through different saving revolutions until at last they reach the highest degree of salvation and godhood.⁴³ Those who are saved can only reach godhood through promotion. One who is saved must first minister as a deacon, then a presbyter, and then keep progressing until they "grow into a perfect man."⁴⁴ Thus Clement makes the distinction between those who are deified and all other saved beings. One who is deified is greater than the other saved beings, as a bishop

37. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 17.

38. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicean Fathers*, 493.

39. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 505. Clement also points out that one must know God rather than simply believe, if one is to receive the highest honor "after being saved, which is greater than being saved." One is saved by degrees in proportion to his faith.

40. Clement, *Books One Through Three*, 239.

41. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 504.

42. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 504.

43. Clement, *The Seventh Book*, 17–18. In a way, Clement saw salvation similar to climbing a ladder, with each new step being a higher level of faith. He stated, "The Lord is the one and only charioteer who conducts each of us 'from faith to faith' progressively to salvation" (Clement, *Books One Through Three*, 240).

44. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 505.

is greater than a presbyter or a deacon. He makes it clear that just as the sun differs in glory from the moon and the stars, so is the deification of man/woman.⁴⁵ Those sons of God, who are gods, are also distinguished by pertaining to a heavenly church that belongs only to the gods and angels.

For in what way is a stranger permitted to enter [the kingdom of heaven]? Well, as I take it, then, when he is enrolled and made a citizen, and receives one to stand to him in the relation to the Father, then will he be occupied with the Fathers concerns, Then will he share the kingdom of the Father with His own dear Son. For this is the first-born Church, composed of many good children; these are “the first-born enrolled in heaven, who hold high festival with so many myriad of angels.” . . . And now the more benevolent God is, the more impious men are; for He desires us from slaves to become sons, while they scorn to become sons. O the prodigious folly of being ashamed of the Lord! He offers freedom, you flee into bondage; He bestows salvation, you sink down into destruction; He confers everlasting life, you wait for punishment, and prefer the fire, which the Lord “has prepared for the devil and his angels.”⁴⁶

At this juncture, Clement introduces a gradation which does not pertain to salvation at all, but rather destruction. Those members of the heavenly “first-born church” are contrasted with those who suffer with the devil and his angels. In the “first-born church” the saved are gods, enjoy freedom, everlasting life, the company of angels, and inherit the kingdom of the Father. On the contrary, those who are ashamed of the Lord receive bondage, destruction, punishment, sharing their existence with the devil and his angels.

In conclusion, Clement of Alexandria believed that an individual could become a god who is less than the Father in honor, similar to the Son, and greater than all other beings in the universe. Clement’s seemingly conflicting ideas are bold with respect to the anthropology and eschatology of the faithful Christian. Due to Clement’s premises, a deified individual can never supersede the Father or the Son, yet can become comparable to the Son in many ways. For Clement personal deification was the object of existence and the final aim in the worship of God.

45. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 505.

46. Alexander and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 195.

ASTERIA AND EPITOGIA: APOCALYPSES, LAIC
VENERATION, AND THE FORMATION OF
MARIOLOGY IN CONSTANTINOPLE

STEPHEN WHITAKER

There is extant a significant amount of literature regarding the early Christian veneration of Mary. It is clear that syncretism and confluence stemming from pagan influences has affected the development of Christian understanding of the mother of Christ, yet the degree to which this happened is an issue incidental to which are many theological and historiographical implications. The broader question I would like to explore in this paper is that of the evolution of Mariology and Mariolatry in early Christian Constantinople, or, more specifically, how the pagan roots of the city were manifested in that evolution. This is a very broad issue, admittedly beyond the scope of this short paper, and for that reason I would like to specifically treat the role of the particularly evocative images of the astral motif and robes of glory; images which were well nourished by those pagan roots. My argument is that these images played a significant role in shaping the theological development of Constantinople and of Eastern Christianity during the formative first centuries, and did so not just by mandate from the top down, but through a kind of laic viral marketing that shaped ecclesiastical and imperial policy by way of the cultural identity of the citizens of Constantinople.

The Astral Motif and the the Queen of Heaven

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she, being with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. . . . And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.¹

This passage in *Revelation* 12 describing the Virgin clothed in celestial bodies and glory is one of only a few direct attributive references to the mother

1. Rev 12: 1–5.

of Jesus in the New Testament. The image portrayed in this passage remained an important archetype for representations of Mary in art and literature for centuries to come. The astral motif became prominent in the architecture of the churches of the sixth century, and the “dome of heaven” became an important structural symbol of the church as microcosm.² The dome took on the function of the sky, the mysterious veil that separates our mortal cosmos from the everlasting realm of deity beyond, held up by the four arches of the dome representing the four corners of the earth. This theme was popularized in the aesthetics of Pseudo-Dionysius, whose philosophy of emanation bore particular hellenistic semblance.³ These themes were not, however without precedent in the greater Near Eastern and Hellenistic context. The sky as a glittering robe was a common depiction in describing the gods, and more frequently, the goddesses. In Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, Isis is described as wearing a black robe adorned with a full moon surrounded by stars.⁴ Isis and the Virgin shared in addition to this astral motif the characteristics of motherhood, supremacy, and resurrection, all of which bore symbolic affiliation to the expanse of the sky. The celestial robe designated the extent of the dominion of the wearer, and would elicit the title “Queen of Heaven,” which was applied to, among others, Caelestis, who was also syncretized with other lunar deities such as Selene and Artemis. These all were connected with the lunar cycle, the menstrual properties of that cycle, and motherhood. The description in Revelation 12 of the woman “clothed with the sun” evoked further correlation with Helios and the properties associated with his celestial authority. In the fifth century Macrobius equated all the gods with the sun and designated the sun as the symbol of superlative reason.⁵ The association of Mary with light is one that became central to her Byzantine persona as a torch-bearer.⁶

The Mother of Us All and The Mother of Harlots: Who was Cut from Which Cloth?

In addition to the astral motifs present in *Revelation*, another significant

2. The earliest extant literary reference to the architectural motif appears in a Syriac hymn on the church of Haghia Sophia in Edessa. This hymn, though written in Syriac, was seen as indicative of popular Greek ideas that would become a staple of Byzantine symbolic architecture, and utilized prominently in both the church of Aghia Irene and what became the epitome of Byzantine architecture: the Church of Haghia Sophia in Constantinople. *Edessa Hymn*, in Kathleen E. McVey, “The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol,” in *Art, Archaeology, and Architecture of early Christianity* (ed. Paul Corby Finney; vol. 18 of *Studies in Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul Corby Finney. New York and London: Garland, 1993).

3. Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *The History of Aesthetics*, (trans J. Harrell, C. Barrett and D. Petsch; New York: Continuum, 2005), 31 For a broader (but much older) treatment of the astral motif of the dome and its place in a hellenistic and near eastern context, see Karl Lehman, “Dome of Heaven,” *Art Bulletin* 27:1 (March 1945) 1–27.

4. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 11.3–4 (Hanson, LCL).

5. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.17.3.

6. See note 22.

image is that of the “Mother of Harlots” portrayed in chapter 17. This delineation of the antithesis of the virtue and modesty attributed to Mary presents a paradox in Mariological depictions, as it demonizes many of the very images later used as part of the liturgical repertoire of Mariological veneration:

And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.”⁷

A historical-critical reading of *Revelation* often renders the work as an attempt by John to proscribe to a certain extent assimilation into the Roman Imperial Culture generally and idolatry more specifically, which informs our reading of Revelation 17. Along the vein of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible whose writings were characterized by strict denunciation of polytheism and idolatry, John’s writings seem to be a literary tribute infused with a similar social commentary. Biblical references to Babylon have supplied interpretations of this passage as a reference to the city of Rome itself. Also, the “mother of harlots” can be seen as a play on words and a reference to Cybele, the “great mother.” This evokes language used by the prophet Jeremiah to castigate veneration of the “Queen of Heaven,” a title used to describe an idolatrous goddess, probably Asherah.⁸ In using such language the Revelator seems to be commenting on the homogeneity of the condition of the two epochs. The woman sitting on the beast could also be compared to Artemis, who was depicted as “queen of the wild beasts”⁹ or Cybele, who was often depicted in the company of lions.¹⁰

However, the image of purple and scarlet cloth in which the “Mother of Harlots” is adorned took on a degree of polyvalence among early Christians. The second century apocryphal account of the early life of Mary known as the *Protoevangelium* (or *Proto-gospel*) of James had been growing in popularity, and its themes became well known. Among these themes was that of the Virgin spinning purple and scarlet cloth for the veil of the temple. The *Protoevangelium* described the generation and early life of Mary, who herself was conceived under miraculous circumstances and born to the aging Anna and Joachim, who in gratitude for the birth of their daughter promised to consecrate the girl to the Lord by sending her to the temple, where she would

7. *Revelation*. 17:3–5.

8. Jeremiah 7:18, 44:17. The particularly disparaging reference to veneration of the “Queen of Heaven” in Jeremiah 7:18 is particularly representative of the portrayal of the goddess: “The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.”

9. *Iliad*, 21.470.

10. Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1993), 105.

remain until she reached the age of twelve. Upon Mary's attainment of twelve years the priests, fearing defilement of the temple, had her leave and assigned the significantly older Joseph to watch over her. Later, the priests decided to select from among the virgins seamstresses to spin cloth for the veil of the temple. Mary was given the honor of spinning purple and scarlet. It was while she was spinning that she received the angelic annunciation of her prominence among women and her role as the vessel that would bring forth the child Jesus.¹¹

The image of the virgin weaving as a symbol of modesty and wisdom was something that had long been associated with the veneration of Athena.¹² This is one of multiple manifestations of pagan influence present in the delineation. Stephen Benko, whose research on Early Christianity often returns to these themes, also points to the impossibility of Mary's access to the "third step of the altar" and the Holy of Holies as related in the *Protoevangelium's* account as an indication of greater pagan influences than Palestinian, as Palestinian Jews would have been much less likely to ignore the significance of priestly functions in the context described in the *Protoevangelium*.¹³

These paradoxes would have been less significant to a newly converted body politic with a national tradition steeped in the very images that are the apparent subject of John's social and political censure. The popular spread of the concepts conveyed in the *Protoevangelium of James* preceded any kind of ecclesiastical mandates of many of these abstractions. "What is most interesting," Vasiliki Lamberis points out, "is that very few Patristic authors allowed the apocryphal tales to influence their doctrinal writing until late in the fourth century. Marian piety, however, was spreading in spite of the Church during this period."¹⁴ Veneration of Mary was evolving throughout the empire, and usually to a greater degree by women. This trend was not always looked on favorably by the church hierarchy. For example Epiphanius, the fourth-century bishop of Salamis, was occupied with this phenomenon as he felt there was a great imbalance in the degrees of reverence to Mary. Though he held her immaculate conception and referred to her as Theotokos, he feared that "the worst sort of harm" was excessive glorification. He is particularly stern in his evaluation of the Collyridians, a group of Thracian women in Arabia who venerated Mary with offerings. Seizing the opportunity to elucidate what he viewed as the corrupt nature of women in an almost hesiodic trope, he asks:

11. *Proto-Gospel of James*. 12.

12. Ioanna Papadopoulou-Belmehti, "Greek Weaving or the Feminine in Antithesis," *Diogenes* no. 167, vol. 42/3 (Fall 1994), 39–56 n.b. 41 In fact, just as Mary is contrasted against the literary foil of the "Mother of Harlots," Athena in the act of weaving can be said to be a foil against Aphrodite, who is in fact incapable of successfully spinning though she tries. Catherine Caren Gines, "Preceding Allegory: Byzantine Images of the Virgin Annunciate Spinning" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1998), 16–17.

13. Benko, *The Virgin Goddess*, 200.

14. Vasiliki Lamberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 146.

And who but women are the teachers of this? Women are unstable, prone to error, and mean-spirited . . . here the devil has seen fit to disgorge ridiculous teachings from the mouths of women. For certain women decorate a barbers chair or a square seat, spread a cloth on it, set out bread and offer it in Mary's name a certain day of the year, and all partake of the bread; I discussed parts of this right in my letter to Arabia. Now, however, I shall speak plainly of it and, with prayer to God, give the best refutations of it that I can, so as to grub out the roots of this idolatrous sect and with God's help, be able to cure certain people of this madness.¹⁵

Despite these kinds of misgivings, these ideas continued to grow in popular religion. The spread of this kind of veneration illustrates the need filled by these particular images of Mary as the ideal yet attainable. The spinning virgin and the dedicated mother gave a cradle-to-the-grave model for women in the empire to relate to. This model had a well-established cultural precedent. Spinning and weaving had long been a staple in Greek literature in creating a model of the feminine ideal. Xenophon pointed out in the fourth century B.C.E. that "the Greeks required a woman to devote herself to the sedentary tranquility of woolwork."¹⁶ These images were salient on the popular mind for centuries, and gave women of a converted Byzantium a benchmark of a good Christian woman with which to reckon themselves. What seems likely is that the ease and ready adaptation of this model helped to push the popular concepts associated with the Virgin towards the realm of doctrine, creating an awkward cognitive dissonance in the minds of the early fathers, who struggled to maintain the doctrine as they understood it while avoiding the problems like those that would come to plague the tenure of Nestorius, the Archbishop of Constantinople from 428–431 C.E., whose ostensibly heretical Christology would reveal important breaking points with regard to church doctrine on the relationship between Mary, Christ, and Christians. While the western empire would stick to more westernized gospels like the *Pseudo-Gospel of Matthew* and the *Gospel of the Nativity of Mary* for influence on their art and literature, the *Protoevangelium of James* was of great import in the development of art, architecture, liturgy, and doctrine in the Byzantine world.¹⁷

The Sequence of Events in the Evolution of Constantinople

When Constantine undertook the massive project of reinventing Byzantium to house the ideology of the newly shaped empire as a new kind of Christian Rome, he was careful to tacitly emphasize important cultural elements in his renovations of the city. These renovations included the assimilation of Rome's goddess Fortuna by the Greek equivalent Tyche, syncretized with the goddess Rhea, to whom he built new temples as part of

15. *Panarion* 79.1.6 (Williams).

16. Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, 1, 3–4.

17. Though there was a great deal of confluence among these Gospels, the stylistic and distinctions and variations in content are illustrative of important regional doctrinal exegeses. David R. Cartlidge and James Keith Elliot, "Mary," *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*. New York: Routledge 2001.

the Terastoön, which would dominate the cityscape.¹⁸ He also built a large statue of himself which could be seen from all over the city in the image of Helios. These images resonated with relative ethnic comfort to the deme who had for centuries counted on celestial protection. Mindful of the delicate relationship the earlier Emperor Severus had created in Byzantium with his fickle destruction and rebuilding in the second century, Constantine was careful to patronize the popular will and tried to create an imperial identity the Byzantines could relate to. These measures helped facilitate the relative ease with which Byzantines converted culturally into Christianity during this period. They also maintained many of the motifs that would shape that very Christianity.

Later in the mid-fifth century Nestorius, the Archbishop of Constantinople would come to neglect the city's cultural singularity through a redefinition of Mary. Positioned against the stark backdrop of Byzantine ethnocentrism by his own Syrian extraction, Nestorius faced strong opposing tides in navigating the culture that would define the doctrine in this pivotal hub of the eastern world. During the troubled phase of the Nestorian dilemma around 430 C.E., the city came to an ultimatum of identity of the *ethnos*. Nestorius's apparent Christological separation of the divine and human properties of Jesus formed his conception of a Mary who was not as the *Theotokos* the bearer of God, but as the *Christotokos*, the bearer of the man Jesus irreconcilable with the plebeian precedent of veneration:

They make Him (Christ) second to the blessed Mary, and they set the mother against the divine demiurge of time. For if hers is not the nature of man, but God the word, just as they say, with regard to her, then she is not the mother. For how can someone be the mother of a nature completely other than her own? For if she be called mother my them, he is of human nature not divine. For like bears the same essence of every mother. . . . In his nature and essence the Son is the Essence and nature of God the Father, but in the flesh his nature is human from Mary.¹⁹

Much of the opposition against Nestorius came from Aelia Pulcheria, daughter of the Emperor Arcadius (377/8–408) and elder sister of Theodosius II (401–450), who was emperor during the Nestorian dialogue. Pulcheria had taken a vow of virginity to avoid obligatory marriage, and modeled her life after the Virgin Mary. Having a great deal of power both by popularity and by her role in helping her younger brother who assumed the throne as a child, she was able to use the images of the Virgin to rally popular support. Her appeals fell on sympathetic ears was able to gain a much greater following.²⁰ Nestorius was eventually banished and his Christological position was designated heretical by the First Council of Ephesus in 431.²¹

A very significant and popularly syncretized role assumed by the Virgin

18. Lamberis, *Heiress*, 16.

19. Nestorius, *CMP*, vol. 4/1, 2956.

20. Lamberis, *Heiress*, 56.

21. *Third Ecumenical Council*, Canon VII.

was that of the *poliouxos*, or city protector. Here again the historical precedents of the astral motif takes on a significant function. Embedded into the political and cultural memory of the Byzantines was the image of the goddess Hecate, whose astral emblems came to signify the essence of Byzantium. In the fifth century the Byzantine historian Hesychius of Miletus gave in *Patria Konstantinopoleos*, his work on the origins of Constantinople, a legendary account of the resistance of the city to Macedonian influence and the help of Hecate, often syncretized with Cybele and other mother goddesses, who was said to have brought victory to the city, rendering her as its champion.²² To commemorate the victory, the Byzantines minted coins with her emblems, the crescent and star, which remained symbols of the empire until adopted by Islam and the modern Turkish state, whose efforts towards establishing legitimacy included assimilation of important historical symbols in religious and national symbols. This role was later assumed by Mary. The *Akathist Hymn*, which places the *Theotokos* squarely in the position of municipal custodian, contains the following passage, written as a rally and entreaty to the *Theotokos* to protect the city against a Eurasian Avar attack:

Unto you, O Theotokos, invincible champion,
Your city, in thanksgiving ascribes the victory for the deliverance from
sufferings.
And having your might unassailable,
free me from all dangers, so that I may cry
unto you: Hail! O bride unwedded.²³

The astral and celestial themes also present themselves once again in this hymn with the words: “Hail! O star revealing the sun” and “Hail! O ray of Mystical sun.”²⁴

Having come full circle in its conceptions of self-identity in relation to deity, the city of Constantinople was in its civic history a reflection of the political, cultic, and social ideas that made up daily life in the city. The efforts of the citizens to reach the divine and in doing so reaching some kernel of self-examination and self-definition are demonstrative of the power of the civic need for affirmation. Whether that affirmation came as a reflection of daily tasks such as weaving, a desire to comprehend that which is beyond a veil of heaven, or as a hopeful entreaty for divine protection, it was easily evinced by the Byzantines by the devotion to parts of their own ethnic identity. Institutional veneration merely provided the vehicle for that devotion, and where institutional measures were able to be reconciled, those measures, as is often the case, can become subject to change via the facile elicitation of the precedented—the conventional—the orthodox.

22. Hesychius of Miletus, *Patria Konstantinopoleos*, 11.

23. *Akathastos Hymn* verse 1, Limberis *Heiress*, 153.

24. *Akathastos Hymn*, verses 1, 20.

RIDDLING THE ROOD: THE PARADOX OF SUFFERING AND GLORY IN THE RUTHWELL CROSS

RACHEL ANNE WISE

The Old English poem, the *Dream of the Rood*, is a unique piece of literature because it describes Christ's crucifixion from the perspective of the cross. Although scholars speculate over its author and date of completion, it is known to have been written before the eighth century because segments of it are inscribed in runes on the Ruthwell Cross, a sculpture constructed in the eighth century. The Ruthwell Cross is eighteen feet high with Latin letters and runes bordering panels of images on its four sides. The lines from the *Dream of the Rood* have been inscribed along the vine-scrolled north and south sides of the cross (fig. 1). The east and west sides contain a complex program of panels, mostly scenes from the New Testament (fig. 2). Many scholars have explored the symbolic interaction between these sculptural reliefs and the *Dream of the Rood*. Margaret Jennings, in particular, has looked at how paradoxes in the poem and in the reliefs "emanate" from the central paradox of Christianity: Christ's human suffering brings about his divine glory.¹ This paper will explore that paradox by looking at how it functions in the poem and cross, specifically through the use of metaphor, Anglo-Saxon riddle form, and eremitical philosophy.

In her article, "Rood and Ruthwell: The Power of Paradox," Jennings contends that both the *Dream of the Rood* and the Ruthwell Cross express this central Christian paradox. Eighth-century Christians venerated the cross as a symbol for the paradoxical mystery of Christ's resurrection because "the instrument of defeat"—the cross—"had become the instrument of victory."² The cross, then, took on additional sacred meanings and mysteries in worship ceremonies. Pseudo-Athanasius articulated a common sentiment about the cross when he apostrophized it as "O Paradox and Wonder: Birth of the Second Man from death by wood."³ The Ruthwell Cross in its artistic and symbolic program exhibits this same paradox of Christ's humanity and divinity

1. Margaret Jennings, "Rood and Ruthwell: The Power of Paradox," *English Language Notes* 31 (March 1994): 6.

2. Margaret Jennings, "Rood and Ruthwell," 7.

3. As quoted in Jennings, "Rood and Ruthwell," 7.

through the paired panels on the north and south sides. On the north side, Christ's divinity is expressed through images of Christ in Majesty, Hermits, Flight into Egypt, Evangelists, John the Baptist, and the Nativity. On the south side, however, Christ's humanity is conveyed through sculptures of the Archer, Visitation, Mary Magdalene, Crucifixion, Blind Man, and Annunciation.⁴ Although not explicitly involved in Christian worship, the *Dream of the Rood* addresses the same tension between the human and divine Christ. The poem has been known for its many paradoxes, whether in narration, subject matter, language patterns, or "time levels," but as Jennings argues, all these paradoxes speak to this central paradox of the divine Christ taking upon himself the corruptible human form.⁵ The fundamental paradox of Christ's life and death thus sets up a series of interrelations: between the front and back panels and between the cross and the poem.

The *Dream of the Rood* incorporates many metaphors that give insight to the paradox of Christ's sacrifice. In an article that analyzes how metaphor functions in the *Rood*, John Mark Jones argues that the poem is metaphorical because it "creates solidarity between two objects that formerly were quite distant from each other"—the cross and Christ—and in so doing "shocks the reader's imagination."⁶ Like Jennings, Jones believes that the central paradox expressed in these metaphors is that "human suffering" allows "divine glory."⁷ The central metaphor, he argues, is that the cross becomes a type of Christ. This is supported by the fact that the cross suffers vocally in the poem. It cries after Christ has been raised up: "They pierced me with dark nails: the wounds are seen on me . . . I was all wounded with arrows."⁸ They are mocked together, both left "all wet with blood."⁹ In suffering, the cross has become one with Christ because it, too, carries the weight of sin and feels the same pains of crucifixion. Yet through this humiliation and defeat, the cross and Christ are exalted. The cross describes how, after Christ is taken away, warriors of the Lord came and "decked me in gold and silver."¹⁰ And now, in its newly glorified state, the cross declares that "men far and wide upon earth honor me . . . and pray to me."¹¹ Like Christ, the cross has been resurrected and crowned in glory, even made worthy of worship. The startling metaphor of the cross as Christ reinforces the startling paradox of their mutual suffering and exaltation. This idea of the cross and Christ achieving "glory through suffering, exaltation through humiliation, [and] life through death" represents the critical paradox of the poem.¹²

4. Jennings, "Rood and Ruthwell," 10.

5. Jennings, "Rood and Ruthwell," 8.

6. John Mark Jones, "The Metaphor That Will Not Perish: The Dream of the Rood and the New Hermeneutic," *Christianity and Literature* 38.2 (1989): 63.

7. Jones, "The Metaphor," 66.

8. "The Dream of the Rood," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M.H. Abrams, et al., Vol. 1 7th ed., (New York: Norton & Company, 2000), 27.

9. "The Dream of the Rood," 27.

10. "The Dream of the Rood," 27.

11. "The Dream of the Rood," 28.

12. Jones, "The Metaphor," 66.

The poem's metaphor of the cross as Christ situates it in the Anglo-Saxon riddle tradition, which adds yet another layer of paradoxical mystery to the poem's narrative of Christ's life and death. The poet of the *Dream of the Rood*, writing in the British Isles during the first part of the eighth century, probably would have been influenced by Anglo-Saxon riddling techniques.¹³ Anglo-Saxon riddles have been defined in a way that is strikingly similar to Jones' definition of metaphor: they are "metaphors facilitating some fresher insight into texts, on condition that the reader is willing to undertake the effort in deciphering them."¹⁴ They are intended to leave the reader with "subsequent elucidation" on the object or idea that they express.¹⁵ There are two types of Old English riddles, and the *Dream of the Rood* falls into the category where "the riddler (man) pretends to be the creature (not man), but the creature describes himself in typically human terms."¹⁶ This formula can be detected in the poem when the poet, or riddler, is pretending to be the cross, yet the cross is describing itself in terms of Christ, who is both human and godly. It receives the same type of death and resurrection as Christ, and at the same time. This poem also employs other characteristics of Anglo-Saxon poetry because it "uses techniques of evasion and misdirection" to "celebrate Christianity."¹⁷ This is best exemplified by the different and contradictory ways the cross presents itself in the poem: in the beginning as a "rare tree encircled with light,"¹⁸ then as a beam bleeding from arrow wounds, and then as across encrusted with jewels. In incorporating all of these opposite portrayals of itself, the cross becomes a paradox and riddle itself.

Indeed, the selection of *Rood* text inscribed on the Ruthwell Cross seems to have been chosen to fit a specific Anglo-Saxon riddle scheme. The lines written on the right border of the south side, for instance, seem to pose a riddle: "Almighty God stripped himself. When he willed to mount the gallows, courageous before all men, [I dared not] bow."¹⁹ By describing itself as a gallows, the cross challenges the reader to guess its identity, just as Anglo-Saxon riddles did with other objects. The riddle becomes deeper and more important, however, as the cross begins to take on the identity of Christ himself. On the north side of the cross, on the left border, the runes read: "I [lifted up] a powerful king. The lord of heaven I dared not tilt; men insulted the pair of us together; I was drenched with blood [that poured from the man's side]."²⁰ Here the inscriber of these runes, or the riddler, has taken on the persona of the cross, which melds its identity with Christ's by describing how men "insulted

13. Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 291.

14. Rafat Borystawski, *The Old English Riddles and the Riddlic Elements of Old English Poetry* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), 13.

15. Borystawski, *Old English Riddles*, 13.

16. Craig Williamson, *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 25.

17. North, *Heathen Gods*, 291.

18. North, *Heathen Gods*, 291.

19. "The Dream of the Rood," 27.

20. "The Dream of the Rood," 27.

the pair of us together” and how its wood, like Christ’s flesh, was “drenched with blood.”²¹ The cross has become one with Christ, and the riddle of the cross’s identity reinforces the paradox of Christ’s divine and human identity.

The same paradox of human suffering and divine glory can be found on the Ruthwell Cross in the many images of desert and eremitical life. Over fifty years ago Meyer Schapiro identified a strong desert and ascetic theme in a majority of the panels.²² The key support to this argument lies in the panel on the west side in the center, where Christ has been carved standing over two animals. Schapiro argues that this panel is a depiction of the Temptation of Christ in the desert, where “he was with the beasts, and the angels ministered to him” (fig. 3).²³ This desert motif is further carried out in five other panels, such as the image of John the Baptist, “prototype of Christian asceticism,” gesturing towards the *Agnus Dei* (fig. 4).²⁴ Furthermore, underneath the panel of the temptation of Christ is an image of St. Paul and St. Anthony eating the bread delivered to them by a raven (fig. 5). St. Paul, a hermit saint, was brought half a loaf of bread every day by a raven. When St. Anthony came to visit him, the raven brought him a full loaf to share with St. Anthony.²⁵ Anglo-Saxons considered St. Paul and St. Anthony the “two fathers of the desert [and] the first monks and founders of the first monastery,” and by the ninth century Paul and Anthony were regarded as the first anchorites.²⁶ On the east side of the Cross, Mary Magdalene is shown washing the feet of Christ with her hair (fig. 6). Her story, too, relates to the overall hermitical theme of the Cross, for it was commonly believed in eighth-century England that Mary had become a recluse and hermit after Christ’s death—the Anglo-Saxon martyrology described her “as a repentant sinner who lived for thirty years in the desert.”²⁷ Schapiro argues that the Visitation scene (fig. 7) and the Flight from Egypt scene (fig. 8) relate to the theme of asceticism too, but more indirectly.²⁸ The Visitation depicts the meeting of Elizabeth with Mary, and therefore foreshadows the birth of John the Baptist, the first real ascetic; the Flight from Egypt, strategically placed under the panel of Paul and Anthony in the desert, conjures up the same desert atmosphere of those desert fathers.²⁹

The lifestyle of hermits and other ascetic Christians followed the paradoxical idea that human suffering allows one to achieve divinity from God, the same paradox of Christ’s Passion presented in the *Dream of The Rood*. During the eighth century, increasing numbers of monks were becoming hermits, modeling their lives after the desert fathers, St. Paul and

21. “The Dream of the Rood,” 27.

22. Meyer Schapiro, “The Religious Meaning of the Ruthwell Cross,” *The Art Bulletin* 26 (December 1944): 238.

23. Schapiro, “Religious Meaning,” 233.

24. Schapiro, “Religious Meaning,” 236.

25. Schapiro, “Religious Meaning,” 236.

26. Schapiro, “Religious Meaning,” 236.

27. Schapiro, “Religious Meaning,” 238.

28. Schapiro, “Religious Meaning,” 238.

29. Schapiro, “Religious Meaning,” 238.

St. Anthony.³⁰ Because England's climate did not allow for recluses to live in a desert environment, English hermits had to make do with inaccessible marshlands and forests, anywhere removed from civilization.³¹ Nevertheless, the desert continued to be a vital symbol for them, representing a place of temptation, hunger, and tormenting demons.³² They believed that living in such brutal conditions was necessary to achieve a heavenly life; by suffering pain in the desert, they would be rewarded in being granted the ability to perform miracles, receive the Eucharist from heaven, and communicate with God.³³ The panels of St. Paul and St. Anthony, St. John the Baptist, and St. Mary Magdalene exemplify the eremitical way of life, and the paradox that through their suffering in the desert they achieved sainthood and heavenly distinction.

In the abstract context of riddles, the anthropomorphic cross in the *Dream of the Rood* can be seen as a type of hermit. It was cut down from a secluded woodland, where it too had grown and lived away from civilization. It suffered tremendous physical pain on the hill as nails were driven into its sides and arrows buried in its wood. And yet, the cross proclaims that it "dared not to bend," suggesting a willingness to suffer, to endure this necessary pain.³⁴ In the poem the cross receives heavenly exaltation and becomes like a saint, just as St. John the Baptist, St. Paul, St. Anthony, and St. Mary Magdalene became saints. As outlined above, the life of the cross suggests a paradox in its suffering leading to exaltation. This paradox, then, can be applied to the lives of hermits represented on the Ruthwell Cross, both because of the paradoxical philosophy behind hermetical thinking, and because of the presence of the *Dream of The Rood* on the cross. This can also be seen as part of the Anglo-Saxon riddling tradition in that the cross has abstractly taken on the identity of a hermit, and it is left to the viewer of the cross to determine this mysterious identity.

Another paradox apparent in ascetic philosophy is the belief that in living in the desert will induce a return to a state of harmony with nature, an Eden.³⁵ In depriving himself of basic necessities and not following his impulses, a hermit would come to "imagine his ascetic solitude as a recovery of the happy innocence of the first man in Eden."³⁶ The paradox here is that in living in a desert environment, dry and spare, one's state of mind would mirror that of Adam in his lush and verdant Garden of Eden. In other words, the "wilderness" would become one's "paradise."³⁷ This Garden of Eden paradise is represented on the Ruthwell Cross by the carved vines filled with birds and animals (Fig. 1). These vines stand in stark contrast to the cross's predominantly desert

30. F. Saxl, "The Ruthwell Cross," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 6 (1943): 5.

31. Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 10.

32. Warren, *Anchorites*, 10.

33. Warren, *Anchorites*, 10.

34. "The Dream of the Rood," 27.

35. Schapiro, "Religious Meaning," 237.

36. Schapiro, "Religious Meaning," 237.

37. Warren, *Anchorites*, 11.

scenes, reinforcing the paradoxical nature of a desert habitation becoming an Eden. The vine scroll, a motif from the Middle East referred to as the “Tree of Life,” is an obvious reference to Eden, not only because it is the “refuge of birds and beasts,”³⁸ but also because God planted the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden.³⁹ Yet the “Tree of Life” is also identified with the cross.⁴⁰ The worship of the cross evolved from the worship of sacred trees with qualities similar to those of the biblical “Tree of Life.”⁴¹ Earlier crosses were made of wood, and as stone become the norm in constructing crosses for Anglo-Saxons, vine scrolls were carved into the stone to symbolize living trees.⁴² The *Dream of the Rood* is inscribed around the vine scroll, emphasizing the motif’s association with both living trees and the cross.

More importantly, the vine-scroll also symbolizes the paradox in the *Dream of the Rood* because it represents “Christ in union with his church and the harmonious coexistence of transformed nature in the living God.”⁴³ This harmonious coexistence refers to an exaltation and paradise, which the cross obtained through suffering. The sections of the poem that are inscribed around the vine-scroll describe the pain of both the cross and Christ. Therefore, there is an emphasis on paradox in the vine-scroll program, as these vines, representing the cross’s exaltation, surround the narrative of its human suffering. Furthermore, the abstract motif of vine-scrolls, in their complicated and mind-numbing designs, symbolize the web of never-ending mysteriousness, complexity, and riddle-like quality of attributes of the cross: stone being like wood, cross as metaphor for Christ, cross as metaphor for hermit.

In conclusion, the presence of the *Dream of the Rood* has brought new insights in interpreting the sculptural reliefs on the Ruthwell Cross. The paradox and riddle-like qualities of the poem emphasize Christ’s holy and mysterious nature. The central paradox of the poem, that through human suffering divine glory is obtained, is expressed in the panels of eremitical life, for through suffering and overcoming impulses ascetics can receive heavenly manifestations and exaltation. The exalted life of cross and hermit is displayed on the Ruthwell Cross’s shaft containing the vine-scroll. Thus within this paradox of suffering leading to divine glorification, text and image are joined together.

38. Warren, *Anchorites*, 11.

39. Cyril Aphrem Karim, *Symbols of the Cross in the Writings of the Early Spriar Fathers* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004), 43.

40. Calvin B. Kendall, “The Ruthwell Cross and The Dream of the Rood,” in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Larratt Keefer, and Karen Louise Jolly (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 131.

41. Kendall, “The Ruthwell Cross,” 131.

42. North, *Heathen Gods*, 290.

43. Swanton, *The Dream of the Rood* (Manchester, England: University Press, 1970), 13.



Figure 1, Ruthwell Cross Details, South and North Sides, Vine-scroll, Author Unknown



Figure 2, Ruthwell Cross, West and East Sides, Author Unknown



Figure 3, Christ on the Beasts, Ruthwell Cross Detail, West Side



Figure 4, John the Baptist, Ruthwell Cross Detail, West Side



Figure 5, Sts Paul and Anthony in the Desert, Ruthwell Cross Detail, West Side



Figure 6, Christ and Mary Magdalene, Ruthwell Cross Detail, East Side



Figure 7, Visitation Scene, Ruthwell Cross Detail, East Side



Figure 8, Flight into Egypt, Ruthwell Cross Detail, West Side

Images courtesy of Albert S. Cook, *The Date of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1912).

