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Book Reviews

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Religion in Hip Hop: Mapping the New Terrain in the US, edited by Monica R. Miller, Anthony B. Pinn, and Bernard "Bun B" Freeman

Bloomsbury Studies in Religion and Popular Music | London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015 | 270 + xix pages | ISBN: 978-1-4725-0907-9 (softcover) $35.99

Consisting of fourteen new studies on primarily contemporary, commercially successful, mainstream American rap, *Religion in Hip Hop: Mapping the New Terrain in the US* is the most theoretically challenging and engaging study of the relationship between hip hop and what could be broadly conceived of as religion to date. Coming at a time when hip hop is artistically and ideologically more diverse than ever before, however, readers may find the quite narrow methodological approaches of the chapters, and the limited focus on a small number of commercially successful male megastars, to be disappointing. The collection is significant in building upon and moving beyond the well-established view of scholars of the genre that hip hop holds "vital clues regarding changing patterns and configurations of meaning, life, community, politics, and so on" (1). By engaging hip hop in dialogue with, and through the lens of, critical theory and continental philosophy, a convincing cumulative argument is presented for hip hop to be more than merely data; that hip hop is a meaningful partner and resource for scholars developing sophisticated understandings of contemporary culture.

With hip hop reaching the commercial apogee of its four decades of existence, increasingly engaging with the full range of possibilities presented by the culture industry and media technology, several chapters offer a good demonstration of hip hop as a preeminent medium for studying broader issues at the intersection of religion and contemporary culture. James Braxton Peterson's chapter on the "ontological rupture" of the holographic resurrection of Tupac (71–86), is one such example. Anthony B. Pinn's chapter on "Zombies in the Hood" (183–197) is another, interrogating, but extending, the revived popular trope of the zombie to theorize the embodiment of African American disadvantage and marginalization—the zombie as the "un/dead representing meaninglessness rendered external to 'human' life" (188). Similarly, Elonda Clay's chapter on religion and hip hop online (87–95), using the example of Yeezianity.com—nominally based on Kanye

West's 2013 album *Yeezus*, and seemingly owned by an accountancy training company—demonstrates both the ambiguity of virtual religion and the ludic nature of hip hop culture.

This ambiguous approach can also be detected in approaches to the concept of "religion" in the book. The editors wish to approach religion as "a conceptual and taxonomical 'place holder' of sorts" for questions of existential meaning (3). This is common for studies of popular culture emerging from within the discipline of religion studies, from wherein most of the contributors come, and within which critical engagement with the category of religion is increasingly common. The definition is sometimes stretched, and sometimes deconstructed out of existence, with the resulting advantage that the discipline gains secular credibility and broadens its potential field of study. So one must be a scholar very much committed to the old school to expect some kind of engagement with what we might call *actually existing religion*. The editors have almost entirely excluded actually existing religion circulating in contemporary US hip hop from this collection, with the exception of passing allusions to and critiques of African American churches and acknowledgement of the influence of heterodox forms of African-American Islam. The "melancholic kind of hope" (176–177) in Lupe Fiasco's lyrical critique of American foreign policy is more interesting than his publicly identified Sunni Muslim beliefs, therefore. This is despite—or, perhaps, *because*—actually existing religion is more prominent within contemporary American hip hop than ever before. In 2014 the album *Anomaly* by the Evangelical rapper Lecrae debuted at number 1 on the Billboard 200 album chart. Released on his own independent label, no less, one might have thought that such a development would warrant at least some passing comment in a collection on 'the new terrain' of religion in American hip hop.

This conspicuous absence is one of the disappointing aspects of the collection, and it is linked to two other aspects mentioned in this review's introduction: the narrow methodological focus and the narrow range of artists analyzed. The latter is perhaps the most obvious issue: Tupac, Jay Z, and Kanye West dominate the discussion, and aside from this holy trinity, only Erykah Badu and Lupe Fiasco receive sustained treatment. The other foundational elements of hip hop, aside from rapping, are only briefly breached in Maco L. Faniel's chapter on the development of the Houston scene (96–107). To map "the new terrain in the US," as the collection proposes to do, is not the same as to keep up with the Kardashians. It is not only the genre-crossing and multimedia megastardom of a handful of rappers that marks

contemporary American hip hop as quantitatively and qualitatively different from other sites of the global scene and other periods in American popular music history, it is also the radical diversity of the contemporary form, and this is underanalyzed in the collection.

Similarly, with few exceptions the chapters demonstrate the same methodological approach: critical textual analysis of album lyrics and art, combined with publically available interviews. Critical theory and continental philosophy provide the theoretical thrust, in combination with the familiar treatment of hip hop as a subcategory of (African-American) progressive politics. This is, once again, common for studies of popular culture emerging from within the discipline of religion studies; the interest is in nominally secular popular culture, but analyzed in the way one might analyze more conventional religious texts. As mentioned, Maco L. Faniel's chapter on the Houston hip hop scene stands out for its nod towards cultural geography and move beyond the focus on individual megastars. Standing out in a different way is Daniel White-Hodge's chapter "Methods for the Prophetic" on the "ethnolifehistory" of Tupac and, briefly appearing as if an afterthought, unfortunately, Lauryn Hill (24–37). In his longstanding interest in the cultural and religious significance of Tupac, Hodge draws upon numerous interviews with his associates and acquaintances, to move beyond "a sole focus on the lyrical and aesthetic dimensions, to consider the lived realities and geography" of an individual life. At the other end of the methodological spectrum of hip hop studies, absent from this collection, scholars are engaging in similar research—not about celebrity lives, but about the lives of impoverished and otherwise marginalized youth who engage with hip hop as a resource for education and a tool for self-expression.

In the penultimate concluding chapter, Miller and Pinn argue that the "new reality" of the relationship between religion and culture in the United States, emerges through the "complexity and useful incoherence" of hip hop's approach to what might be characterized as "religion" (215). Despite the theoretical sophistication of the study, I cannot help but wonder how "new" this "new reality" or the "new terrain" in the book's title really is. To what extent is the "complexity and useful incoherence" of "religion" in hip hop that emerges through the collection simply a consequence of the exclusion from the study of the more orthodox forms of religion that circulate within the genre? What is left is religion as the creative, individual expression of moral seriousness, familiar in artistic endeavors and self-authorizing individual spiritual journeys from the Romantic era onwards. If the analysis of the

beliefs and practices hinted at in the public utterances of rap's megastars was conducted in a more banal scholarly manner—that is, a more sociological manner—I wonder if we would be less dazzled. Should Jay Z's refusal, as Michael Eric Dyson explains, "to hunker down" in any single religious register or articulate a coherent theological "system" (58, 63) be surprising to scholars of the late capitalist spiritual terrain? How about his periodically self-deifying braggadocio—"Jay Hova" also being the focus on Monica R. Miller's chapter on hip hop's "New Black Godz" (198–213)—or the thoroughly material concerns that saturate his "cosmic consciousness" (67)? These artists are not just heirs to the values of the Romantics, but to the values of Oprah Winfrey and her "divine self," and the rest of Hollywood's spiritual self-help milieu, after all.

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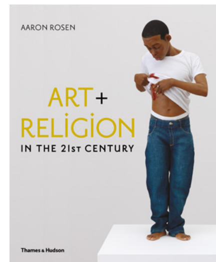
Art and Religion in the 21st Century, by Aaron Rosen



London: Thames and Hudson, 2015 | 256 pages | ISBN: 978-0-500239-3-15 (hardcover) £32.00

On first receiving a copy of Aaron Rosen's *Art and Religion in the 21st Century*, my first impression was that it looked more like a coffee-table book than a scholarly tome. From its smooth, hard cover and arresting cover art to the thick glossy pages crammed with countless colour images, this book is a pleasure to look at *and* touch.

And yet, this book demands more than our visual or tactile appreciation—it deserves to be read too, Rosen offering a clear and thoughtful guide through the subject of religion in modern art. He begins with the premise that, "when you enter the world of art, you are, like it or not, entering the realm of religion" (7). And this is no less true, he argues, of modern art, despite contemporary artists' reputations as "godless marauders on a quest to offend" (10). Modern art has the capacity to raise difficult yet genuine questions about religion, often more effectively than were these questions to be asked directly in theological conversation. As Rosen demonstrates throughout this book,

there is a "tremendous potential for reciprocity" (17) between modern art and religion, which invites audiences to consider the "religious" as a serious subject for discussion and critique, rather than as a source of ridicule.

Rosen has organized the book around five key themes, through which he suggests contemporary art raises questions for and about religion. These themes are: people of the image, wonder, cultural identities, ritual, and indwelling. Threaded through these five areas are other layers of engagement, including race, class, gender, and sexuality, which Rosen argues are crucial to understanding the production and reception of contemporary art. Keen to avoid pigeonholing these works as a particular "type" of religious art (e.g., Jewish, Christian, Hindu, etc.), he looks instead for thematic connections across multiple traditions, which he then explores using a range of methodological approaches. This accentuates one of Rosen's goals for the book—to showcase the "sheer multiplicity" of ways in which contemporary art and artists can engage with religion *and* can likewise encourage audiences of their work to join in this engagement, regardless of their religious backgrounds (22–23).

The first theme Rosen addresses is "People of the image," a word play on the common term "people of the book," which claims a common identity between Jews, Muslims, and Christians. This section (like the others) is further divided into two chapters, which consider artists' engagement with the themes of creation and Christology. Adopting a theological perspective, Rosen first explores the way that creation myths are both retold and deconstructed by contemporary artists. He raises the issue that many of these artists (wittingly or not) echo some common theological questions around creation—its order, purpose, capacity for chaos, and, of course, the identity of a Creator. The art work thus becomes a visual form of theological (and often scriptural) interpretation, with which viewers are invited to engage.

In the second chapter, Rosen turns his attention to images of Jesus in contemporary art, considering the ways artists have questioned, reconfigured, and critiqued Christian religion through their representation of iconic traditions, such as the Last Supper, the Pietà, and the crucifixion. He also illustrates artists' attempts to subvert the traditionally white, male Christian perspective that has dominated depictions of Jesus in art, by portraying this iconic figure through various lenses of race and political ideology. Jesus can be depicted as a Samoan man, an Israeli soldier, even Michael Jackson; he may be dipped in urine, or sculpted from either chocolate, an animal carcass, or the incense ash gathered from Buddhist temples. Rosen's choice of images

raises an important point—that images of Jesus in contemporary art cease to be "the cultural property of any one region or religion." Instead, they are appropriated to comment upon wider issues, such as public trauma, racism, neoliberalism, and the failure of the Church to address issues of social justice. Rosen does not dwell on this point in depth, which is a pity, given its centrality in tracing the reception history of cultural and religious texts across space and time.

In the second section of the book, Rosen shifts (sideways) from theology to philosophy to consider the "sublime" in contemporary art. Tracing the development of philosophical notions of the sublime, he offers us a series of art works that grant audiences an unnerving glimpse of something that lies outside their everyday experience, be it upwards towards the divine, or downwards, into the abyss of human fragility. Like earlier artists such as J. M. W. Turner, contemporary creators of the sublime often tap into the awesomeness of terrestrial landscapes and the constant clashes and intersections between the natural and human domains. By doing so, these artists raise searching questions about the place of humanity within cosmic creation—the tensions, interconnections, and responsibilities that continuously unfold within this fraught relationship.

Moving on to section three, Rosen turns his attention to issues of cultural identity, asking how experiences of marginalization and otherness have been expressed within contemporary postcolonial art. The art works he chooses spotlight the experiences of the subaltern "Other" and the violence, segregation, and displacement perpetrated against the Other within the arena of colonial privilege. In some of these works, indigenous iconography is woven together with western art forms and objects, offering a startling reminder of imperial authority and the erosion of indigenous culture. Rosen also traces the ways that contemporary artists have used religious iconography to critique the more official discourses surrounding wider global conflicts and violence. From the language of exclusion voiced in sacred scripture to the contested spaces of religious landscapes, artists engage with religious conflict and extremism, using as their "muse" phenomena such as the separation wall between Israeli and Palestinian territories and the visceral reality of blood that is shed in the name of faith. This is a sobering chapter, but one that expresses all the more clearly the power of modern art to name and shame the rhetoric of violence that is seeped into the warp and woof of religious tradition.

Rosen's penultimate section turns to another form of religious expression—ritual. Borrowing from sociological and anthropological discourses, he con-

siders the ways that modern art can depict *and* enact ritual. Often, these art works are deeply embodied, the artist either performing a ritual themselves or drawing attention to the presence of other active bodies within ritual. The rituals they uncover may be explicitly connected to religious tradition, or instead, ritualize an everyday mundane act, thereby imbuing it with a sense of the sacred. These artworks invite their audiences to think deeply about the significance of rituals, particularly their power to inscribe collective identity. They may also break away from expected meanings of ritual to offer new, and often critical, reflections on religion and contemporary culture. Rosen gives particular attention to rituals and monuments of remembrance in this section, noting the ways that modern art can produce "counter-monuments" (183) that are intended to provoke, as well as console. Instead of *filling* an absence, these counter-monuments make that absence more palpable: rows of unoccupied chairs, discarded shoes on a riverbank, the empty ground where two towers once stood—all reminding people of a terrible loss and inviting them to remember that loss and to grieve.

In the final section of this book, Rosen adopts a phenomenological approach to consider the theme of "indwelling" in contemporary art. Focusing first on embodiment, he walks us through a series of art works that reflect the significance of the body within religious faith. Drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, Rosen considers notions of the body as forever in tactile contact with the world and with the bodies of others we encounter. From rapturous facial expressions, to bodies touching in community, to the religious garments and veils that mask bodies from our view, the art in this chapter attests to the human form as a conduit through which the sacred can be expressed, experienced, and, at times, contested. These images also raise questions about the sexuality, gender, and colour of bodies, inviting audiences to destabilize traditional socio-religious norms of what a body "ought" to look like. Rosen continues this focus on the indwelling of the sacred in the second chapter of this section, where he moves from embodiment to sacred space. He notes that the functions of the art gallery and religious sanctuary are often conflated, both treated as sacred spaces *and* secular repositories for art. A trip to the Louvre may, for some, be akin to a holy pilgrimage; a tour of St Paul's Cathedral can be savoured as an encounter with stunning art and architecture. In a sense, a space inhabited by art (be it a gallery or religious sanctuary) has the potential to engage audiences in contemplation of both the sacred and the secular at once, inviting them to note how they reflect onto each other. As Rosen observes in his closing dis-

cussion, art and religion provide powerful ways of looking at each other and at the world—and perhaps they also give their audiences the opportunity to look a little more closely at themselves too.

As I said at the beginning of this review, Rosen's *Art and Religion in the 21st Century* is a beautiful book and one that engrossed me as I read and looked. Its multiplicity of colour images and the accompanying discussions testify to the many ways in which religious themes and experiences (however we may define these) have been received and reconfigured in contemporary art. Moving away from more explicit religious iconography, Rosen encourages his readers to search out the sacred in art forms which, at first glance, may appear to have little to do with religion. But through his discussions of religious iconography, the sublime, culture, ritual, and indwelling, he demonstrates that the sacred in art is never far from our gaze. My one frustration with the book was that there was little in the way of detailed or prolonged discussion of these themes, or of the art works under consideration. It left me wanting more. But this is perhaps the value of this volume—to inspire *further* study of this important topic in reception history. Rosen offers an invaluable starting point, not the final word.

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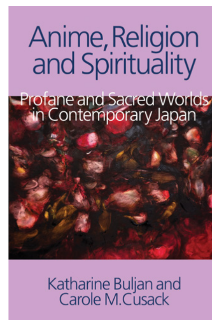
***Anime, Religion and Spirituality: Profane and Sacred Worlds in Contemporary Japan*, by Katharine Buljan and Carole M. Cusack**



Sheffield: Equinox, 2015 | viii + 249 pages | ISBN: 978-1-78179-110-3 (softcover) £20.00

Katharine Buljan is a talented artist-scholar with a love of Japanese manga (cartoons) and anime (animation; a.k.a. manga movies), while Carole M. Cusack is an accomplished religion scholar with an interest in the East; both have teamed up to explore some religious dimensions of the Japanese anime phenomenon. Their work focuses primarily upon Shintoism, Buddhism, Animism, the supernatural, magic, mythology, and folklore, with various asides into Confucianism,

Daoism, Christianity, and New Religious Movements. The penetration of this Asian art form into the Western world is nowadays so great that "manga and anime as words … have become part of colloquial English" (1), and an adherent is respectfully called an anime "'aficionado' more often than 'fan' (or the [negative] Japanese *otaku*, which generally is understood as 'extreme fan' or 'nerd')" (165).

This book sits comfortably alongside *Japanese Mythology in Film: A Semiotic Approach to Reading Japanese Film and Anime* (Yoshiko Okuyama, 2015), *Miyazaki's Animism Abroad: The Reception of Japanese Religious Themes by American and German Audiences* (Eriko Ogihara-Schuck, 2014), *Drawing on Tradition: Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Jolyon Baraka Thomas, 2012), *The Fairy Tale and Anime: Traditional Themes, Images and Symbols at Play on Screen* (Dani Cavallaro, 2011), *Magic as Metaphor in Anime: A Critical Study* (Dani Cavallaro, 2010), and a sea of anime books devoted to auteur artists, animation studios, aesthetic styles, and various genres dealing with robots, cyborgs, transhumanism, apocalypticism, environmental degradation, social rebellion, cultural decay, and the post-human.

The authors claim in various odd spots that: the "book investigates anime, focusing on its historical antecedents (graphic and narrative), its religious and supernatural content, its generic and thematic variety, and its popularity and reception among fans" (5); the "aim of this study … is to interrogate the symbiotic relationship of religion and the spiritual with anime (and the related art form of manga), focusing on the way magic and the supernatural are fused with science and science fiction, to produce a unique cultural product" (60); the "focus is on a selection of elements from a set of religions present in Japan that can be identified in anime" (74); the book was written for readers "who desire to know more about the religion and mythology of Japan and how it informs the manga and anime genres" (8).

Structure-wise, the book consists of the usual academic apparatus comprising of title pages, publication details, "Contents," "Acknowledgements," plus an overall book "Introduction" (1–9) followed by four dedicated chapters containing potted histories, ad hoc anime selections (sometimes retold with fannish glee), and numerous tangential excursions into non-Japanese exemplars, as follows:

Chapter 1, "Japanese Modernity and the Manga and Anime Art Forms" (11–61), with subsections: (a) "Introduction" (11), (b) "The Graphic and Narrative Origins of Manga" (12—23), (c) "Japanese Modernity and the Emergence of Manga in the Twentieth Century" (23–36), (d) "The Tran-

sition from Manga to Anime" (37–48), (e) "Contemporary Religion, Spirituality and Popular Culture" (48–60), and (f) "Conclusion" (60–61).

Chapter 2, "The New Life of Old Beliefs: Religious and Spiritual Concepts in Anime" (63–115), with subsections: (a) "Introduction" (63), (b) "Religious Traditions in Japan" (63–89), (c) "Animal Transformations in Japanese Folklore and Anime" (89–100), (d) "Supernatural Themes and the Anime Genre" (100–114), and (e) "Conclusion" (114–15).

Chapter 3, "From Realistic to Supernatural: Genres in Anime" (117–60), with subsections: (a) "Introduction" (117–18), (b) "The Rise of Generic Hybridity in Anime" (118–29), (c) "Western Pagan Ideas in the Supernatural Subgenre of Anime" (129–35), (d) "The Supernatural in Anime with Realistic Subject Matter" (135–46), (e) "The Child/Young Adult Protagonist and the Supernatural" (146–59), and (f) "Conclusion" (160).

Chapter 4, "Power Within: The Fan's Embrace of Profane and Sacred Worlds in Anime" (163–208), with subsections: (a) "Introduction" (163–64), (b) "A Story of Devotion: Anime and its Western Aficionados" (165–81), (c) "The Fulfilment of Cosplay" (181–87), (d) "Audiences and the Religio-Spiritual Content of Anime" (187–95), (e) "Anime Pilgrimage" (195–207), and (f) "Conclusion" (207–8).

This was followed by "Conclusion: Profane and Sacred Worlds in Anime" (209–12), a comprehensive "Bibliography" (213–31) and a detailed "Index" (232–49), plus five full-page images (ii, 10, 62, 116, 162) crowned by a colourful cover-page picture.

Production-wise, the book is clearly printed, of good quality paper and binding with clean, legible footnotes, but missing was a List of Illustrations and a List of Abbreviations, e.g., "BDSM" (2; unexplained but "bondage, dominance and submission, sadomasochism"); "sci-fi" (124; unexplained but "science fiction"); "NHK" = "Nihon Hikan Kyokai (Japan Pessimists' Association)" (176); "ST" = "*Star Trek*" (183); "TOS" = "the original series" (183); "IDIC" = "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations" (183); "MMORPGs" = "Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games" (187); "SOS Brigade" (199; unexplained but "Spreading Cheer to Our Student Body Brigade"), "JNTO" = "Japan National Tourism Organization" (198, 199, 233). A family tree of anime genres would have been useful, but most annoying was the missing Contents page subheadings. What was gained by their elimination (which forces readers to manually search the book for guidance) when including them is easy, more scholarly, pragmatically useful, and an inexpensive book-selling feature?

Illustration-wise, there were two Japanese art prints (10, 62), two anime TV stills (ii, 116), and a photograph of an unnamed Sydney cosplayer dressed as Howl (162) from *Howl's Moving Castle* (a film otherwise ignored therein), and no stills from *any* anime film (although comparing the anime and cosplay Howl would be useful). Furthermore, Buljan's 2012 artpiece, "Sacredness of Cherry Blossom" on the book cover had no apparent anime reference (but possibly some faces (?) in the blossoms), was *not* discussed in the text or indexed, and was apparently selected to promote her art/business. A montage of iconic anime characters would have been more appropriate and much more readily catch the aficionado's eye-cum-purchase.

Reading-wise, the information provided is so dense in some places, coupled with numerous tongue-twisting Japanese words, names and concepts, that it made reading the book for non-Japanese speakers an uncomfortable experience. Added to the information overload and the foreign language discomfort were the numerous academic asides best left as footnotes, e.g., Gilgamesh (134); Bob Marley (165); Hungary (177), which disrupted the reading flow with a stop-start action. Especially disruptive was the recounting of detailed plot features *before* making their point(s) and then returning to their narrative trajectory. Overall, it sometimes felt like reading a dictionary (i.e., the storyline was very hard to follow, but magnificently explained along the way).

These reading discomforts were further compounded by the authors' stylistic choice of providing an overall "Introduction" and "Conclusion" *along with* four additional chapter "Introduction" and "Conclusion" sections (better relabelled as "Preface" and "Summary"). The authors had deployed the old pedagogic formula of: (a) tell them what you are going to tell them, (b) tell them, and (c) then tell them what you just told them, that is, five sets of repetitious recounting within the book! Minor incidents of redundant repetition occurred early on, namely: "The terms 'anime' and 'manga' have found their way into modern English" (2), which was basically a repeat of their footnote 1 on the previous page.

Major incidents of redundant repetition occurred regarding the term "cosplay," namely: "cosplay (costume role-play)" (2); "cosplay activities (costume role-playing, dressing up as characters)" (40); "cosplay ('costume play')" (163); "cosplay, a type of performance by anime aficionados" (181); "anime aficionados have made an art out of donning costumes and acting the part of favourite anime characters. It was Nobuyuki (Nov) Takahashi who coined the term 'cosplay'" (182); the "term 'cosplay' is an abbreviation of 'costume'

and 'play'; the costumes are a vital part of cosplaying as they assist fans to emulate the anime character" (185); "the act of cosplaying can be seen as symbolic stepping into an alternative reality, the diegetic world of anime narratives" (164). Similar widespread redundant repetition occurred regarding the demeaning Japanese term *otaku* (8, 12, 105, 165, 173, 174, 175, 176). Overall, it appears as if the two authors did not coordinate their multiple explanatory efforts to avoid such unnecessary repetitions.

The reading discomfort was again compounded by the multiple meanings attached to specific terms. For example, the religious concept of "*kami*" was defined, described and referred to in the following ways: "(the supernatural beings of the Shintō religion)" (4); "Shintō's deities, the *kami*" (5); "*kami* (spirit)-filled natural world" (7); "*kami* (spirit beings)" (66); "*kami* (divine spirits)" (114); "the dead were also called *kami*" (67); "anything that appeared 'superior, mysterious, fearful, powerful, or incomprehensible' and it included not only animate but also inanimate entities" (67–68); "the intangible *kami* that, in Shintō belief, permeate all of life" (78); "in Japan, the Shintō *kami* and both society and the universe are interpellated" (96). Then there is "the common *kami* (sacred) nature"; (67); the "powerful female *kami*" (131); "the local *kami*" (110); "the *kami* of rivers and other natural phenomena" (110); the explanation that "people of the mountains venerate mountain *kami* called *yama-no-kami*, while rice farmers worship the paddy-field *kami*, *ta-no-kami*, and those living by the sea worship the sea *kami*, *umi-no-kami*. The term *kami* can also be applied to plants, animals and landforms" (67); "'evil' and 'mysterious things' were referred to as *kami*" (67); "*kami* have imperfections, and *kami* can also refer to supernatural forces in addition to specific persons" (5).

One wonders how the average non-specialist reader can keep track of their variety, let alone the different perspectives and subtle nuances. Given its obvious importance to the book and field, the term should have been defined and elaborated early on, possibly given its own subheading to explore more thoroughly its richness and diversity, rather than widely spread out the various meanings in an uncoordinated fashion. Furthermore, although "manga" and "anime" (2) are terms defined therein, many technical terms were not (e.g., "myth," "supernatural," "magic"); apparently the authors automatically assumed that readers know what they mean by them (let alone what the Japanese meant by them per religion and per historical period).

Given the book's factual density, sorely missed were: (a) a Japanese word glossary with succinct meaning and/or explications of the terminology em-

ployed (e.g., *awatee, baku, bishōnen, dōjinshi, hakama, hentai, hikikomori, ikebana, kamishibai, komikkusu, mangaka, mu-kokuseki, musume-yaku, otoko-yaku, ōtsu-e, seichi junrei, shōjo, shōnen, shunga, ukiyo-e*); (b) a glossary of Japanese deities, folklore, mythological and magical creatures, religious terms and concepts (e.g., *bakemono, bodhisattvas, Gaki Zoshi, gohō, kami, kappa, mahō shōjo, miko, shinbutsu shūgō, shin shin shūkyō, shūkyō asobi, tengu, ying-yang, yōkai, Yomi-no-Kuni*) and ideally with a family tree indicating their interrelationships; (c) a filmography (e.g., *Appleseed, Ghost in the Shell, Grave of the Fireflies, Neon Genesis Evangelion, Ponyo, Princess Mononoke, Spirited Away*); (d) a listing of TV series (e.g., *Astro Boy, GeGeGe No Kitarō, Kimba the White Lion, Princes Knight, The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*), with all media entries having their Japanese name, English translation, year(s) of release, and director name(s) provided; (e) a brief plot of each film/TV episode mentioned, so as to set the scene for the uninitiated; and (f) the bracketed name of the main voice actors alongside the character quoted within the text.

Although their book title is *Anime, Religion and Spirituality: Profane and Sacred Worlds in Contemporary Japan*, the authors had frequently burst their own boundaries by referring to the supernatural, magic, folklore, fairy tales, and mythology (as if unproblematic and interchangeable with religion and spirituality). Further, instead of "*Contemporary Japan*" many references discussed modernity and the antecedents of manga art, comics, paintings and persons.

Temporarily ignoring that cosplay is *not* anime, the authors devoted extraordinary space to the American cult science fiction TV-cum-film series, *Star Trek*, devised by the American Gene Roddenberry, plus its cosplay conventions in the United States, Germany and Hungary (56, 163, 166–69, 177–78, 181–85, 192, 206–8)! The authors deemed the two phenomena "appropriate as a comparison" (167) for gaining insight into Japanese cosplay, but one wonders why their main focus was not upon Japanese cosplay in Japan. It is dangerous to assume an international equivalence here, or to make the equally dangerous assumption that because "anime aficionados can … manifest a deep, almost religious, devotion to anime in various ways" (163) that it actually *is* something (pseudo?)-religious.

For a book primarily about anime, it also devotes a disproportionate amount of space to the history of manga art. The authors did not get to the religion-and-anime aims of the book until page 100 with "Supernatural Themes and the Anime Genre." This is an exceptionally long wait for those wanting to get to anime quickly. Given the heavy manga focus, one

wonders why the book was not titled *Manga, Anime, Religion and the Supernatural.* Additionally, the downside of the authors' intimate knowledge and passionate recounting of artists, historical periods and events is their assumption that the reader instantly recognizes what they are talking about and is able to follow the (sometimes convoluted) jumps from storyline, character and media modality *without* any prior preparation. This problem is especially pronounced with long-running anime series, e.g., 24 episodes (175), 52+ episodes (140), that automatically renders any full explanations complex, and frequently results in a glossing over of the subject matter.

A few blemishes mar the work, notably, excessive words, e.g., "mainstreaming of of [sic] this art form" (170); mismatching cases, e.g., "*shūkyō asobi*" (79) versus "*Shūkyō asobi*" (246); un-italicised titles, e.g., "Ribon no Kishi" (190); inconsistent naming formats, e.g., "*Hanasaku Iroha – Blossoms for Tomorrow*" (116), "*Blossoms for Tomorrow*" (135), "*Hanasaku Iroha* (2011, English: *Blossoms for Tomorrow*)" (143), "*Blossoms for Tomorrow*" (2011)" (209), "*Hanasaku Iroha* (*Blossoms for Tomorrow*)" (237); missing Index items, e.g., the six film/TV titles in the quotation (126); erroneous Index links, e.g., "*kami* 65" under "*Blossoms for Tomorrow*" (233) but the film title is missing (65); and inconsistent bibliographic formats (e.g., "Avramides … XV/I" (214) not "15.1" as done elsewhere.

Overlooking the information density, foreign words, and unnecessary repetitions, there are copious interesting information and noteworthy anime exemplars that will help sensitize readers to the range, influence, and pedagogic potential of popular culture for post-Millennial religion studies in this age of Hollywood. The text is an interesting addition to any academic film book collection, whether for professional, pedagogic or personal purposes. Readers need only dip randomly into its pages to realize how extensive and exciting anime art can be, and to appreciate just how deeply it has penetrated the western consciousness (and is affected by it in return). Hopefully, Buljan and Cusack's text will whet the appetite of readers to delve deeper into this important subgenre of the religion-and-film/TV field. One looks forward to their future works; possibly a book specifically devoted to Christianity within anime that complements and extends their current Asian religion work.

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Between Text and Text: The Hermeneutics of Intertextuality in Ancient Cultures and Their Afterlife in Medieval and Modern Times, edited by Michaela Bauks, Wayne Horowitz, and Armin Lange

Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements 6 | Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2013 | viii + 363 pages | ISBN: 978-3-525-55025-0 (hardback) €100.00; ISBN: 978-3-647-55025-1 (ebook) €79.99

Between Text and Text is the publication of the third meeting of "The Hermeneutics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam" network, which was held September 21–24, 2009. The twenty-one chapters focus on elucidating intertextual relationships in ancient texts, despite the fact that the fragmentary nature of our knowledge of ancient literature, language, and culture makes identifying these relationships more difficult than when studying modern texts.

The volume is organized into three parts; the first part is made up of three chapters that lay out proposals for methodologies by which the intertextual study of ancient texts can be undertaken. The second part is made up of thirteen articles which examine various types of intertextual relationships in written and visual texts in the ancient period including some comparison of ancient intertextuality with that in the medieval and modern periods. The final section contains five articles considering the way intertextuality can function in cultural memory and canon.

Part 1 begins with Michaela Bauks's "Intertextuality in Ancient Literature in Light of Textlinguistics and Cultural Studies" (27–46). The chapter starts by differentiating typological (at the level of genre) from referential (the relationship of text and text) intertextuality, continues by defining the meaning of "text" precisely, and concludes by noting several difficulties particular to ancient intertextuality. Next, Gebhard Selz parses the intertextual implications of the bilingual environment surrounding the formation of the Mesopotamian writing system in his article "Texts, Textual Bilingualism, and the Evolution of Mesopotamian Hermeneutics" (47–65). Selz argues that Ancient Near Eastern cylinder seals and the logographical Sumero-Akkadian writing of early Mesopotamia are ontologically equivalent and that writing develops "in the domain of visual representations" (64). Further, Selz observes a sanctification of written materials in Mesopotamian culture which,

he suggests, is a result of an "evolutionary process leading from the divination of physical and mental objects to the objectification of the written, signs and words alike" (53). Finally, Philip Alexander, "A Typology of Intertextual Relations Based on the Manchester-Durham Typology of Anonymous and Pseudepigraphic Jewish Literature of Antiquity" (66–89), reports the intertextual implications of the Manchester-Durham Typology of Anonymous and Pseudepigraphic Jewish Literature from 200 BCE to 700 CE. Bearing in mind that "intertextuality is only one aspect of a literary profile" (72), and that individual texts can display several different types of intertextual relationships, Alexander identifies the various types of intertextual relationships present in the corpus. The categories he identifies in this piece are: explicit metatextuality (lemma + comment); implicit metatextuality (translation); verbal overlaps between non-narrative or narrative texts; the borrowing of phrases or passages from another text including quotation, allusion, and expressive re-use of another text; and the use of an antecedent text as a literary model.

Part 2 is made up of thirteen articles which identify intertextual relationships in written and visual texts in the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. This section is broken up further into three subsections, the first of which contains six articles dealing with retelling or rewriting. Markus Risch analyzes the reception history of Gen 6:1–4, the story of the Nephilim, in 1 Enoch 6–16, Jubilees 5:1–10, and 4Q252 frg. 1, col. 1, in his chapter, "Tradition and Transmission of Texts and Intertexts in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Jewish Literature" (90–97). Risch observes that Gen 6:1–4 has a "twofold aim": the limitation of human lifespan (v. 3) and the mythical genealogy of semi-divine beings (vv. 1, 2, & 4). As this text is taken up in the early Jewish tradition, the interpretations focus on one or the other of these original aims. In the Book of the Watchers, Gen 6:3 is excised from the discussion entirely. Jubilees 5:1–10 treats Gen 6:1–4 as containing two distinct stories. Finally, 4Q252 only includes a reference to Gen 6:3, excising the mythic story entirely. Next, Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten takes up the integration of the Abraham cycle as told in Genesis within the book of Jubilees ("Abraham's Death: The Intertextual Relationship Between Gen 25:7–10 and Jub. 22:1–23:8"; 98–116). Ruiten observes that Jubilees typically follows the sequential order of events in Genesis, though makes "many transpositions through addition, omission and variation" (100, cf. the table on pp. 100–102). The main focus of this chapter is on the intertextual relationship existing between the story of Abraham's death in its architext,

Gen 25:7–10, and its phenotext, Jub 22:1–23:8 (cf. the table on pp. 105–6). Rutien's conclusion is that Jubilees integrates the Genesis passage "into a completely new narrative" (114). This new narrative re-attributes the main contents of the farewell speech Isaac gave to Jacob (Gen 27:1–29) to Abraham in Jub 22:1–12, and incorporates elements from the report of Jacob's death (Gen 49:33–50:14) in its description of Abraham's death. The result is what Ruiten terms "transvalorisation," by which he means that the "'value' of Abraham changes in the new narrative, as does the 'value' of Jacob" (115), likely with the intent to emphasize the idea that Jacob and Abraham were united in life and death.

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "Gospel of Thomas Logion 7 Unravelled: An Intertextual Approach to a *locus vexatus*" (117–131), uses intertextuality to explain how and why the incorporation of the simile Socrates uses to describe the tripartite soul in Plato's *Republic* 588–589 by GosThom logion 7 so thoroughly changes the hypotext. Lanzillotta identifies several types of transposition including condensation, diegetical transformation (alternation of the narrative framework), pragmatic transformation, and transmotivation. The result of these transformations is transvaluation, or the creation of a "new axiological framework" (123), which exposes the fact that the hypotext is being read differently because of "deep changes in the historical context in which it is re-read and rewritten" (131).

The next chapter, "An Attempt to Classify Different Stages of Intertextuality in the Myth of Horus at Edfu" (133–154) by Sydney H. Aufrère, explains intertextuality in the inscriptions and reliefs in the temple of Horus at Edfu. These texts contain both "internal intertextuality," that is, "links between the same elements of a literary unit" (144), and the geographic arrangement of different units—and "external intertextuality," or the importing of "external mythological context" into the texts at Edfu (146). The internal and external intertextuality result in the imposition of a re-reading of the world through the myth of Horus at Edfu.

The final two chapters in this section deal with modern instances of intertextuality and are included in the volume to show the similarity of the intertextual mechanism between ancient and modern contexts. Klaus Davidowicz, "Kabbalistic Elements in Popular Movies" (154–164) identifies several intertextual uses of the practical Kaballah—Golems, Dybbuks, and "wonder Rabbis"—in modern movies. Manfred Oeming, ("'*In kino veritas*': On the Reception of the Biblical Book of Job in the Context of Recent Cinematography" 165–179), also deals with modern cinema, focusing on the ways that

the book of Job is reworked in two feature-length films: *Adam's Apples*, directed by Anders Thomas Jensen (Denmark: M&M, 2005) and *A Serious Man*, directed by Joel and Ethan Coen (Universal City, CA: Focus Features, 2009). Oeming's analysis of these films is geared towards understanding the meaning of a text as it is "constructed by the individual recipient and interpreter" (165). It specifically considers the way in which the biblical text is put into a new context by movies, and thereby provokes and challenges the audience.

The second section in Part 2 contains three articles dealing with commentary and translation. In the first of these chapters, "Controlling Intertexts and Hierarchies of Echo in Two Thematic Eschatological Commentaries from Qumran" (182–195), George J. Brooke starts by pointing out that Kristeva's notion of "intertextuality" has come to designate two distinct concepts—explicit use of pre-existing literary traditions, and the way readers or hearers "locate [a text] in a field of references," some deliberate and others less so (182). Brooke then goes on to classify the way these types of intertextuality function in 4Q174 and 4Q177. He concludes that there is an intertextual hierarchy at play in ancient Jewish commentaries. First is the authoritative hypotext that was intentionally selected by the author. Next are the other authoritative hypotexts that the author refers to in an effort to support the interpretation. In third place are echoes of other authoritative traditions, either deliberately included by the author or not, and either recognized by the reader or not. Fourth are intertextual echoes of other traditions, and finally the echoes of other textual worlds.

Gilles Dorival, in "Biblical Intratextuality: MT-Numbers and LXX-Numbers: A Case Study" (197–203), starts by observing a historicizing trend in LXX-Numbers, namely that when compared with MT-Numbers, the Septuagint provides about forty more references to other Torah texts. Dorival argues that this is a particular type of intertextuality, and should be referred to as "intratextuality" by which he means "reference to the literary corpus which a given text belongs to" (197).

Last for this section, Margaret Dimitrova, "New Testament Quotations in a Medieval Slavonic Manuscript with Commentaries on the Song of Songs" (204–215), analyzes the translation technique used by the Medieval translator of the Slavonic translation of New Testament quotations in what is known as *catena B2* (also written as B2). The essential question is, did this translator use previous Slavonic translations, and if so which ones? Dimitrova concludes that when translating New Testament quotations in the *catena*, the

translator gave the highest authority to the Greek version of the verses included in *catena B2*, but "exploited the lexical decisions" of previous Slavonic translators (214). This method stands in some distinction to the translator's practice with the Song of Songs, where the translator introduced several changes to the pre-existing Slavonic translations.

The third section of Part 2 contains three articles which demonstrate different functions of quotation and allusion in ancient texts. First, Martin F. Meyer, "Quotations in the Writings of Aristotle" (220–232), speculates what information the various links, references, and quotations in Aristotle's preserved works have to tell about his process of text production. The results: there are scant quotations of philosophers in Aristotle's works. It is rare for written books to be explicitly mentioned, but those that are mentioned are mostly works of Plato. Finally, even when Aristotle mentions that a text was written, he quotes it in his own words, by which Aristotle clearly implies that his audience knew something about philosophy. Further, Aristotle cross-references his works some 150 times, which, Meyer argues, helps elucidate not only the chronological order of Aristotle's works but also the increasing importance of written text.

Next, in her article "Intertextuality as Discourse: The Discussion on Poetry and Poetics among Hellenistic Greek Poets in the Third Century B.C.E." (233–243), Annette Harder analyzes how and why Callimachus of Cyrene, Apollonius Rhodius, and Theocritus referenced each other's works, specifically as they dealt with the myth of the Argonauts. She concludes that the subtle references each author makes to his colleagues allow him to "define his own choices and carry on a discussion on how to write poetry fit for the modern Alexandrian setting of the third century B.C.E." (242).

Finally, Lukas Bormann, "The Colossian Hymn, Wisdom, and Creation" (244–256), applies Udo Hebel's "allusion paradigm" to Col 1:15–20. Bormann identifies allusions to Job 28; Prov 8:22–31; Sir 24; Wis 6:12–20; and 7:22–8:1; and also to Plato's *Timaeus*, via its Middle Platonic interpretation in Cicero's *de natura deorum* which likely came to Colossians through Philo's *de opificio mundi*. Bormann describes each of the allusions to the biblical text in detail and identifies that the allusions create "a matrix of creation from the viewpoint of the wisdom tradition" (253). The wisdom tradition is framed by references to the creator, an agent of God or mediator, and to creation itself. Yet, Bormann concludes that when this frame is applied to Christology, each of the attributes is adapted towards the idea of elevating Christ to the throne of God.

The final section of Part 2 contains Andreas Wagner's chapter, "Typological, Explicit, and Referential Intertextuality in Texts and Images of the Old Testament and Ancient Israel" (260–269), dealing with genre and motif, specifically elucidating the benefit of applying intertextuality as a method to some often-studied sections of the Hebrew Bible. Wagner considers specifically the prophetic words of woe, the כה אמר formulas, and the raised or outstretched arm motif, which frequently occur in ANE depictions and the Hebrew Bible. From these brief case studies, Wagner concludes with four theses: 1) Intertextuality cannot be restricted to a synchronic study: diachronic perspectives are essential; 2) Intertextuality cannot be confined to the consideration of the textual tradition, but must include images; 3) Intertextuality explains the formation, translation, exegesis, and expansion of the Old Testament better than classical models (religious history, literary history, form criticism, redaction criticism); and 4) Connecting biblical texts to pre-texts frees the text from the necessity of identifying "the intention of one author" (269).

Part 3 contains five articles considering the way intertextuality can function in cultural memory and canon. The first chapter, "The Astrolabes: An Exercise in Transmission, Canonicity, and Para-Canonicity" (274–287), by Wayne Horowitz, traces the transmission of several Mesopotamian astronomical texts which relate a consistent astronomical principle—one star rising in each of three stellar paths during each of the twelve months of the year which fixed the annual calendar—which, however, appear in different formats: circular and list. Horowitz terms the faithful transmission of key materials over a thousand years, albeit with a certain amount of variability, as "para-Canonicity" (287). Next, Stefan Alkier articulates the semiotic function of the various forms of intertextuality inherent in reading the Christian biblical canon in his chapter, "Reading the Canon Intertextually: The Decentralization of Meaning" (289–303). Aliker suggests that intertextual reading of the biblical canon is inherently dialogical in that it sets non-harmonized textual voices together. Consequently, canon increases and does not limit potential meanings found in the biblical text. Felicia Waldman in "Turning the Interpretation of the Text into Text: Written Torah and Oral Torah in Jewish Mysticism" (304–314), considers various mystical interpretations of the revelation of the oral and written Torah at Mount Sinai. She concludes that while it is likely that oral and written Torah had equal status earlier in the tradition, the kabbalists came to understand the Oral Torah to be of much more significance than the written Torah. Anisava L. Miltenova, "In-

tertextuality in the Orthodox Slavic Tradition: The Case of Mixed-Content Miscellanies" (315–328), considers intertextuality in the South Slavonic miscellanies with "unstable" or mixed content; that is those with non-liturgical application and unidentifiable principles of arrangement. Milenova argues that these miscellanies actually demonstrate a certain amount of stability, like the inclusion of the same works in the same order, and therefore suggests that the "apparent free selection and arrangement of texts in mixed-content miscellanies turns out to be illusory" (317). Finally, Armin Lange and Zlatko Pleše investigate the function performed by texts in intercultural encounters, specifically considering acculturation and cultural resistance, in their chapter, "Text between Religious Cultures: Intertextuality in Graeco-Roman Judaism" (329–350). The work of Aristobulus of Alexandria and the so-called Letter of Aristeas are taken as case studies, each of which demonstrates a different way of navigating the process of acculturation. The Letter of Aristeas, they argue, presents the Greek translation of Torah to the Jewish reader as sacred scripture through intertextual reference to the public reading of the Torah in Exodus 24:3–7. To the Greek reader, Aristeas presents the Greek translation as the point of origin for Alexandrian textual scholarship. Aristobulus presents Moses "not only as the source of Greek philosophical thought but also everything of value in Greek poetry" (337). At the same time, Aristobulus argues from the other direction that Greek philosophy provides an interpretative key for unlocking hidden secrets in the Torah.

Having described the form and scope of the text, an assessment of its impact remains. The introduction to the volume begins with the observation that the validity of Kristeva's intertextuality is hardly questioned today, but at the same time "the study of ancient intertextuality has also particular difficulties to address" (11). The studies throughout the volume demonstrate these difficulties, but also show potential benefits for unpacking intertextual references in ancient texts. Laying behind many of the articles is a thinly veiled criticism of the historical-critical method—this becomes most clear in Bauks's argument that original author, setting, and text do not, or cannot exist (29–30), and also in the four theses with which Wagner concludes his contribution (267–269), and in Alkier's article on canonical intertextuality.

The variety within the volume also deserves particular commendation. The articles in this edition contain analyses of biblical and non-biblical texts of various languages—at least Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Slavonic, and Coptic—from different time periods—ancient, medieval, and modern—and from a variety of locations. It also considers "text" relatively broadly, in-

cluding canonical and non-canonical texts, manuscript and printed editions, and even images. In the end, these contributions show the wide applicability of intertextuality and show that the mechanics of determining and explaining intertextual relationships are substantially the same across a wide swath of literature.

Several articles point out that intertextuality has come to mean several different things in biblical studies (cf. esp. 27–29; 73–81; 116–118; and 181–182). The variety of scope and direction of the articles included in this volume confirm the various ways in which "intertextuality" can be understood. There is a lot of conceptual overlap between the articles, some of which the editors have pointed out in the introduction—particularly the types of intertextuality proposed by Alexander, and Horowitz's idea of para-canonicity. Because of the diversity inherent to the discussions of intertextuality, the volume would have benefited from a more specific program of mentioning these overlaps and parallels, and some standardization of terminology and approach taken in each chapter. Further, individual articles elicit different models for understanding "intertextuality." In addition to Kristeva's meaning, some articles are based on Genette's adaptation of Kristeva's method (particularly Bauks, Risch, Ruiten, Lanzillotta, Aufrère, Dimitrova, Lange & Pleše), and Rutien bases his chapter on the work of Paul Claes (98). Given the varied use of "intertextuality" in the literature, it is hardly surprising to find varied use of the term in this volume.

Notions of intertextuality intersect with the method of reception history at about every turn. For this reason, this volume is a rewarding resource for the reception historian. It presents the varied results of intertextual research and also presents important methodological considerations dealing with the difficulty inherent in identifying intertextual relationships in ancient literature. As such, *Between Text and Text* is an important resource.

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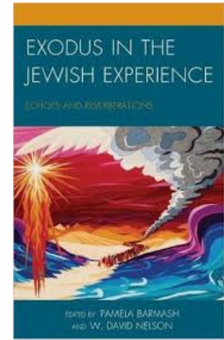
Exodus in the Jewish Experience: Echoes and Reverberations, edited by Pamela Barmash and W. David Nelson



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The biblical account of the Exodus in Jewish experience has transcended its one-time historical event, Barmash claims in the introduction (xi), and the claim is demonstrated by contributors chapter-by-chapter thereafter. This volume advances the notion that the Exodus enables Jews "to lay claim to the future" by means of engaging past narratives, in particular the Exodus story (ix). The chapters demonstrate this claim by examining, successively: the enduring transmission of the Exodus story; the continuity-shattering trauma that produces dissonance in early rabbinic texts; the liturgical iteration of the narrative as paradigmatic of hope in dark times; the Exodus story's stimulation of social conscience regarding the plight of the poor and disadvantaged; the juxtaposition of mortality and celebration in medieval Judaism; the production of illuminated iconography in order to establish stand-alone haggadot; the transformation of myth to memory in German Jewish translations of the Exodus story, as a means to perpetually personalize historical recollection; and the transposition of desert themes to depict contemporary (re-)placement.

In chapter 1 ("Out of the Mists of History: The Exaltation of the Exodus in the Bible"), Pamela Barmash argues that the Passover tradition, said to obligate Jews to reenact the story of the Exodus in a manner meaningful to present generations, effectively transforms history into metaphor by transcending time and space: those who are present at the Passover meal were once, long ago also in Egypt. The Exodus "template" (6) "was inserted in a matrix of memory and became the matrix of memory for other events" (7). In this manner, the Exodus story becomes a universal tale for not only those who relate or are related to the original players in the narrative by ancestry, but also for all who would seek freedom from enslavement, whether physical, psychological, emotional, cultural, or spiritual—creating a "usable past by re-experiencing rather than remembering from afar" (6). Collective consciousness in combination with creative imagination gave Jews a means to evoke the excitement of escape from enslavement *en route* to a land of promise

while in actuality being forced to live anywhere but in said Promised Land centuries later.

Chapter 2 is entitled "Discontinuity and Dissonance: Torah, Textuality, and Early Rabbinic Hermeneutics of Exodus." W. David Nelson discusses how the order of the Passover Seder contained within the Passover Haggadah finds authentication in the last tractate of the Mishnah, Pesachim (23).

In chapter 3, "The Past as Paradigm: Enactments of the Exodus Motif in Jewish Liturgy," Richard S. Sarason argues that the Exodus narrative has remained vibrant and relevant across cultures, contexts, and generations due to its paradigmatic nature that ensures both "durability and malleability" (81) as a "model for resistance" (78), lending itself to a myriad of cultural and social issues. Many have produced a particular Passover Seder to address inequities felt from their own perspective. The *Women's Seder*, paralleled with *The Freedom Seder*, "resonates deeply with the lived experiences of the participants and [is] reinterpreted to articulate and ritualize their perceptions of themselves and the world in which they live" (74). Past redemption within the biblical narrative transforms, with slight modification, into future hope of redemption when set alongside contemporary examples of oppression and protest. The *Humanist Haggadah* calls for inclusive language wherein "the destiny of the Jewish people cannot be separated from the destiny of all humanity … since no one can survive alone.… Brotherhood is born of shared need and shared danger.… We can no longer be fully Jewish unless we recognize that we are also fully human" (79).

A paradox relating to halakhah is explained in the introduction and unpacked in chapter 4, "The Impact of the Exodus on Halakhah (Jewish Law)," dedicated to the impact of the Exodus on Jewish law. Barmash, in the introduction, contends that "Jews have placed Jewish law into an Exodus framework in order to comprehend and come to terms with Jewish law" (xiii). Reuven Hammer, in chapter 4, argues that the plight of the poor, sensitivity to the stranger in the land, decency in dealing with a residual reality of slavery, among several topics dealing with human societal sensibilities, lead to legislation which elevates love and generosity vis-à-vis the poor, the needy, and the stranger based on gratitude for redemption and freedom from Egyptian servitude (139). "Moreover, the Exodus was used only as the narrative structure for rabbinic law, not as a generative principle yielding specific statutes" (Barmash, xiii).

Kalman P. Bland examines "Passover and Thanatos in Medieval Jewish Consciousness," in chapter 5. Bland argues that, during the medieval pe-

riod, personalization generalized and transformed the Passover story into a universal and trans-historical experience (159). While much can be gained by viewing Passover through various contemporary lenses such as what Abarbanel accomplished by imploring the metaphor of the seasons, the original historical and temporal trajectories cannot be ignored. Judaism customarily approaches themes in "polyphonic" manner (148), for example through hermeneutical lenses of Peshat, Remez, Derash, and Sod. No matter how derived the discussion becomes, none of these lenses precludes adherence to the terms of the original context. Mortality's immanence and death's deliverance are each inescapable themes in the Exodus as they are in the seasonal stages of life, whether considering the story from an Egyptian or Israelite perspective. Judaism's internalization of the details, as noted in mystical accounts found in the Zohar, opened the narrative to a deeper exploration of spirituality whereby the metaphor of a cosmic struggle with death obtains, leaving aside emblematic symbolization of stated literary occurrences (153). Maimonides's admonition "to rejoice and be of cheerful heart" flies in the face of the increasingly morose focus on mortality during the medieval period (154). Death experiences contained in the Exodus story were able, in a highly personalized and psychological manner, to shape contemporary response to trauma experienced in the context of Christian crusades, no less a "preoccupation with death" (159).

Prominence of the Exodus in Jewish art cannot be overstated, especially where images were added to the haggadot. Vivian B. Mann addresses this topic in chapter 6, "Observations on the Biblical Miniatures in Spanish Haggadot." In thirteenth-century Spain, illuminated manuscripts decorated traditional biblical texts with scenes that became familiar narratives for the literate and illiterate alike. The Seder (Jewish prayer book), along with other medieval ritual publications, show-pieced Torah depictions ranging from Creation to the death of Moses with a disproportionate representation of scenes from the Exodus. As would be expected, the Passover Haggadah was also embellished with such miniature scenes. That Christian and Jewish interests resided in the production and sale of these illuminated texts may be somewhat problematized by the fact that Hebrew manuscript paintings abruptly ceased inexplicably some time prior to the pogroms of 1391 in the Jewish quarter of Barcelona and elsewhere throughout Spain (184).

Abigail E. Gillman, in chapter 7 ("From Myth to Memory: A Study of German Jewish Translations of Exodus 12–13:16") asks, "Can a nation go from slavery to freedom *without* translation?" (191). Her question is ex-

plored with a view to setting aside the standard discussion of whether the Exodus is fact or fiction (192), in exchange for establishing a new paradigmatic lens to read the cypher by which the Exodus is communicated. Viewing the blood on the doorposts as code permits a distinction between doorpost and threshold. "In some respects, the door *does* mark the dividing line between slavery and freedom" (195). The Destroyer was able to pass over the blood-stained doors but not through them. Further translation of various elements of the Exodus narrative invites additional transformations of thematic escapes from slavery to freedom throughout subsequent generations, thus allowing "a transit point for 'ours' to meet 'theirs'" (207).

In Chapter 8 ("The Desert Comes to Zion: A Narrative Ends its Wandering"), Arieh Saposnik examines the Zionist perspective that living in Diaspora can be equated to the concept of exile; the Exodus culminates only in settlement in the land of Israel (214). This principle lies at the root of Zionist thought as expressed through art and literature. Theodor Herzl, Ahad Ha'am, Boris Schatz, and David Ben Gurion interchange metaphors of the Exodus in their Zionist visionary expressions. The ambivalence of being able to successfully establish a redemptive conclusion has not been without substantial opposition. In "Ben-Gurion's recasting of the Exodus, however, process—out of placeness—is all but expunged in his vision for Israel, where *endziel*—a longed-for being in place—is the one remaining truth" (240). From the perspective of Zionists living in Israel today, 'redemption is at hand' (216).

I required this book as a text for a one-term graduate course for students majoring in psychoanalysis and spiritual counselling that I team-taught with a Christian theologian and philosopher; my role was to provide Jewish perspectives and be a resource for the non-Jewish student. Throughout the term, students were required to read the text and provide critical assessment of its contents. As well, at the end of each class they wrote a brief reflection on their thoughts relating to the topics covered in the text as we explored them in detail each week. At the end of the term, we participated in a mock-Seder.

What stood out for many students was the familiarity they had with the Exodus as paradigmatic for their own life experiences. More than once they expressed identification with Jewish appropriation of translation of the Exodus and in no small measure indicated that experiences described in the text for Jews were not uncommon in their own lives.

Notwithstanding the few qualifications and criticisms embedded throughout this review, Barmash and Nelson have offered a collective work of analysis

that fills a significant gap in a number of topics related to the Exodus while effectively expressing itself in a style that informed readers can access and benefit from today whether in the university classroom, in one's home, or at one's office.

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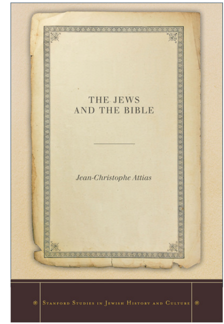
The Jews and the Bible, by Jean-Christophe Attias



Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture | Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014 | 256 pages | ISBN: 978-0-804789-0-73 (hardcover) $75.00; ISBN: 978-0-804793-1-93 (softcover) $22.95

The translation of Jean-Christophe Attias's work *The Jews and the Bible* unlocks to English-speaking readers a broad-in-scope, fluid, and full coverage of the history of how Jews have historically related to the Bible. As the chair of "Medieval Jewish Thought" at the École pratique des hautes études, Attias's area of study is Jewish Traditions. *The Jews and the Bible* covers everything from the elusiveness of the relationship between Bible and Jews to how the Bible is perceived in the modern era by Jews. Many of his conclusions are challenging to the reader and require reflection in order to fully engage with and digest his history because he operates within a Jewish framework that calls for actions.

Attias establishes the elusiveness of what "Bible" actually means from the outset of chapter 1. Such elusiveness is present in the "varying harmonics of the words denoting the scriptural corpus in rabbinical language" (4), Christian traditions, and other sources from antiquity. With regard to the dynamics between Jews and the Bible, he notes that before the official Jewish canon was established, the text became "the key element of the dialogue between God and His people" (21), indicating that actual practice can and should do without a text. Even the establishment of "official" bibles, like the Masoretic text, could not put an end to the various interpretative traditions and understandings of "Bible." Attias, thus, roots his work in the ambiguous identity of "Bible" and a basic understanding of the Jewish relationship to it.

Chapter 2 examines Judaism's use of the Bible as an Object. In his analysis, traditional Jewish "Bible objects," like the Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Sefer Torah, contain portions of the biblical text which are paradoxically not of scriptural origin but are dependent upon scripture to maintain their Objectness. This paradoxically allows the hearer to participate in worship of the Word, the revered Object, and focus on rabbinic material, benedictions, and mishnaic prayers and express the importance of the Objectness of the Bible. Reasonably he concludes that the people provide life to the book, not the book to the people. His presentation is importantly focused on how Jews give life to the book based on how people use the book as an Object. With this Objectness in mind, he proceeds to engage in the relationship between Jewish identity and the Bible.

After identifying Jewish identity as the condition of collectiveness of Jews as descendants of Abraham and Moses, and part of the continuity of Jewish history, he explores in chapter 3 the collective identity and results of "Biblical Judaism." Attias argues that "Biblical Judaism" and early Christian appropriations of Judaism and the Bible misunderstood the relationship by ignoring the value of Oral Tradition, or true tradition. This caused Jewish teachers to focus on three primary principles in rabbinic Judaism: Oral Law, which grounds Jewish identity; Written Law, which should be read in light of Oral Law; and the oneness of the Oral and Written Law, emphasizing the Oral Law as the locus of identity rather than the Bible. Even the Karaites, Attias argues, were not considered heretical for "Bibliocentrism," but for denying true tradition and adding false tradition. Jewish identity is therefore dependent upon living tradition.

Moving towards the personal relationship between the Bible and Jews, Attias focuses chapter 4 on the relevance of the Bible for individual Jews. For Attias, the Bible is dangerous for children because it may result in bad interpretations and not necessary for women whose focus should be on the household. Within a scholarly context it is important to Jews because it is common property for differing faiths, "imposing an exceptional duty on scholars to engage with it" (102), to draw out the supersaturated meaning of the Bible, which may only be done within a Jewish community. For the scholar, the "Spirit" of the "Flesh" that is the Bible should be found in Oral Tradition, meaning Jews assert their role over the Bible by simply commenting on it. Overall, the commentaries, which contain Scripture, are the primary focus for Judaism. It wasn't until the moderns (neo-Karaites)

that Scripture attained a position by which the spirit of rabbinic Judaism, the Oral Traditions and commentary, was not of the utmost importance.

Chapter 5 explores the triumph of the Bible in the West and Judaism, and its impact on Jews. The rise of critical biblical scholarship resulted in the dismemberment of the unity of the Bible and its appropriation as a book of theologized politics. These tendencies prompted Jewish responses which contradicted and splintered Judaism, including four major approaches. Of these four options, *Bible as literature* became "the pillar of a modern Jewish identity" (136). Secularization, argues Attias, began with Moses Mendelssohn who, although not advocating assimilation, advocated for the culture of the Other in Jewish studies, moving the Bible from the sacred to common. Thus, the sharing of the Jewish Bible as non-Jewish dissolved tradition. Secularization then provided fuel for Zionism as the locus of Jewish identity began to be constructed around the Bible, something taken furthest by David Ben-Gurion. As the ideology progressed, the Bible as a pillar to Jewish-Israeli identity waned and became a book that separated, rather than united. It was shaken even more with scholarly claims that the Bible was a book of non-site and not viable as a pillar of Jewish identity.

The epilogue concludes the book by challenging the reader's sensibilities regarding the Bible and Freud's interpretations thereof: "If the Bible is really the Father's Book we [Jews] say it is, and if that Father is dead, what or whom is the Bible now the Book of" (156)? The Bible is therefore nothing without Oral Tradition, tradition which prevents the Bible's excess violence and "seductiveness of force." So, for Attias, living tradition alone may save the Bible, or perhaps not. From a historical vantage point, Attias's arguments are rooted in Jewish traditions and history. He convincingly illustrates the complex dynamics between Jews and the Bible, taking into consideration concurrent sociopolitical contexts and theological currents in Christian tradition. In drawing out the history of the relationship, Attias provides reasonable grounds on which to increase understandings of Jewish traditions and improve the state of multi-faith dialogue, especially with Christians. Although some statements should be tempered due to his higher view of Judaism, he suggests a provocative point regarding Christian traditions: Christians "in a way substituted Jesus and the teachings of the Church for the Oral Torah" (107). Though the statement is problematic because it assumes superiority of Jewish traditions, it does emphasize that Christianity does indeed have an "Oral Torah" of sorts, one that is only found in Church traditions. Recogni-

tion of this in multi-faith dialogue could potentially improve the quality of the dialogue through recognition of shared commonalities, namely dependence upon tradition.

Yet this also presents a significant flaw with his work. Attias is justified in focusing on Jewish traditions, yet *how* he approaches traditions assumes Judaism is greater than Christianity. Rather than being an unbiased (as much as possible), historical analysis of the development of the relationship between Jews and the Bible, *The Jews and the Bible* is rooted in assumptions of the validity and truth about Jewish interpretation and traditions. To write, as Attias does, that Christians replaced the Oral Torah is to assume that the Oral Torah, as a whole, has ancient roots. While some elements of the Oral Torah are surely present in the turn of the first millennium, many elements were absent and are merely assumed to be present in antiquity. If he wishes to most effectively and critically discuss the historical, relational dynamics between Jews and the Bible, Attias should have explored the historicity and viability of one of his primary resources for history and Jewish tradition.

With regard to his style, Attias is difficult to follow. While he does not stray from his primary topic (the relationship between Jews and the Bible), the structure of the chapters, and sections therein, are often unnecessarily extended. Attias's style does not provide the opportunity for points to actually layer and build upon each other. In contrast to academic literature and histories whose arguments may be traced like a complicated set of connected staircases, his work is like a mountain which, although beautiful, mighty, and strong, is not easy to climb with its many sudden changes in terrain.

Even with a trajectory oriented towards Judaism, he creatively and, to a certain extent, clearly demonstrates the complexities of the historical relationship between Jews and the Bible. His broad coverage of history, thorough analysis of Jewish traditions with regard to sociopolitical contexts, and ability to contextualize the role of the Bible for modern Jews are major strengths of his work, elements which the style detracts from expressing more clearly. Even so, *The Jews and the Bible*, while not necessarily a historical analysis that will significantly change the grounds of Jewish studies and multi-faith dialogue, is a valuable contribution to those fields and does offer unique insights about the complex dynamics, polemic activities, and religious-political issues surrounding the relationship between the Jews and the Bible.

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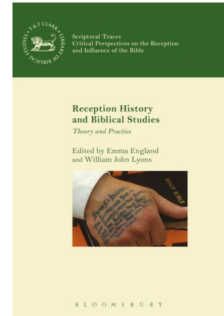
Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice, edited by Emma England and William John Lyons



Scriptural Traces: Critical Perspectives on the Reception and Influence of the Bible 6 | Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 615 | London: Bloomsbury, 2015 | x + 280 pages | ISBN: 978-0-567-66008-4 (hardback) £49.00

The scramble for review copies that met the publication of this edited volume is testament to its timely release. It is a necessary and astutely judged volume that addresses comprehensively many of the issues, appraisals, and criticisms that have arisen and been put to this emerging field in biblical studies. The enormous scope of reception history and its many possible trajectories are considered, placing them within their rightful context as invaluable contributions to the discipline as a whole. In this review I will briefly summarise the main argument of the book and describe its parts. I will then offer my own short critique of the book and evaluate it as a biblical reception resource.

Reception history as an emerging field within biblical studies is a "work in progress," the contours and boundaries of which are being sought, explored, traced, tested, and defined as increasing numbers of scholars, young and old, bring new questions and possible methods to the task. In recent times this has occasionally been conflictual—and reception history practitioners have been challenged to give an account of how and why reception history fits into biblical studies, its theoretical underpinning, methodologies, and what it offers the broader discipline. A series of books, journals, and dictionaries have appeared in the last decade and some of those responsible, among them John Sawyer, David Gunn, Christopher Rowland, and Jonathan Roberts are mentioned repeatedly in the present volume. This is the sixth volume in the Scriptural Traces: Critical Perspectives on the Reception and Influence of the Bible series. This collection of essays, by respected practitioners in the field, was enthusiastically anticipated as it offers an overview of why they engage in this work, how they approach the research and the value they believe it holds for the future of academic biblical studies. The condescension that has characterised some attitudes within the academy–Susan Gillingham overheard one unnamed scholar describing reception history snidely as "biblical studies on holiday"—requires a riposte from those

committed to scholarship and the future of biblical studies within the secular academy. This volume is that reply.

The editors of this fine volume, Emma England and William John Lyons, have brought together fourteen further scholars to make the case for biblical reception history within the academy. This book originates out of sessions jointly held by the ISBL/EABS "Biblical World and its Reception" research group at the international annual conference that took place in Amsterdam in July 2012. It offers an invitation to those scholars, both converted and curious, to "embrace expansion, diversity and change in the academic study of the Bible."

The book is organised into five parts. Following the Introduction (Part 1), the four remaining sections are as follows: Part 2, "Reception History, Historical Criticism, and Biblical Studies"; Part 3, "Conceptualising Reception History"; Part 4, "Practical Implications, Difficulties and Solutions"; Part 5, "Bible, Reception and Popular Music." The intended audience is primarily those biblical scholars already practising reception history, or those interested in understanding more about the nature of research undertaken by reception-history practitioners. A diversity of approaches and arenas of investigation are covered, meaning there is much here of interest to scholars already engaging certain methodologies and those interested in new scholarly approaches.

There is a clear and useful trajectory that progresses through the book. Part 2 serves to place reception history in context and to make a solid defence for its ongoing presence in biblical studies programmes. Susan Gillingham opens up the dialogue with an overview of the criticisms levelled at reception within the academy, most especially that it lacks "theoretical theological underpinning" (22). She offers a response to those criticisms with recourse to relevant publications. She notes that such is the breadth of material to be covered that subjective choices will need to be made in terms of setting boundaries around a particular study, either in terms of context or period. A comprehensive reception history of any one text demands considerable resources in terms of personnel and time to gather and analyse the material. This also places collaboration at the fore—another difficult yet worthwhile endeavour for those used to working in more individualistic ways.

James E. Harding delves into the tension between confessional and secular approaches in the discipline of biblical studies, making a call for a more balanced and unified approach. As with others, he suggests that an inversion of the concept of reception is necessary and makes a case for considering the

placing of all contemporary biblical scholarship within the remit of reception history because the text (if it is indeed possible to identify the "text") is itself a "reception." In other words those engaged in philological or archaeological work are themselves already, to some extent, engaged in the reception of a reception. Reception history is an aspect of the work of all biblical scholars.

The binary categories of historical criticism and reception history are also resisted by James G. Crossley, who calls for "a more rounded narrative for the field." His is a plea for an enthusiastic expansion of biblical studies, as well as a warm embrace of reception history as a natural development and necessarily constitutive dimension of biblical studies. He writes, "If we want to justify Biblical Studies by the contemporary relevance of the Bible then it might reasonably be expected that we explain *why* it is still relevant in the ways that it is."

Jonathan Morgan attempts, in his contribution, to open up a "dialectical middle" through recourse to William John Lyons's oft-cited "Hope for a Troubled Discipline?" He brings Lyons's thought to bear on a fairly thorough (given the length of the chapter) critical overview of arguments made by George Aichele, Peter Miscall and Richard Walsh, John Van Seters, Larry Hurtado, and Eryl Davies, in the recent past, in different contexts. He opts for a "third way," through a mutual recognition of what both historical critic and postmodern interpreter can bring to an invigorated discipline. These four different chapters make a very valuable and forceful defence for valuing innovation in the field and supporting the new directions being opened up in reception history.

Part 3 delves into conceptualising reception history. Caroline Vander Stichele brings three theorists, Jonathan Culler (intertexuality), Mieke Bal (pre-posterous history), and Gilles Deleuze/Felix Guattari (rhizomorphous systems) into a dialogue of sorts, in her exploration of Giovanni di Paolo's series of paintings on John the Baptist, most specifically *The Beheading of John the Baptist*. Her recognition that the artist's work is informed by more than the biblical text is demonstrated through bringing these different (intertextual, multidirectional, rhizomorphous) approaches to an investigation into the cultural impact of a biblical figure such as John the Baptist. Her wonderfully expansive outlook reveals that the possibilities are excitingly endless and there is much to be learnt and gained.

The influence of Gilles Deleuze continues in the following chapter as he provides the inspiration for Brennan Breed's exploration of ethology, an understanding of animal behaviour, transposed provocatively to the "nomadic

text" that is the Bible. Breed makes a convincing case for the role ethology could play precisely because it shifts the focus away from issues of canonicity and textual history and coherence towards the workings of a particular text in a certain "problematic field" or context. The emphasis in ethology is on what the text *can do*.

With recourse to Jacques Berlinerblau and Timothy Beal, Samuel Tongue considers the prevailing confessional/non-confessional, conservative/radical dualism. The poetic rewriting of Jacob and the Angel by Yehuda Amichai is the locus for his appeal for a broadening of perspectives that allows the diverse voices that have received the text to enter the debate, "risking an aesthetic response that is difficult to define as 'religious' or 'secular,' but is a performance in which we all become players."

The different receptions of the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19) in Zimbabwe, is brought to life by Masiiwa Ragies Gunda, as he deftly recounts the oral transmission of the story, from colonial-era missionaries to Christian families, in song format, with a didactic emphasis on the lack of obedience of Lot's wife. Another focus entirely sees its influence extend to the homophobic anti-sodomy laws in the Penal Code, which have been extended and elaborated in even more oppressive ways in recent times.

A variety of different approaches are considered in Part 4, "Practical Implications, Difficulties and Solutions," witnessing to the creativity and ingenuity that characterises reception history and why it holds so much promise for an invigoration of biblical studies in general. Roland Boer brings us on a fascinating and personal journey through his inspirations, his erudition and intellectual affairs with various partners (Lenin, Calvin, and Cave), and the places (metaphorical and real) these wanderings (wonderings) have brought him. One can't help but feel, reading him, that illuminated capitals really should be reinstated: Calvin, with a cat peeping out of a bag, curled in a capital C. This is an invitation to become fellow ramblers—unashamedly succumbing to our passions—and chasing the "allure of other disciplines, approaches and subject matters."

The travel metaphor is picked up by Ian Boxall who transports us to Patmos (Rev 1:9), the geographical and metaphorical island. He brings us humbly through his method for setting out from his own academic comfort zone into a reception of Patmos in biblical history. Much of the charm of this chapter is Boxall's personal style and willingness to expose a certain scholarly vulnerability in venturing along this trial and error "anything goes" approach to his project. This level of intellectual reflexivity is rare but most welcome

and a liberating antidote to dogmatic proclamations about "method" and "meaning."

Emma England has bravely gone wading into the technological minefield of setting up a cross-referencing database of occurrences of a selected text (Noah and the Flood narrative in this instance) in children's Bibles, over a specific time period. She details her process and the hitches and complexities involved in a thoroughly understandable way—even for non-techie readers. This is an aspect of reception history that has received little scholarly attention and yet cries out for greater uptake. England has pried open the lid of this neglected dimension of the digital humanities and successfully demonstrated its vast potential for reception history.

Another Southern African perspective is offered by Gerald O. West in his study of the reception of Jephthah's Daughter (Judg 11) among the AmaNazaretha. Resisting missionary interpretations of the Bible as a whole, Isaiah Shembe, the founder of this community, developed an elaborate appropriation of this text. The etic response of Carole Muller and, in turn, Nkosinathi Sithole's fascinating emic response to Shembe, West and Muller unfolds the complexity of this textual afterlife, most especially in relation to the role of adolescent women, in the early foundation of this nascent faith community and its continued self-understanding.

The final Part brings all the previous theoretical deliberations to a natural culmination as four scholars demonstrate reception in action, as it were, in the particular context of popular music. Helen R. Jacobus opens with a fascinating investigation into Leonard Cohen's song "Who by Fire." She traces the lyrics of Cohen's song back through 1000 years of history to the Cairo Genizah. Along the way she uncovers a "hirtherto untranslated version of *Unetaneh toqef* and a likely connection to astrological texts." Again, collaboration has played a vital role and new avenues of exploration are opened from many new departure points into liturgy and prayer.

Revelation makes another appearance in William John Lyons's study of the Depeche Mode version of "John the Revelator." A thorough consideration of the band members' religious practice as youths, worldviews and relationships, revealed in other musical ventures, biographies and interview transcripts are brought into dialogue with scholarly commentary on Revelation questioning especially John of Patmos's use of Ezekiel. Lyons sets out some possible motivating agendas that may shed light (in the absence of direct commentary) on why songwriter Gore presents John as he does.

In his contribution, Michael J. Gilmour uses Harold Bloom's theory of

an "anxiety of influence" to delve in to the affect of John Lennon on U2's Bono and Larry Norman, a Christian songwriter. Bloom posits an Oedipal relationship at the heart of the musical influence and legacy—that characterises the conflicted respect and desire to acknowledge and emulate the artistic predecessor—among descendant songwriters (poets) all the while seeking their own autonomy and originality. Gilmour traces this development through Lennon's song "God," Bono's nuanced "God Part II" and Larry Norman's openly confessional statement in "God Part III."

Ibrahim Abraham brings this compelling volume to a close with yet another well-presented chapter full of observations and challenges to particular scholars (and at least in one instance this has already been responded to at length) and reception historians, planning these types of studies, in general. He raises three main areas for consideration in the area of popular music: the privileging of production over consumption; the privileging of subjective readings over engagement with real listeners; and a focus on the "text" (lyrics) rather than a thorough engagement with the music that is integral to the song. His critique from the vantage point of another discipline, social science, is well-argued and offers much food for thought.

There is a issue to be addressed by those researching and publishing the reception of biblical texts in artworks of various sorts, be they paintings or poetry, and their reproduction alongside the scholarly text. Sometimes copyright, royalty fees and printers costs make reproduction difficult or prohibitively expensive, but it does create a disconnect and distraction for the reader not to be able to easily see the painting or poem that is the focus of the reception-historical work. It renders the artwork essentially silent and invisible, which seems contradictory and strangely disrespectful, as though it is an aside or an added extra rather than a primary focus. The problem goes beyond the present volume, and probably must be addressed collectively within the academy, so as to achieve better terms for the reproduction of art in academic publications.

England and Lyons are to be commended for drawing together a great spectrum of scholars to advance convincingly the case for biblical reception history in the academy. There is a discernible arc tracing the emergence and development of reception history, critiques and challenges, theoretical and conceptual underpinnings, its role in the secular academy, its relation to other disciplines, explorations "off-grid," and creative impulses, motivated by a genuine desire to understand the role and impact of the Bible in the world. Any part of this book can be read separately, but I suggest it will reward a

sequential reading. This is without doubt a significant work in the field. It may even be perceived as a manifesto of sorts, if you will. It sets out the stall, unashamedly raises the reception history banner and announces "We are here to stay!"

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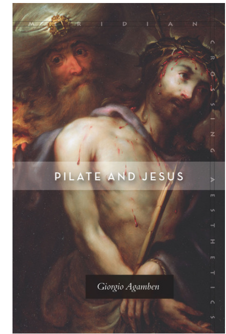
Pilate and Jesus, by Giorgio Agamben



Translated by Adam Kotsko | Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics | Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015 | 63 pages | ISBN: 978-0-804-79233-2 (hardback) $50.00; ISBN: 978-0-804-79454-1 (softback) $15.95; ISBN: 978-0-804-79458-9 (e-book) $15.95

Giorgio Agamben's *Pilate and Jesus* is initially puzzling. It is not a monograph, as it is a mere 45 pages (63 pages with glosses and bibliography). Nor is it interested in probing the historical realities of the figures under question, as its bibliography is peppered with such thinkers as Barth, Kafka, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. Rather, Agamben's goal is to explore the phenomena of judgement and justice in the passion narrative from a philosophical, often theological, perspective. Pilate, as the character in the most powerful legal position in the narrative, is an ideal site to explore this issue. Once the reader understands his aims, navigating this book (which is really a long essay) is easier.

Agamben takes as his starting point the curiosity that only "a single proper name" (1) occurs in one of the most common Christian creeds. In addition, the gospel authors seem to be particularly preoccupied with the character of Pilate, showing "perhaps for the first time something like the intention to construct a character, with his own psychology and idiosyncrasies" (3). Some extra-canonical accounts and testimony from church fathers show a similar fascination with Pilate. What, the author muses, can explain Pilate's appeal, besides the oft-proclaimed idea that Christians wanted to appease the Romans who may have been reading these stories about Jesus? There is an additional curiosity for Agamben. As one who explicitly believes in the historical reality of Christ's incarnation, he wonders why such a thing unfolded via a "*krisis*, that is, a juridical trial" (2), for it is here that he observes the

spiritual worlds and human worlds confronting one another: "the temporal kingdom… must pronounce a judgement on the eternal kingdom" (15). Whether or not one shares his theological proclivity, it is indeed intriguing that the phenomenon of judgment is so central in the narrative life of Jesus and in the sayings attributed to him.

Also intriguing is the Gospel of John's extensive attention to Jesus's interaction with Pilate, especially when compared to the Synoptic Gospels. In John, Jesus and Pilate speak at length about the accusation made against him. Agamben interprets Pilate's famous question ("What is truth?") to be an enquiry about the true spiritual reality that Jesus seems to know. Though Pilate is ultimately legally responsible for Jesus's fate in all of the gospel accounts, he never makes a definitive pronouncement of his guilt. Even so, Pilate lacks the upper hand vis-á-vis the Jewish antagonists, and his actions, for Agamben, become "incoherent" (23). In opposition to Jesus's accusers, Pilate seems to linger on Jesus's kingship and eventually has the title "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" placed on the cross. Whereas some have viewed this as an attempt to mock Jesus's claim, Agamben sees it as a deliberate affirmation of it.

That a deeper, theological meaning to the trial exists is supported by the realization that the narrated trial does not conform to ordinary Roman legal procedure, a problem many historians and other scholars have wrestled with. A formal trial never truly occurs, nor does a definitive judgment from Pilate. Moreover, Pilate and Jesus share a private conversation in the Gospel of John, which is also not part of the official legal procedure, but nevertheless serves to give Pilate the opportunity to consider the accusations against Jesus. For Agamben, the historical and procedural inaccuracies of the events are not insurmountable problems: the historical figure of Pilate contributes to his theological function: "only as a historical character does Pilate carry out his theological function, and vice versa… he is a historical character only insofar as he carries out his theological function" (35). As I understand this, his claim is that Pilate is included in the narrative as a historical figure precisely because of the consequences he was thought to bring to the story. Had he not contributed to this outcome, his historical visage would not be necessary in the gospel accounts.

Agamben notices, following Karl Barth among others, that the theme of "handing over" looms large in the passion narrative. Theologically, this dramatizes the exchange involved in salvation. What is handed over, moreover, is in direct opposition to the traditions passed down by other Jewish teach-

ers: "there is only one authentic Christian tradition: that of the 'handing over'—first on the part of the Father, then of Judas and the Jews—of Jesus to the cross, which has abolished and realized all traditions" (29). As the most prominent legal functionary, Pilate must somehow factor into this process, too. Interestingly, Pilate, with his interrogation of Jesus and his subtle protests against the Jews, threatens to disrupt the structure of this "economy of salvation" (28); if Jesus's "handing over" is cancelled, so also is its redeeming effect. Since the core of Jesus's teachings seems to be non-judgment, it is ironic that his fate, whether it part of "God's plan" or whether it be a tragic accident, should result from a situation of judgment. But Agamben, following Dante and others, sees the *necessity* in this situation; it cannot be a contrived event. If it gave the appearance of injustice, then the logic of Jesus's death as a "ransom for many" would be ineffective. The Roman Empire's compelling legal logic, paradoxically, must be affirmed for the theological framework to be convincing.

The "truth" that Jesus is required to testify to in his trial is also inherently paradoxical, according to Agamben, for it embodies the contradiction between human history and the divine kingdom. As he stresses, Jesus "must attest *in history and in time* to the presence of an extrahistorical and eternal reality. How can one testify to the presence of a kingdom that is not 'from here'?" (42) In terms of the evidence required for the Roman courts, it is thus clear why his trial was not successful; in fact, it was *necessarily unsuccessful*. Salvation and justice, in this theological analysis, are thus different to reconcile. To accept earthly justice, salvation must be denied, and vice versa.

Agamben has uncovered some fascinating curiosities in his short study. Many people easily overlook the role of Pilate in the passion narrative or explain his characterization as a function of the gospel authors' needs to appease a Roman audience. In this analysis, Pilate emerges as theologically indispensable. He is the "alter ego" (44) of Jesus, and their confrontation is a microcosm of the confrontation between human justice and divine salvation. This book will be of interest to those with a theological, even philosophical, interest in the salvific nature of Jesus's death. As it is devoid of many socio-historical details about the figures under discussion, it is not ideal for historians of early Christianity.

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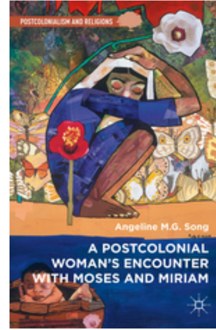
A Postcolonial Woman's Encounter with Moses and Miriam, by Angeline M. G. Song



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Angeline Song's book combines literary and postcolonial methods in a close reading of Exodus 2. After performing a close literary analysis of Exodus 2 using Bal's focalization strategy, she applies insights from her own experience growing up in postcolonial Singapore to understand better the experiences of Moses, Miriam, and other characters in this chapter. Song's book contains some good insights into the characters in Exodus 2, and it exemplifies interdisciplinary biblical scholarship, combining the world within the text (literary criticism) with the world before the text (postcolonial criticism).

Because she foregrounds empathy as a literary tool used to read Moses's birth and youth, Song begins the book with a brief autobiography relevant to her reading of the text (chapter 1). Like Moses, Song was given up for adoption; just as Moses' adoptive father is either nonexistent or unmentioned, Song was raised by a single mom. Song describes some of her experiences as a member of a formerly colonized country still living with the effects of British rule. Song is a member of the Peranakan ethnic group in Singapore, which is still known for collaborating with the British colonial administration and, in Bhabha's terms, mimicking British culture. Song parallels this colonial mimicry with Moses's dual identity as a Hebrew by birth and an Egyptian prince by upbringing. I appreciate Song's frank admittance of some of her own "postcolonial inferiority complex" (e.g., 23–28) and the anxiety and rootlessness of an adoptee (30–32), both of which she later ponders in the person of Moses. This chapter is important because she will later (chapter 6) draw on her experiences to empathetically imagine the psychological dynamics of Moses, his sister, his birth mother, and his adopted mother. Still, while this chapter helps me understand how Song's personal experience impacts her postcolonial lens, it would have been helpful if she had explained her personal reasons for examining the Bible in particular. After all, this book is based on a dissertation in biblical studies from the University of Otago.

In chapters 2–4, Song details the methods she employs in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 2 describes the method of empathetic reading, which Song

later employs to connect her life experience with Moses's and Miriam's. She begins with a summary of various perspectives on empathy from philosophy and cognitive neuroscience, ultimately defining "empathy" for the purpose of her study on pp. 58–59. For Song, an empathetic reading is "self-specific, self-conscious, and self-reflective" (59–60), and the empathetic reader always has a "similarity bias" toward characters who they perceive as being more like them. The gaps and silences of Hebrew prose narrative, Song writes, actually invite this kind of empathetic reading, since the narrative is often reticent on characters' internal psychological states. Without disagreeing with the need to read any literary text with empathy, a skeptic might wonder whether or not the similarity we imagine with literary characters might be more imagined than real. This is particularly true when studying ancient texts such as the Hebrew Bible, which are written and set in times very different from our own, times which history may not shed much light on. Song could have addressed this problem.

In chapter 3, Song describes the method of postcolonial criticism she will employ in her analysis of Exodus 2. After describing the theoretical contributions of Said and Bhabha and her personal surprise and delight in encountering them, she delineates the contributions of postcolonial biblical scholars in particular to her work. She focuses on Segovia's "flesh-and-blood" reader employing a "hermeneutics of the diaspora," Sugirtharajah's "vernacular hermeneutics," and her own "pragmatic yin yang approach" based on Liew's work. This pragmatic approach combines both literary methods of "the West" with the postcolonial optic of "the Rest" (85). She continues by examining postcolonial feminist thinkers Donaldson and Dube, which she employs later in examining the various female characters surrounding Moses, particularly Miriam. She concludes the chapter by retelling the Malay/Indonesian folktale of *Sang Kancil*, a trickster mouse-deer who uses his brains to outwit bigger creatures' brawn. Song compares herself to this figure in using her brains to "survive—and thrive—in multiple realities if need be" (93). This chapter verges on tedious at times, as much of it is summary, but it has a strong thread of Song's own autobiography running through it that keeps it more lively than a typical literature review.

After specifying both her framework of empathy and her optic of postcolonialism, Song finishes her methodology section in chapter 4, where she introduces Bal's focalization strategies. The focalization method asks: how does the narrator of a story steer its reader toward particular readings of that story? How do the characters within a story point the reader to a partic-

ular reading? In other words: whom and what does a story focalize? For a reading optic concerned with power, one important question for Song is how much Exodus 2 focalizes (and thereby empowers) one character over another. While the method is useful, I had a hard time following some of the elaborate focalizer-focalized schemas Song introduces in this chapter.

After she has elaborated on the hermeneutical toolkit with which she will approach Exodus 2, chapters 5 and 6 dig into the text itself. Chapter 5 employs the focalization method in a line-by-line analysis of the narrative of this chapter, an analysis she builds on in chapter 6 when she applies her empathetic postcolonial optic to the chapter. Because her analysis is lengthy and detailed, I cannot summarize it all; a few of her more insightful points will suffice. Her analysis of 2:6, for example, analyzes the Hebrew closely to see that the narrative repeatedly guides the reader to focus on Moses, even though Pharoah's daughter is the agent of this sentence. Song finds that this same daughter is given narrative power over other characters because she has a greater ability to focalize the narrative onto others; therefore, "such a narrative structure on the abstract narrative level reinforces the power structure that exists on the story level" (123; cf. 129–30). The narrative of Exodus 2, Song finds, also focuses closely on Moses throughout, and lulls the reader into empathizing with him and taking his perspective (e.g. 134). This close reading of the narrative can seem tedious and technical, but Song finds some interpretive payoffs that really unveil the depth of this story's narrative construction.

The real meat of this book is chapter 6, where Song ties together all the previous chapters into her empathetic postcolonial reading of Exodus 2. Here Song uses her own lived experience as a postcolonial woman to imagine the feelings, thoughts, and motives of Moses, his sister, his birth mother, and his adopted mother. Song remembers the care her adopted mother lavished on her as a child and uses that to imagine what Moses's mom felt like as she built the basket on which he would float down the river (155–57). She imagines Moses's sister as a crafty young girl, able to speak the figurative (and literal) language of the oppressor and sufficiently persuade Pharaoh's daughter to let her find a wet nurse for the baby—an example of the "pragmatic prowess of the powerless," a *Sang Kancil* story of a disempowered, colonized woman using her brains to save her brother's life (165–69). She picks up on the way Pharaoh's daughter immediately recognizes Moses as a Hebrew and speculates on the way physical differences are used by colonizers to Other their colonized subjects (164), and the way she wields her power by getting

to name Moses despite the fact that she does not even care for him as a child (172). As for Moses himself, Song speculates on the "significant silence" (172) of v. 10: how did Moses sustain his sense of Hebrew identity during his childhood? How might the other members of Pharaoh's family have treated this red-headed stepchild, and how might that have kept Moses's memory of his birth identity alive as he grew up in the palace? In Song's empathetic, psychologically insightful reading, Moses's murder of an Egyptian man (v. 11) is a turning-point in his young adult identity crisis (179–80). The irony is that Moses is now caught between two worlds, rejected with suspicion by both Egyptians and Hebrews (186). Song wonders if Moses ever reconciles his identity anxiety, as shown by his son's name, "Gershom," or "a sojourner there" (191–92).

Song ends her close reading of Exodus 2 with that question: "Will the legacy of old, the ghosts of Moses's past, ever really go away?" (192). Although this book's birth as a dissertation makes its close focus on one chapter understandable, I was left wishing for more of Song's close reading of Moses's character, perhaps an examination of more of the Torah to answer the above question. This book has the typical awkwardness of a dissertation. Song could have condensed the early methodology chapters more; as it was, they took up half the book. As mentioned above, it would also have been instructive to understand why she chose to analyze the Bible in particular. Is this no different from a postcolonial reading of any other work of literature for Song? Is she invested in an ecclesial context for her interpretation? Lastly, her analysis in chapter 6 might have been more effective had she moved thematically rather than verse-by-verse. Despite these shortcomings, this book is a valuable source on the Moses narrative, both for literary and for postcolonial scholars. Given Exodus's significance in African-American biblical interpretation, it was an interesting counterpoint to read an identity-based reading of Exodus from a different context, and to learn about Singaporean history and culture as it relates to colonization.

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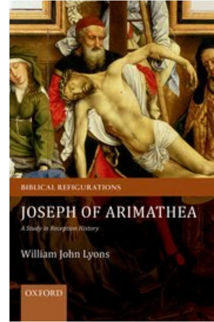
Joseph of Arimathea: A Study in Reception History, by William John Lyons



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My initial attraction to this book was its cover—even if that may sound decidedly unacademic and facile. It features Rogier van der Weyden's famous oil painting entitled *The Descent from the Cross*—to be found in the Prado, Madrid. The detail shown is that of Joseph of Arimathea holding the dead body of Christ as he is lowered from the cross. Those interested in European art of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries know that Joseph of Arimathea features in a great many descent-from-the-cross paintings and yet, beyond being name-checked, few art historians deal with this character in any depth when discussing these works. My hope was that this mysterious and under-explored biblical figure of Joseph of Arimathea would be fleshed out in new and illuminating ways. The author does not disappoint in this regard and I learnt much that hadn't even been on the periphery of my awareness about Joseph prior to reading this engaging book.

As is clearly indicated by the subtitle, Lyons's book offers a reception history of Joseph of Arimathea. In this sense it is at the cutting edge of the emerging area of reception history within biblical studies. It is evidence, I am sure, of many more dedicated studies to come that will explore in depth the cultural and literary afterlives of single biblical characters in many different arenas. While I am familiar with studies that have explored the afterlife of female characters in particular, such as Judith or Susanna for example, in Renaissance and Baroque art—I cannot think of a study that attempts to simultaneously move across many cultural areas and eras. Lyons thus opens up an interesting new vista—and challenge—for reception history scholars with this work, through this focus, bringing a marginal biblical character from their portrayal in the biblical text right up to the present day. As has been noted by Lyons, he had to be particularly selective about which aspects of the afterlife of Joseph of Arimathea to give attention to. The consequence of these choices meant that much had to be selectively and consciously ignored—thereby leaving gaps in this particular study—to be taken up by other interested scholars at a later stage. His study does not follow either a strictly

chronological path or a focus on a particular area, such as the arts. Rather, he delves deeply in diverse areas of investigation including painting during the Renaissance period, as well as contemporary popular cultural appropriations of Joseph of Arimathea (many unconscious no doubt) such as the advancing of Blake's "Jerusalem" as a new type of "national anthem" for English sports teams! While acknowledging the gaps, there is no doubt that his study does present biblical scholars with one type of model of a reception history with which to proceed. One can see the potential for a series of similarly fascinating monographs exploring different characters in such a fashion. As with this volume they could have broad appeal to a wide range of readers including those outside the academy. In this sense, this is an exciting and timely addition to the burgeoning catalogue of biblical reception studies.

The volume contains six chapters along with an introduction and conclusion. Their scope is clearly defined in their titles: "The Biblical Joseph," "The Early Joseph," "The Renaissance Joseph," "The Glastonbury Joseph," "The 'Jerusalem' Joseph," and "The Twentieth-Century Joseph." The opening chapter on The Biblical Joseph serves as a necessary foundation to the rest of the book, grounding Joseph in his literary textual origins in the four canonical gospels. Here we have a close textual reading that acknowledges the downfall of certain practices, within traditional biblical studies of times past, that have sought to harmonise the gospels. Such practices, Lyons maintains "can just as easily hide the specific contours of each gospel's Joseph as reveal them."

The earliest recorded layers of the canonical Josephs' reception as they developed in the first millennium are opened out in the next chapter. A natural trajectory is developed as the effects of the four gospels are picked up in five examples from the following centuries. The Gospel of Peter (ca. second century), the Gospel of Nicodemus (ca. fourth century), the homilies of John Chrysostom, Jerome's Vulgate and Augustine's *De Consensus Evangelistarum* are all covered. Here we are introduced convincingly to the diversity emerging early in Joseph's literary afterlife. The initial difficulties posed by "the lack of a definitive characterisation of Joseph" in the canonical gospels and the attempts to deal with that in turn saw him moulded according to differing agendas and his afterlife in the literary tradition proceeded down many different strands.

The third chapter turns to the visual arts and the Renaissance in particular. Obviously a reception history of Joseph of Arimathea in art could quickly require a volume of its own and again the potential for numerous such fur-

ther and expansive studies becomes apparent as one progresses through the book. Five paintings are considered here: Simon Bening's *Joseph of Arimathea before Pilate*, Rogier van Der Weyden's *The Descent from the Cross* (detail shown on the book cover), Sandro Botticelli's *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, Michelangelo's *Entombment*, and Simon Marmion's *Ducal Lamentation*. There is an interesting discussion around Michelangelo's sculpture, the *Florentine Pièta* and the ambiguity of the tall hooded figure lowering the body of Christ into the lap of Mary. The excursus into "Nicodemism" arising during this period is an illuminating addition to this exploration of the established depiction of Joseph and his visual relationship to the character of Nicodemus. It would be wonderful to see Nicodemus being given a parallel reception historical treatment to match this of Joseph of Arimathea.

There is an issue that arises from time to time with reception history scholarship that focusses on the visual arts and this is the strange exclusion of the art under discussion. This is a complaint levelled at the publisher rather than the author but unfortunately none of the artworks discussed were shown in the book. This seems to be a peculiar omission as these artworks are, as I understand it, in the public domain and out of copyright. These images appear frequently on blogs and countless other internet pages (without even so much as an acknowledgement of the artist in many cases), magazines, parish missalettes, book covers, and conference posters—often serving as nothing more than a decorative flourish. And yet they are not featured here in an academic book explicitly exploring the detail, meaning, and influence of those images. As we have now moved to digital printing there is no technical reason for not printing images in black and white; they can be just as easily and well reproduced as text. If we are able to include (often copyrighted) works of poetry, song lyrics, movie stills, photos from theatrical productions in our reception-history academic publications we must find a way to include the visual arts of painting, drawing, design and sculpture and treat them as being of equal importance for inclusion. This volume would have been enhanced by the inclusion of these artworks.

As a very small aside, in the discussion of Michelangelo's first *Pièta*, it is incorrectly cited as being in St Peter's Cathedral in Rome (60). This should read St Peter's *Basilica* (and to be really pernickety: in the Vatican City, as this is a sovereign state albeit a tiny one). A minor error appears on the back cover where Van der Weyden's painting is incorrectly entitled *Deposition* rather than *The Descent from the Cross* as it is labelled by the Prado and, indeed, the author. Admittedly these terms are occasionally used interchangeably.

At this point the book turns to Glastonbury, a town in Somerset in the South West of England. Some British readers might be familiar with legends connecting Joseph and the tin trade and Glastonbury. As one not overly familiar with the Arthurian legends and medieval English history, I admit to being slightly wary embarking on this chapter, feeling there was too much local history beyond my remit to allow me to fully appreciate its significance, but it proved to be thoroughly fascinating and worthwhile. Five turbulent centuries of English religious and political history are spanned, revolving around intersecting layers of Joseph legends. This moves seamlessly into the following chapter on the "Jerusalem" Joseph, which expands the reception in further surprising and delightful directions. This trajectory of Joseph reception—from the words laid down by William Blake in a preface to his epic poem "Milton," of which four stanzas have been popularised as the song "Jerusalem," later set to rousing music by Sir Hubert Parry during the Great War, and its subsequent uptake in popular culture during the last century—is intriguing.

Finally, beyond the desire to create a national anthem of "Jerusalem," Joseph of Arimathea has continued to find his way into other facets of contemporary social life, whether it be as the patron saint of pallbearers, funeral workers or tin miners, or a character in an Indiana Jones movie—among many diverse iterations well-covered here. In his conclusion Lyons makes an interesting observation drawn from his experience of researching this vast body of material. And he relates this back to the "broadly active Joseph of the three Synoptic Gospels" and the "passive Joseph of the Fourth Gospel." The receptions of Joseph largely conform to one or other of these dualities: "Joseph as an *active* man, looking at the examples of his bravery, his wealth and influence, his masculinity, his sanctification, and his dominance over others; and Joseph as a *passive* man, looking at examples of his guilt, his fear, his secretiveness, his malleability, and his submissiveness to those who have appropriated him." This insight gleaned from pursuing Joseph down the centuries and across the seas in turn offers something profoundly rich back to the historical-critical scholar.

Lyons's book certainly unveils the complexity of the task and scope of such a reception-historical project even when it considers a so-called "minor" character, like Joseph, who features in little more than a few verses. It also undoubtedly reveals the necessity of such endeavours and the immense value such research has to offer not only biblical scholars but a much broader interdisciplinary scholarship and readership. This book is very accessible and

has much to offer a wide range of readers from biblical scholars to Joseph enthusiasts of all persuasions. I hope it is proving a bestseller in Joseph's legendary stomping ground of Glastonbury.

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