

### **Book Reviews**

John Rogerson, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University, 2001. 412 pp., cloth, \$49.95.

The volume under review is one of those rare works that offers a collection of essays which, individually, are of uniformly high quality and readability and, as a whole, achieve a tight overall coherence. The book guides the reader through its subject matter by organizing the contributions into four sections prefaced by a lucid and engaging orientation by the editor. The first two sections, both titled "The Making of the Bible," deal first with the historical background of the scriptures and second with the composition, transmission, and translation of biblical texts. John Rogerson's essay on the historical background of the Old Testament focuses primarily on scholarly discussion on Israelite religion and its development. Philip Davies' essay on the Apocrypha follows with a brief discussion on issues of canon and a survey of the contents and composition. Margaret Davies then places the topic of canonization more squarely at the center in an absorbing essay on the composition of the New Testament documents.

Geoffrey Khan opens the second section, on texts and transmission, with a meticulous account of the development and transmission of the Masoretic text and the role of variant traditions, such as those reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint. Philip Davies then offers brief accounts of the textual histories of the individual books that comprise the Apocrypha and is followed in turn by David Parker, who deftly elaborates the operations of the textual study of the New Testament in tandem with the textual, social, and theological issues that gave rise to them. Stanley E. Porter concludes the section with an informative survey of translations of the Bible, a discussion of the difficulties involved in establishing the textual base for translation, and an overview of the issues involved in translating the Bible meaningfully into English.

The largest number of essays appears in the third section on "The Study and Use of the Bible." In "The Early Church," Henning Graf Reventlow summarizes the contributions of key figures in the era, and G. R. Evans explores, among other things, the impact of the Bible on preaching and education in "The Middle Ages to the Reformation." David Wright examines the impact of such developments as the printing press, the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, and the emergence of historical methods of interpretation in "The Reformation to 1700." Ronald Clements completes the historical overview, in "1700 to the Present," with a cogent discussion of biblical scholarship's interaction with the intellectual and cultural currents that emanated from the Enlightenment. George Bebawi, in "The Bible in the Eastern Churches," helpfully explains the Eastern insistence on explaining the scriptures according to the Church's faith, worship, and ideal of holiness, and Philip Alexander gives a masterful overview of seminal developments in Jewish interpretation – encompassing early commentary, rabbinic midrash, the medieval shift to philology, and the impact of the Enlightenment – in "The Bible in Judaism." David Jasper's essay on "The Bible in Literature" concludes

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the section by discussing the appropriation of biblical texts and motifs in the works of influential English authors from the Medieval Era to the present.

The concluding section, "Contemporary Interpretation," comprises four essays. The first, by Yvonne Sherwood, elaborates the objectives and operations of feminist scholarship as it addresses the negative images and absence of women from the biblical text and traditional interpretation. The last three essays frame the globalization of biblical interpretation from the perspective of Liberation Theology. M. Daniel Carroll R. provides a succinct discussion of the origin and development of Liberation Theology in Latin America and summarizes the hermeneutical proposals of a number of key figures in the movement. Gerald West discusses and unites the complex and many-faceted character of Africa's engagement with the Bible by explaining it as a series of transactions. Luise Schottroff concludes the section with an essay on the ways Liberation Theology has impacted biblical interpretation in Europe. John Rogerson then completes the volume as a whole with a short epilogue that gives a nod to contemporary approaches (e.g. formalist, ideological, deconstruction) but argues strongly for the primacy of the historical-critical method and the attempt to discern authorial intent.

Taken together, the essays offer a masterful and very readable account of the Bible's history that is rich in detail and complemented by a judicious selection of illustrations. Yet there are significant omissions. Formalist, social-scientific, and "postmodern" approaches are presented as an afterthought and are not given an explanation sufficient to acquaint the novice reader with their operations and ends. The positioning of contemporary biblical interpretation within the rubric of Liberation Theology seems incomplete, especially given disaffection with the term in many quarters and a reorientation toward postcolonial reading strategies. Perhaps this explains the striking absence of any discussion of biblical interpretation in central and east Asia, where liberationist categories have not caught on but where, nonetheless, energetic engagement with the Bible continues apace. Finally, it is somewhat disappointing to find so few references to evangelical and pentecostal/charismatic engagement with the Bible, especially since these currents constitute a vital and growing expression of Christianity in many global contexts.

These comments notwithstanding, readers will find this volume an excellent introduction and reference for the history and study of the Bible.

L. Daniel Hawk

John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*. JSOTSup 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press (now handled by Continuum, New York), 2000. 288 pp., cloth, \$60.

Judith M. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess*. University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 57. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Xv + 265 pp., cloth, \$105.

That Israel was not alone in its religious world is shown by the prophets' all too frequent condemnation of Yahweh's people for following other gods. These two books ably present some of the options available for their spiritual adultery. The first looks across a broad panoply of deities, most specifically in their relationship to Yahweh, while the second plumbs the evidence available on one particular goddess.

John Day, Professor in the Faculty of Theology, University of Oxford, brings to bear the decades of research made available since the publication of W. F. Albright's *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* almost forty years ago. He is well qualified to do so, having already published numerous books and articles on aspects of the topic. In the first chapter, Day looks at Yahweh and El, who he sees as originally separate deities. There was, however, influence of the latter on the former in such aspects as Yahweh being ancient, wise, and creator. El's dwelling in paradise is also explored, as are several features of El, such as his association with calves/bulls, which are rejected as being part of the worship of Yahweh.

Chapter two studies Asherah, a goddess associated with Yahweh in several recently discovered texts. Day takes the mention of Asherah in these to refer to cult symbols rather than the goddess herself. He does hold that the goddess was Yahweh's consort among many in Israel who turned their backs on orthodox Yahwism and lived in syncretism with the surrounding Canaanite culture, the very practice which the prophets condemned. Two chapters are dedicated to Baal and the appropriation by Yahweh of some Baal imagery. There is also a brief discussion on Dagon. The following chapters combine several deities, one on the goddesses Astarte, Anat, and the Queen of Heaven, another on the astral deities (sun, moon and Lucifer), and one on the underworld deities (Mot, Resheph, Molech, and the Rephaim). Day concludes with a discussion of the development of monotheism, which he sees arising in the pre-exilic period, being especially reinforced by Josiah's reforms, and firmly established after the exile. Day concludes with a valuable bibliography of almost 30 pages, and indexes of references and authors.

Judith Hadley is Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University. She also is an expert in ancient religion, especially the goddess Asherah and the textual and archaeological evidence concerning her. She brings all of these to bear in this monograph. After introducing previous research on Asherah, Hadley explores the goddess Athirat in Ugaritic literature and Asherah in the Bible. She suggests an evolution of understanding, starting with her as El's consort, but devolving into simply a wooden cult object. She then studies the Khirbet el-Qom inscription associating Yahweh and Asherah (most likely as a cult object) and the Kuntilet Ajrud material which

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provides inscriptions and pictorial representations relevant to the topic. She interprets the writing and the art as being unrelated from each other, with the writing done by someone other than the artist and not being comments on the representations. She completes the evidential survey by looking at finds from Lachish, Pella, Taanach, Ekron, and Jerusalem, as well as a chapter on female figurines. A twenty-five page bibliography is followed by indexes of biblical and extra-biblical passages, modern authors, and subjects.

Both books are models of scholarship in areas with diverse but incomplete streams of evidence. Various views are presented fairly, with the authors' own conclusions clearly drawn. The books show that religious enculturation has a long history, with today's manifestations of cultural and political Christianity only continuing a long tradition.

David W. Baker

Alfred Rahlfs, ed. *Septuaginta*. Revised and corrected edition by Robert Hanhart. New York: American Bible Society/ Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2006. 2201 pp., cloth, \$79.99.

Print editions of the LXX have a long history (see K. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000] pp. 69-75), and Rahlfs' has been the standard edition since 1935. This revised and corrected edition was prepared by the able hands of Robert Hanhart, himself editor of Göttingen critical editions of 1, 2 Esras, Esther, Judith, Tobit, and 2 and 3 Maccabees. The nature of the revisions are spelled out in a short introduction (pp. xi-xii), which is expanded upon in an article by Hanhart published elsewhere: "Rechenschaftsbericht zur Editio Altera der Handausgabe der Septuaginta von Alfred Rahlfs," *Vetus Testamentum* LV (2005): 450-460.

The present edition leaves the Rahlfs text "largely untouched" and restricts revisions "to the most inevitable changes." It is, in Hanhart's words, "a moderate revision of the first edition" (p. xi), limited largely to errors and misprints. These pertain to accentuation (at Prov 7:4; Exod 27:20; 30:24) and transmission of a different form of a word (Isa 5:17; 53:2) in the text. They also pertain to some matters in the critical apparatus including, first, mistakes in collating that become apparent as the Göttingen editions become available. Second, revisions to the apparatus are made toward correcting Rahlfs' way of quantifying textual traditions from "about a quarter," etc., to specifying a specific quantity as done in the Göttingen or Brooke-McLean editions. Third, corrections were made of misleading simplifications of textual transmissions. Finally, the present edition includes uncials Q, C, and V, and recensions O and L, where Rahlfs only uses B, S, and A.

The typesetting, font, formatting, color, and even the binding are identical to the Rahlfs edition. The aim of the revision is the same as that of the original Rahlfs: to provide a reliable edition of the LXX at a moderate price for ministers and students. That the revised edition is now available will surely make it the standard edition, though one need not replace the old Rahlfs on one's shelf. For these revisions comprise such a slight

percentage of the overall Rahlfs edition that replacing one's copy of the first edition may not be entirely warranted, provided one is aware of the errors present in the 1935 text. However, for serious work in the LXX, especially where text critical matters are concerned, one best consult the Göttingen editions for the most up-to-date critical text and apparatus.

Daniel M. Gurtner, Bethel Seminary, St Paul, MN

Tomoo Ishida, *History and Historical Writing in Ancient Israel: Studies in Biblical Historiography*. SHANE, 16. Leiden: Brill, 1999. Xiv + 219, cloth, \$122.

Questions of history and historiography of the Hebrew Bible have been gaining momentum in recent years, and this collection by a leading Japanese biblical scholar helps track his own not inconsiderable contribution to the debate. The volume consists of revisions of 14 articles previously published between 1973 and 1993.

The contents are arranged in two sections. The first is entitled "Dynamism in History and Historiography" and deals with the pre-Israelite nations, the *shophet* ('judge') as leader of the pre-monarchical 'tribal leagues', the term '*nagid*' and its relationship to kingship, struggles for the Israelite throne, the 'people of the land', and the house of Ahab. The second section looks at the Succession Narrative, specifically Solomon's birth and succession, Nathan's prophecy, Abner's murder, and the succession narrative against the background of the Aramean kingdom of Sam'al and the Apology of Esarhaddon.

Ishida describes himself as a conservative in the current debate over biblical historiography. By his own definition, this included: analyzing the extant text rather than its purported sources; recognizing the possibility of late texts being compiled from earlier sources; an actual historical *Sitz-im-Leben* giving rise to biblical historical texts, none of which are purely works of literature; extra-biblical sources, while valuable, but are auxiliary and need to be carefully studied in their own right.

The volume provides a valuable antidote to much that is written about Israelite historiography. It should find a place in academic theological libraries.

David W. Baker

Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit & Israel: Their Social & Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East*. OTS 49. Leiden: Brill, 2003. X + 781 pp, cloth, \$165.

The destruction of the city of Ugarit in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC left a snapshot of Canaanite civilization as it was at that period, the time of the Israelite judges. Ugarit has provided considerable insight into the religion of the period, and in this volume its texts yield important sociological information concerning women and their roles. The author,

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and independent Dutch scholar, received her doctorate from the Theological University at Kampen. Her thesis there is the basis for this volume.

The book is divided into five unequal sections. In the first, Marsman sets her methodology within the history of feminist interpretation, looking at its development from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially drawing on the early work of Rosemary Radford Reuther. She seeks to establish a methodology to answer her research question: "whether the social and religious position of Israelite women was worse, equal or better than those living in neighbouring polytheistic cultures" (p. 1). In essence, she explores whether monotheism or polytheism are better for women.

The second, largest section covers women's social position. It includes sections on women in their family of origin as well as the one into which they marry, with all of their aspects (courtship, marriage, motherhood, divorce, widowhood, etc.). It also explores royal and non-royal women, as well as those involved in business, professional life, and slavery. Marsman concludes that women's social position was similar in both Israel and Ugarit.

Chapter three explores women's religious position as both worshipper (through prayer, making vows, bringing offerings [especially in the context of the cult of the dead] and religious specialist such as priestess (unattested in Israel and Ugarit, practiced in Mesopotamia and Egypt, though decreasing through time), singers and dancers, magicians and sorcerers, and prophets. There is special discussion of what has traditionally been designated as 'cultic prostitution', with the author joining those who question whether the practice actually existed. She presents a wealth of evidence, which is to some extent skewed due to the chief tradents being males with greater vested interest in male rather than female practices.

This last point is developed in the fourth chapter, which looks at the non-literary epigraphs available as evidence. These include letters, seals and bullae (seal impressions on clay), and legal and administrative texts. She found similarities with the situation depicted in literary texts, so again concludes a lack of differences between Israel and its northern neighbor. The fifth and final chapter presents the author's summary and conclusion. It is followed by indexes of abbreviations, authors, subjects, and ancient texts cited. Unfortunately, there is no separate bibliography.

Marsman is to be thanked for a thorough start on so vast a topic. The considerable evidence she has compiled will be of great help for all interested in the vital topic. The volume should be in all academic theological libraries. It is unfortunate that its costs will likely preclude its purchase by others interested in the subject.

David W. Baker

Victor H. Matthews, *Old Testament Turning Points: The Narratives That Shaped a Nation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. 208 pp., paper, \$18.99.

Victor H. Matthews, professor of Religious Studies at Missouri State University, is the author of numerous works, including *The Social World of Ancient*

*Israel and Old Testament Parallels*. This most recent contribution is a valuable tool for students seeking an overview of major themes in Old Testament theology.

In his survey of the Hebrew Scriptures, Matthews identifies eight “turning points” or events that contain elements and themes essential to the larger narrative of the Hebrew Bible. For example, the Abrahamic covenant established by YHWH in Gen. 15-17 becomes a central reminder of Israelite national identity in later scriptural passages (Exod. 33:1, Josh. 24:3, 2 Kings 13:23, Neh. 9:7-8, Isa. 51:2, Sir. 44:19-21). Other “turning points” that resonate through the biblical canon include the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:4-3:24), the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt (Exod. 12:33-40:38), the establishment of Jerusalem as the capitol of the Davidic kingdom (2 Sam. 5:6-7:29), the secession of the Northern Tribes under Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:1-19), the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:41), the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:1-21), and the return of the Israelites from Exile (Ezra 1:1-Neh. 13:31).

Matthews examines each of the “turning points” in eight separate chapters, which address their relationship to the broader biblical canon and Ancient Near Eastern literature. Of particular value to the student of the Hebrew Bible is Matthews’ analysis of the retelling of these stories in later biblical writings. Matthews’ work helps the modern reader to draw similar connections between characters, events, and themes that the ancient Israelites would have drawn. Matthews points out that ancient Israelites heard these stories not read them and that the biblical texts themselves have social texture, which gives them an enduring quality and ability to contribute to social identity (p. 8). Matthews suggests that cultural values were passed on by the Israelites to succeeding generations through the “turning point” narratives.

The methods used in *Old Testament Turning Points* include canonical, social scientific, and literary approaches with emphasis on the themes of covenant, ethical expectations, judgment, and restoration. Matthews’ presentation of the material is accessible and includes a glossary of technical terms and important concepts, which make the work more accessible to lay readers. Matthews also includes an index with references to subjects as well as scriptural and Ancient Near Eastern writings that appear in the text. Throughout his work, Matthews remains focused on the topic specified by his title supplying many individual arguments that contribute to the purpose of the whole work.

Jacob D. Dodson, Regent University

Benjamin E. Scolnic, *If the Egyptians Drowned in the Red Sea, Where are the Pharaoh's Chariots?: Exploring the Historical Dimension of the Bible*. Studies in Judaism. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2005. Pp. 198, paper, \$35.00.

This series, *Studies in Judaism*, is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary collection of anything and everything pertaining to the Jewish faith. The collection ranges from biblical studies, to discussions on modern Jewish theology, to commentaries on the Talmud and other extra-biblical historical texts important to the faith. Even among this

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series, *Pharaoh's Chariots* is a unique work, since it spans two disciplines within itself: biblical studies and archaeology.

Scolnic's work is an engaging defense of the historicity of certain events in the Hebrew Scriptures using contemporary archaeological evidence. His aim is to encourage biblical believers to make their own judgments on what is proven or unproven by archaeological evidence. He seeks to re-establish the Bible as a piece of historical evidence on par with extra-biblical literary material. He claims that, because of the religious fervor the Bible incites for or against it, it has been relegated to a status of being worth "less than nothing" (p. 2). His arguments engender appreciation for the field of archaeology, as well as reminding a believing audience that the doors have not been shut on faith. While a variety of archaeologists have sought to prove or disprove the biblical accounts, Scolnic makes the case for an objective and humble middle ground that realizes that the minute amount of archaeological evidence makes absolute certainty impossible.

Some of the subjects examined include: the origins of the Garden of Eden, Noah's ark and the great flood, the status and life of the real Moses, the historicity of the Exodus, and various predictions of the prophets. The strength of Scolnic's work is in reminding the reader that the Bible should be "presumed true" until proven false (p. 1). However, the strength of each individual chapter varies greatly. For instance, the chapter on Moses reminds the reader that it is tradition that has elevated Moses to the status of "Prince of Egypt," whereas the biblical text makes no such claims. He argues that Moses would have had little status as a foreign child in the royal harem when Pharaoh had legitimate children of his own. As such, it is not surprising that Moses is not recorded in the Egyptian annals. It is these areas of textual re-examination and objective archaeological study where Scolnic's work shines. However, other chapters are not so strongly argued. For instance, Scolnic devotes a chapter to the argument that Amos successfully predicted the major earthquake of 763 BCE. Unfortunately, that chapter mainly involves the evidence that an earthquake occurred, but the decision to believe that Amos predicted it is largely left to faith. Although inconsistent evidence is one of the eternal problems of archaeology, in these weaker chapters, it is easy to get the impression that Scolnic is defending his position against an opposing view that the casual reader has no familiarity with.

It should be noted that the book's title really doesn't accurately prepare a casual reader for the content within. *Where are Pharaoh's Chariots?* seems to be the question of an amateur bible-reader confused by textual inconsistencies, when in fact the book only addresses historicity of biblical claims. Similarly, while the book pretends to be written to an amateur audience, it is much too advanced for most people unfamiliar with biblical and archaeological terminology. Despite Scolnic's commitments to "keep references to a minimum," the book is far too footnote-laden to be considered casual reading (p. 2). Furthermore, while there are moments where esoteric terms are explained, they are inconsistent, and many times the casual reader is left in the dark. Finally, potential readers should be made aware that the book is not meant to be an objective textbook or primer on the subject of biblical archaeology. Instead, each chapter consists of the author's own carefully thought-out theories based on the evidence.



I would recommend *Pharaoh's Chariots* to any person with more than a passing interest in biblical archaeology, especially anyone who has found him- or herself overwhelmed by the wide and varying opinions on the matter.

Benjamin Gemmel

Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. 298 pp., paper, \$26.00.

In her introduction Gale Yee states, "The men writing the Bible used women, particularly those who were socially, culturally, and racially Other, as tropes for evil and destruction" (p. 3). Her purpose, however, is not to catalog this symbolization but "to explore relationships between the sexism embodied in this symbol and other forms of oppression" (p. 4). Therefore through her exploration of gender she raises issues of class, status and race in the texts. Yee selects four distinct time periods of Israelite history and using social sciences examines the society. She then turns to Ideological criticism to explore the rhetorical strategies of the biblical texts and its connection to the lived experience of the community. In the process Yee considers how these texts both rely on and re-inscribe various beliefs and ideas about women.

In chapter 2 Yee provides a wonderfully clear description of ideological criticism. She builds her definition from Marxist literary critics (primarily Terry Eagleton) who have paid particular attention to how the lived experience of a society produces particular ideas and beliefs. Following Eagleton she details six different ways in which ideology has been categorized: from beliefs that are entirely neutral to those that promote and legitimate the interests and power of particular social groups all the way to those that are pejorative and rely on false beliefs. Yee develops the connections between ideology and social practice noting that the former provides a rationale for the latter. She then explores various rhetorical strategies that justify beliefs or values. For example; rationalizing, legitimating, universalizing, or naturalizing a concept. These ideological strategies do not exist in a vacuum but "exist only in relation to other ideologies." There are other explanations, other ways of forming a society that compete with any ideology. Written texts produced in the context of this discourse between competing ideologies, contain within them, "the potential for contradiction and dissonance in ideological formations" (P. 13). Yee places her study of the characterization of women in the midst of these competing discourses and the lived experience that gives rise to them. She considers the symbol of woman as evil in light of the prior ideology of gender that this reworks. In particular she asks what beliefs about women make this trope 'work'? (Or not work if one replaced the woman with a man?)

Chapter 3 provides a survey of ancient Israelite culture through the lens of social sciences. The author examines modes of production, kinship and patrimony, honor and shame, the separate world of women (and hence the lack of textual information about their lives) and a section on 'weapons of the weak' or informal power. All these contribute to the beliefs and ideas that inform the biblical text. Once again Yee's brief overview is clear and incisive and particularly informative.

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Chapters 4-7 each cover a biblical example of the use of women as evil. Yee interprets the women in the selected texts as tropes for a social group or nation. She follows the scholarly consensus regarding date of writing, moving from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to post-exilic. Chapter 4 deals with Eve, chapter 5 with the woman in Hosea, chapter 6 with the two sisters in Ezekiel, and chapter 7 with the Other woman in Proverbs. Each chapter begins with an “extrinsic” analysis of the social, political, and economic context for the text. This analysis then leads to an intrinsic analysis of the text’s rhetoric. Her method opens up a number of lived conflicts that tend to become masked under the “symbolic alibi” of the women. In Genesis a public class conflict is shifted to the private domain of family where Eve’s subordination obscures the peasant class that is subordinated by the king. Hosea’s narrative of divorce is a critique of Israel’s male leadership but the rhetoric reinforces the subordinate status of women to men. Ezekiel is analyzed in the context of deportation and exile and Proverbs 1-9 in the context of Empire and the tributary position of Yehud.

There are two minor weaknesses in the book. Yee’s analysis rests on particular historical contexts which could be contested. The other is one that accompanies any focused approach. The analysis isn’t always compelling. Are all these images of evil women really about class conflict? While Hosea clearly directs his attacks towards leaders, and the daughters in Ezekiel provide language for the pain of war and exile, it is not so obvious that Genesis 1-3 is about peasants and kingship nor is the Other woman in Proverbs 1-9 convincingly about the importance of endogamous marriage.

The strengths of this book are many. By putting feminist criticism in dialogue with social sciences Yee exposes the community conflict and trauma coded within the rhetoric of unfaithful wives and promiscuous daughters and how that rhetoric re-inscribes for the reader those same beliefs about women. The analysis is well done and it is written with great clarity. Her focus on how the symbolism of woman as evil provides a gendered mask for other oppressive systems (classism, racism, colonialism) is a much needed analysis and a much needed warning for those reading these texts today.

Donna Laird, Drew University

Stephen C. Barton, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xi + 300 pp., cloth, \$27.99.

This collection of 13 essays draws together some of the most respected Gospels (and more broadly NT) scholars. Primarily from the United Kingdom and the United States, they include Stephen Barton, Loveday Alexander, Francis Watson, Richard Hays, Stephen Fowl, Joel Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson. One expects, in this series, brief discussions by a variety of experts on critical issues pertaining to the topic of interest – in this case the four canonical Gospels. The first portion of essays, entitled “approaching the text,” offers insightful discussions of such issues as genre, the uniqueness of the fourfold shape of the Gospels, and the significance of the Jewish Scriptures (e.g. the LXX) for their interpretation.

The second section deals directly with each Gospel in turn, covering the usual matters of authorship, themes and emphases, and major contributions to the life of Jesus. Given the limited space available to summarize the content and interpretation of a Gospel, these chapters are lucid and rewarding. The final section, “the afterlife of the Gospels,” concerns how these biblical stories have affected the church and society through the development of doctrine, the embodiment of the Gospels through imitation and contemplation, and the application of the message of the Gospels to the arena of politics and morality.

The attraction of this introductory textbook is that it does not simply rework the same issues as other comparative survey-style books. Among others, two distinct emphases make this volume special. First, the essays tend to highlight the *literary* aspects of the Gospels over and against the dissecting work of the quest for a “historical Jesus.” Second, there is a focus on the church, in all its diversity, and how it has been shaped by the four Gospels throughout the ages. When most textbooks stress the world “behind the text,” this one is careful to notice the world “of the text,” and the world “in front of the text.”

There are, however, a few concerns worth noting. To begin with, multiple-authored compilations such as these – as attractive as they are – tend to suffer from redundancy, and this is no exception. For instance, the question of genre is dealt with in one specific chapter, and yet it is discussed again and again (with little addition) in several other essays. Second, though this volume concentrates on the Gospels, the book of Acts seems to crop up here and there, especially in the chapter on Luke. It seems to have an unclear status within this collection of essays. More definitiveness on the category of Acts would have been profitable. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, this volume had to work with and around the earlier volume *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*. However, several important *theological* questions are dealt with in the “Jesus” volume that were not worked over again in this one. But, if an instructor needed to choose one of these for a course on the Gospels, it would be a very difficult decision.

The “Cambridge Companion” series has succeeded in collecting essays from expert scholars who have distilled the background, content, and impact of the Gospels. As a complementary volume to the *Companion to Jesus*, the unique focus on the spirituality of the Gospels will benefit both student and pastor.

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham University, England.

Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. Eerdmans, 2006. xi + 538.

It is sometimes assumed that faith and history cannot coincide and still produce viable scholarship. One characteristic of the third quest for the historical Jesus, however, has been the attempt by some scholars to eliminate the dichotomy between history and faith. Bauckham argues that any reconstruction of Jesus cannot help but be reductionistic if it does not also consider the perspective of Christian faith and theology. He believes that a better way forward is one in which faith and theology meet in the historical Jesus

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instead of parting company (5). This volume is what he labels as his first attempt to set forth the evidence and methodology for such an approach.

The focus of Bauckham's research is the use of eyewitness testimony by the gospel authors. Through a reexamination of the much debated Papias fragments, Bauckham suggests that Papias' gathering of recollections from various elders in the early church represents a preference for eyewitness testimony. While NT scholarship typically thinks of oral tradition as stories being passed around anonymously, he argues that Papias' statements demonstrate that the role of individual transmitters of the tradition was as important as the information being handed down (34-35). In light of this conclusion, Bauckham suggests that a more precise nuance needs to be made. Rather than understand the gospels as oral *tradition* (i.e. stories handed down anonymously) they should be understood as oral *history*, that is, stories handed down by either eyewitnesses or people who knew and received their information from eyewitnesses.

Based on his conclusions about oral history, Bauckham examines the role of named individuals in the gospel. He notes that while many characters in the gospel stories are unnamed, many are identified. He suggests that when a character is named (e.g. Simon of Cyrene) the reason is that these individuals were the eyewitnesses to the original event and, perhaps, even the authoritative guarantors of the traditions (39). Bauckham argues that the inclusion of names in the gospel tradition is neither meaningless nor fabricated but evidence that the gospel authors, like Papias, preferred to use oral history. For instance, the figure of Peter in Mark's gospel forms an inclusio that he claims lends a Peterine perspective. In John the use of anonymous disciples and the figure of the beloved disciple also form an inclusio that Bauckham suggests is evidence for eyewitness testimony.

Bauckham provides a copious amount of research to support his hypothesis. In addition to analysis of the gospel traditions, he includes chapters which examine the following topics: names in the gospels; Palestinian Jewish names in the first century; the importance of the twelve disciples as eyewitnesses; the role of anonymous persons in the gospels; models of oral traditions; the reliance of eyewitness memory; the Gospel of John as eyewitness testimony; and the role of the beloved disciple. All of these are used effectively to support his claim that the gospels should not be understood as oral *tradition* but as oral *history*, that is, documents which preserve eyewitness testimony.

This is an ambitious work which, although narrowly focused on one topic, encompasses a wide range of material and issues. Consequently, any criticism must be tempered by the acknowledgement that much credit and appreciation should be given to Bauckham for his work. The most significant drawback to the hypothesis, in my opinion, is the tremendous amount of weight he has given to the Papias fragments and the kinds of information that he suggests we can learn about oral history. The fragmentary nature is one problem that forces Bauckham to make suggestions that, while perhaps plausible, are not always convincing. Coupled with this is the fact that the fragments are preserved only by Eusebius, who Bauckham concedes was highly critical of Papias. The problem, then, is that all of our knowledge about Papias and his opinions has been mediated by a third party who is not a supporter of the views expressed by Papias. This does not mean that

we should dismiss the evidence out of hand, but it should elicit caution with the kind of conclusions that are suggested.

A second criticism is the overly comprehensive nature of the project. While I support Bauckham's attempts to test his methodology, the sheer amount of information and analysis that is presented is overwhelming at times. While the focus on eyewitness testimony in the gospels is a positive contribution, the broad coverage of material does not always allow for the kind of penetration that such an important topic warrants. Moreover, while those who are interested in highly specialized gospel studies will find it very helpful, the average student and layperson will not be able to engage it at a sufficient level.

Overall, Bauckham is to be praised for his work. The last 20 years has witnessed a steady rejection of the form critical method along with the demise of the criterion of double dissimilarity. Bauckham's contribution encourages scholars to take the claims of the NT authors more seriously. His efforts will go a long way towards removing the supposed dichotomy that exists between history and faith.

John Byron

Warren Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006. xvi + 264 pp. \$19.95.

Carter's book is a valuable introduction to the Gospel of John. Its ten chapters and postscript are divided into three major sections. Section one is John as storyteller, and consists of six chapters covering the genre of the Gospel of John, its plot, its major and minor characters, John's distinctive language, and his style. In section two, John's role as an interpreter is covered. This section has only one chapter, making it the weakest element of the book. Section three, contains two chapters and a postscript. Here, Carter discusses the identity of the person or persons behind the Gospel of John, and its message. The postscript analyzes the extent to which that message may or may not be incorporated into the life and witness of the twenty-first century church.

Some of Carter's most interesting observations are found in the first section. He notes that the Gospel of John, contrary to earlier research, does not constitute a unique genre of Greco-Roman literature. Rather it is an example of the Hellenistic *bios* that incorporates the various literary features of a revelatory biography (pp. 15-18). Carter further notes the importance of plot in John's gospel as both a literary device and a means of providing movement. (pp. 21-45), as well as literary themes. One of these themes is the conflict between Jesus and oppressive power systems, represented by both the Roman governor, Pilate, and the temple establishment. Carter's focus on John's socio-political dimensions provides the reader with a new appreciation of its impact on the original readers/hearers.

The second section discusses John as an interpreter of the Jesus tradition. The role of oral tradition in John's Gospel is noted. Carter concludes that the gospel shows indications of an extensive period of oral refinement and collection, which may explain some of the narrative inconsistencies that previous scholars understood as indicators of

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John's use of separate literary sources (p. 150). John's role as a re-interpreter of the Jesus tradition is examined in light of circumstances facing a late first century church (pp. 155-74). John's narrative demonstrates opposition to oppressive power structures, both religious and secular that faced Jesus and the gospel's later audience (pp. 170-72.).

The third section examines John's role as an evangelist. What did the text mean to its original readers/hearers and what does it mean to the church in the early twenty-first century? Carter concludes that postmodern Christians can and should appropriate John's opposition to oppression, but recognize that some of the gospel's language can, itself, become oppressive, such as the phrase "the Jews" to denote Jesus' opposition. This language has been used to justify the Church's shameful record of anti-Semitism in the past, and Carter concludes it should be rejected. Rather, contemporary readers need to reflect on when Christians find themselves as opponents of God's justice. In this reading, John can once again be utilized to address socio-political oppression as well as spiritual conflict faced both in the emerging church of the two-thirds worlds and in the established churches of North America and Europe.

While the individual features of Carter's readings may not be entirely original, he has combined them in a creative way to produce a challenging monograph. His attention to what John must mean for Christians today as well as what it meant in the first century demonstrates how exegesis addresses both the original meaning of a text, as well as its continuing significance.

Russell Morton

John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans, eds. *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 144pp., paper, \$16.99.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls would easily make the list of top ten archaeology finds relevant to biblical studies in the last couple of centuries. Numerous scholars have dedicated their research fully to these often tattered and faded bits of scrolls. Study centers in universities have cropped up for the sole objective of scrutinizing these texts. Even in seminaries you may find courses taught with a specific focus on the history, literature, archaeology and theology of the Qumran community. More than 50 years after the discovery of the scrolls, there is a need to step back and evaluate how these interesting texts have affected our understanding of the New Testament. *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls* sets out to accomplish such a goal in a succinct way. This brief collection of essays arose from the Hayward Lectures (Acadia Divinity College, Nova Scotia) in 2004 where several respected scholars offered papers, many of which appear in this volume. The list of contributors is quite impressive including John J. Collins, Craig Evans, Martin Abegg Jr., and Barry D. Smith. Though this is not intended to be an introduction to the Dead Sea scrolls, the topics discussed are of general interest to New Testament interpreters and students of nascent Christianity and include themes such as messianism, the matter of the "works of the law" in Paul and 4QMMT, and the interpretation of the Old Testament in the New Testament and the scrolls.

One of the most appealing features of this collection is when scrolls specialists such as Abegg offer glimpses into the progression of their own research and show how the landscape of study in this field is constantly being reshaped as new fragments, methods, interpretations, and cross-disciplinary insights are brought to the fore. That such a book is written with interest from so many different kinds of scholars proves just how significant these ancient texts are for biblical studies and even how much more there is to discover historically, culturally, and theologically.

At times, though, the diversity of the book can seem double-edged. Given how brief the essays are (the last two chapters being eight pages and five pages respectively), the cumulative effort can seem inchoate, leaving the reader unsatisfied. Additionally, though the Dead Sea scrolls are meant to be in the foreground, a couple of essays pay no more attention to the scrolls than to Philo and Josephus. The reader may occasionally feel that the interest is more in the New Testament within its early Jewish context than the contribution of Qumran *per se*.

This book probably appeals most to students and researchers who concentrate on the New Testament (and the early church), but resource the scrolls from time to time as background texts. Written for a wide audience, one can hardly find better guides to these useful and insightful scrolls than the scholars found in this collection of essays.

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham University, England

Morna D. Hooker. *Endings: Invitations to Discipleship*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003. 104 pp., paper, \$14.95.

*Endings* is a companion book to a previously published volume entitled *Beginnings*. Both books deal with the beginnings and endings of the four gospels. Fittingly, Morna Hooker, uses T.S. Eliot's poetic as a tie-in between the books: 'To make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.'

Hooker's approach is both thorough and appealing to the reader. Both of her books provide a good introduction to the gospel writers as she analyzes their style and purpose.

The gospel endings are not unrelated to their beginnings. The final words of each gospel point back to their beginnings, inviting us to read the story once more! All of the gospels present what the author entitles a 'suspended ending'. None of the gospels give total closure. Why? – so that the disciple can continue the story into the future.

Should not a book on Endings have an interesting end? A provocative ending to this exploration of the endings of the gospels is these last recorded words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the eve of his execution. 'This is the end – for me, the beginning of life.'

Cliff Stewart

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Frederick J. Long. *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology: The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 131. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 291 pp. cloth, \$80.00.

This monograph is a revised dissertation completed under Carol Stockhausen in which Fred Long posits that 2 Corinthians is a “unified apology drawing on the well-known Greco-Roman forensic tradition” (1).

In the first chapter Long presents a helpful survey of scholars who address problems and solutions related to the composition of 2 Corinthians. In essence the major problems related to its unity have been the following issues: 1) a disjunction between 2:13 and 2:14, which seems to be picked up again between 7:4 and 7:5; 2) a possible interpolation at 6:14–7:1; 3) whether chapters 8–9 are originally from a separate letter; and 4) whether chapters 10–13 are originally a different letter due significantly to their harsh tone and the abrupt changes this makes with the previous sections. For Long, the best way to demonstrate the letter's unity is by showing that 2 Corinthians functions as “historical rhetoric working with generic features of ancient apology” (10).

In Part 1 (chapters 2–6) Long surveys the genre of forensic discourse in terms of exigency (rhetorical situation that accounts for the circumstances necessitated for the discourse, such as alleged wrongdoings and a judicial setting), invention (types of argumentation and construction involving issues such as *stasis*, topics, artificial and inartificial proofs), and disposition (rhetorical arrangement including components such as *narratio*, *partitio*, and *refutatio*). Numerous ancient works are cited (especially pages 17–22), with writings from Quintilian, Cicero, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Plato, and Andocides dominating this section. Long concludes that 2 Corinthians best resembles a “propagandistic apologetic letter” directed at an assembly (*ekklēsia*) and also includes exhortative (2 Cor. 6) and deliberative material (2 Cor. 8–9). In this apology Paul promotes his ministry and defends “his right to the Corinthians' allegiance in the collection for the saints” (112).

In Part 2 (chapters 7–10) Long establishes how 2 Corinthians conforms to a forensic self-apology (cf. 2 Cor. 12:19). In terms of exigency Paul is charged with failing to visit the Corinthians after he claimed he would, and he is accused of having worldly intentions, such as using manipulative rhetoric and duplicity related to financial gain (1:17; cf. 1:12–13; 2:1–2; 11:8; 12:16–18). In relation to invention Paul uses various *topoi*, artificial and inartificial proofs. In particular he uses qualitative *stasis* to admit his use of rhetoric; for Paul such persuading of persons is done “in the fear the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:11). In terms of disposition Paul deliberately arranges his letter in the tradition of an apology with *prooemium* (1:3–7), *narratio* (1:8–16; also distributed at 2:12–13 and 7:2–16), *divisio/partitio* (1:17–24), *probatio* (2:1–9; 15), *refutatio* (10:1–11:15), self-adulation (11:16–12:10), and *peroratio* (12:11–13:10). This particular arrangement, among other things, stresses in the *partitio* and unpacks through the *probatio* that the reason Paul did not visit the Corinthians was due to their moral failings. The authenticity of Paul's preaching of Christ is affirmed, and along with the Corinthians, Paul receives the



“deposit” of the Spirit. Moreover he is not attempting to lord it over the congregation, but he is a co-worker in relation to their money collection.

Long concludes that this particular reading of 2 Corinthians displays the letter’s unity by showing the seams at 2:13/14 and 7:4/5 “are transitions out of and into well-crafted distributed narrative material (1.8–16; 2.12–13; 7.2b–16)” (235). The material in 6:14–7:1 belongs to a larger unit from 5:11 to 7:1, which emphasizes the Corinthians’ immorality and relates to the *partitio* at 1:23. The collection of 2 Corinthians 8–9 not only encourages the congregation to support Paul’s endeavor, but it also functions as the apostle’s counter-charge that if the congregation members refuse to participate, they will show that they cannot keep their word. Finally, the change of tone in 2 Corinthians 10–13 “is to be expected” for the beginning of a *refutatio*, which naturally follows the *probatio* section of such discourses (178, 235).

Part 1 is specifically helpful in demonstrating the nature of Paul’s letter as an apology, and in Part 2 Long’s treatment of the *peroratio* as a recapitulation of the entire letter’s arguments (190–97) is outstandingly perceptive (the book also includes two appendices that elaborate on the letter’s *peroratio* and *topoi* respectively).

One area of disagreement I have with the monograph is Long’s insistence that 1 Corinthians is the sorrowful letter Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 2:3–4 (cf. 7:8), which he holds in contrast to scholars who claim the letter is either missing or survives as 2 Corinthians 10–13. While Long’s view is certainly possible, Paul’s mentioning of sorrow does not seem to adequately reflect the multi-faceted work of 1 Corinthians, and it is not at all clear that Paul would be specifying only the situation in 1 Corinthians 5–6. Moreover, in keeping with this view, Long maintains that Paul’s “second visit” with the Corinthians (2 Cor. 13:2) refers to his “proxy” visit in spirit recorded in 1 Corinthians 5:1–5 (238). It seems to me more plausible to suggest that Paul made an actual (physical) visit to Corinth in between 1 and 2 Corinthians, even if this encounter was not recorded in the Book of Acts, and he intended to do so again.

It is also questionable whether 1:17–24 is the appropriate *partitio* or *propositio* for the letter instead of 2:14–17; the latter of these passages is maintained by George Kennedy and Ben Witherington. It may be the case that 2:14–17 fits better with 2 Corinthians 3–6, and 1:17–24 functions better as part of the composition’s *narratio*. Admirably Long gives his reasons for rejecting 2:14–17 as the thesis and posits a variety of words and themes to connect the dots between 1:17–24 and 2:1–7:1 (157–62). But in the end, major themes in these chapters, such as the Mosaic Law/new covenant, suffering in the mortal body, and the nature of the body in relation to death/ resurrection, are not treated with the specificity they deserve and seem to make odd bed fellows with 1:17–24.

Perhaps the problem with the letter’s unity is not so much our finding the perfect *partitio* or *propositio* as it is the realization that Paul may not be the rhetorician he is sometimes made out to be. His arguments are not very clear to us, and sometimes they were not even clear to his ancient readers (i.e., 2 Pet. 3:15–16). No doubt Paul intended to be persuasive, but how do we know he deliberately set out to follow step-by-step all the proper procedures of composing 2 Corinthians as an exemplary piece of forensic rhetoric? Must he be entirely conscious of making sure all aspects of his *propositio* or *partitio* were lucidly unpackaged in the letter? Why is not possible, in an age before the

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invention of “undo” buttons on word processors, that Paul went on some irreparable tangents when writing 2 Corinthians?

In any case Long’s work is a valuable contribution in support of the unity of 2 Corinthians. It is well-researched, succinct, and has many helpful tables.

B. J. Oropeza, Azusa Pacific University

Daniel G. Reid, ed., *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament*. Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 1174 pp., hardcover, \$50.00.

*The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament* (IVPDNT) is an abridgement of the four NT-related dictionaries in InterVarsity Press’ ongoing reference series: *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* and *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. This single-volume work offers the most indispensable articles from the four dictionaries in order to provide beginning students with an encyclopedic resource at an introductory level. The IVPDNT includes articles on every New Testament book, significant events, theological topics, and socio-cultural issues. Though the dictionaries in general are known to represent evangelical theology, a sampling of the list of contributors demonstrates remarkable diversity: David E. Aune (“Apocalypticism”), Richard Bauckham (“Second Letter of Peter”), Bruce Chilton (“Judaism and the NT”), James Dunn (“Letter to the Romans”), Everett Ferguson (“Greco-Roman Religions”), Larry Hurtado (“Christology,” “Lord,” “Son of God”), Larry Kreitzer (“Adam and Christ,” “Eschatology”), Stanley Porter (“Sin”), James M. Scott (“Adoption”), Marianne Meye Thompson (“Gospel of John”), Geoffrey Wainwright (“Baptism,” “Lord’s Supper”), Edwin Yamauchi (“Gnosticism,” “Synagogue”).

Articles range in length from the shortest at just over three pages (e.g. “Servant of Yahweh”) up to nearly twenty pages (e.g. “Christology I”). With a student readership in mind, a glossary of terms is supplied in the index covering words and phrases that are particular to NT studies. Additionally, article bibliographies have been updated to include the most recent resources on each issue and references to foreign works have more or less been eliminated. Some articles which overlap with similar ones in another dictionary have been collated and, at times, condensed.

Having used the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* as a required text for a survey course on Paul, I highly commend InterVarsity Press for its efforts to produce relevant and accessible reference resources for students of the Bible. Some may fault IVPDNT for omitting articles that seem vital. I was a bit surprised that no articles focused specifically on “grace,” “Old Testament in Paul,” or “prayer.” Nevertheless, NT instructors will find IVPDNT valuable for its succinct, informative articles on the crucial themes and issues of the New Testament from a number of excellent scholars.

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham University, Durham UK

Matthew C. Williams, *Two Gospels From One: A Comprehensive Text-Critical Analysis of the Synoptic Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006. 256 pp. \$21.99.

For the last forty years the solution to the Synoptic Problem has been a cause of debate. While the Two Document Hypothesis remains the dominant paradigm, in 1964 W. R. Farmer reintroduced the Two Gospel, or Griesbach, Hypothesis as a valid alternative solution of synoptic relationships. In brief, the Two Document Hypothesis proposes that Mark was the first gospel written, and utilized as a source by the authors of Matthew and Luke. Material common to Matthew and Luke reflect an otherwise unknown source known as "Q." A minority of scholars, however, hold to one or the other variations of the "Two Gospel Hypothesis." As developed by Griesbach, this theory states that Matthew is the first written Gospel, which was used by Luke. Mark is a condensation of Matthew and Luke. Another form of the Two Gospel hypothesis was advanced in the 1950's by Austin Farrar. Farrar proposed that Mark was the first Gospel written, followed by Matthew. Later, Luke used both Matthew and Mark. A recent advocate of this position has been M. Goodacre (*The Case Against Q*).

While both the Two Document Hypothesis and the Farrar Hypothesis propose the priority of Mark, the Griesbach Hypothesis does not. Attacking Marcan priority has been utilized by Farmer as a major argument in favor of the Griesbach hypothesis. This approach is also used in a series of essays edited by O. L. Cope and A McNicol in *One Gospel from Two: Mark's Use of Matthew and Luke* (2002). Williams's book, as the title indicates, answers Cope's and McNicol's challenge. In particular Williams focuses upon the stylistic argument; which states that Mark's style is less refined than either Matthew's or Luke's. and that these differences are best explained by Matthew and Luke altering Mark's rough Greek. That Mark's Greek is less refined than Matthew's or Luke's is agreed on all sides. The proponents of Matthean priority, however, hold that this data simply reflects Mark's attempts to abridge Matthew and Luke.

Williams answers the questions on style in a new way. Noting the manner in which copyists improved Mark's text, Williams examines whether Matthew did something similar. In short, does Matthew display the same tendencies as Mark's copyists in improving or smoothing out a text (pp. 23-47)?

This question is answered in three phases. First, a short history of textual history is provided, noting the conclusions of how copyists altered texts either unintentionally or intentionally (pp. 49-64). Second, using textual apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Greek NT, 27 percent of Mark is examined (pp. 65-124). The textual variants are noted and the tendencies are analyzed. Third, the differences between Mark's text and Matthew's are analyzed (pp. 125-202). On the basis of this analysis of the data, conclusions are reached (pp. 203-215). Williams gives decisive evidence that the same tendencies evidenced in copyists' improvements to Mark are also present in Matthew, and that the best conclusion is that Mark is Matthew's source.

Williams provides both detailed analysis and summaries to his discussions of the textual developments of Mark and the relationship between Mark and Matthew. The Greek is translated word for word, and Greek word order is maintained. A reader either lacking Greek, or whose Greek is weak will have trouble following the details. These

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readers are helped by the summaries provided at the end each chapter and the by the conclusion. Williams demonstrates that Marcan priority continues to offer the best solution to the Synoptic Problem, although in a minority of cases, such as Mk 2:26/Mt 12:24 and Mk 6:20//Mt 14:9, Matthew's reading appears to reflect a more original gospel tradition. These phenomena may be explained either by the continuing influence of oral tradition, the loss of original Marcan readings or Mark/Q overlaps (pp. 208-14).

Williams's book provides stimulating reading for those interested in the Synoptic Problem. For most, however, the arguments will be tedious. The book is a useful reference for those who wish to discuss or write on the intricacies of synoptic relationships but will be of less use to those engaged in a pastoral ministry where such questions seldom arise. For these individuals, accessing the book through a local library and reading the summaries would be adequate.

Russell Morton

Anthony G. Thiselton. *I Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006. 325 pp., cloth, \$30.00.

The author has written a much longer commentary on I Corinthians published in 2000. Because of its length he was urged to consider a shorter commentary. However, this new commentary (one sixth of the larger work in length) is not a condensation of the larger. Thiselton's lifetime of research on I Corinthians allowed him to relook at First Corinthians, concentrating on the texts applying to pastoral and practical issues of the day. In this reviewers' opinion, the author has succeeded. This is a 'must' commentary for use in the pastorate.

Of great value is the introductory material, which reconstructs life in Corinth during the time of Paul. The information provided sheds much light on the Corinthian ethos. Thiselton includes with each exegetical study a very helpful section entitled 'Suggestions for Possible Reflection.' In many ways this might be the most helpful portion of this commentary for Bible teachers. The questions posed are relevant to the text and to contemporary life.

Another helpful feature of the commentary is the inclusion of the Corinthian text in a section-by-section basis throughout the commentary. It is certainly handy for the pastor who does not want to handle two books at the same time.

Cliff Stewart

A. K. M. Adam, Stephen Fowl, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Francis Watson. *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 160 pp., paper, \$17.99.

The authors of this volume are leading voices in the theological interpretation of scripture, an approach that, among other things, seeks to close the divide between the

work of biblical scholars and theologians. Each contributes an essay elaborating his approach and, in a second section, responds to the essays of the other three. Adam asserts that Protestant interpretation has been constrained by a grammatical approach fixated on deciphering words and texts in an attempt to get the right meaning. Instead, he argues that biblical theology is a “signifying practice” open to all in the Church and focused instead on clues for performance as Christians seek to imitate Christ. Drawing on Thomas Aquinas, Stephen Fowl asserts that the literal sense of scripture – the stable foundation for interpretation – is not singular but multi-vocal, though bound by the rule of faith and theological concerns. Kevin Vanhoozer views the biblical text as the medium for the divine author’s intent and seeks the single, though complex literal sense that both records and solicits participation in the theodrama of life with God. Francis Watson, via a study of the four gospels, reminds readers that Christ is mediated through the scriptures, which exhibit both a oneness and an irreducible plurality.

The strength of this volume is the space that it creates for dialogue on key issues pertaining to the interpretation of the Bible within the Church. The reader who comes to the book unfamiliar with the discussion will, however, find that he or she has entered the conversation mid-stream. The aim of the authors is not so much to present a summary of their approaches as it is to place them into meaningful dialogue with each other. Novice readers may therefore benefit by viewing these essays as invitations to explore the more developed presentations that each contributor has developed elsewhere. More seasoned readers will appreciate the way that the essays clarify both the commonalities and the differences of each approach.

L. Daniel Hawk

Kester Brewin. *Signs of Emergence*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007. 224 pp., paper, \$14.99.

The subtitle of this book is ‘A Vision For Church That Is Organic/Networked/Decentralized/Bottom-Up/Communal/Flexible/Always Evolving.’ So ‘what is a mainline denominational pastor reading this book for?’ is a question that I am asking! Despite the irony of a devoted member of a non-emerging church reading a book about the emerging church I find this book quite interesting and practical. Brewin has a readable style to his writing. He is persuasive in his urging that the emerging church will come not from the top down but from the bottom up! The author has a refreshing and renewing vision of how life in the church will literally grow from the dirt of existence. Brewin’s entire chapter on the subject of dirt is both provocative and stimulating. After completing the book I find myself hoping that this first book by the author will not be his last. A creative aspect of the book is poems found in most of the chapters. Be sure to follow the references to [www.vaux.com](http://www.vaux.com) for more creative liturgy, which ‘emerges’ from Brewin’s church organization.

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## Book Reviews

Linda Day and Carolyn Pressler, eds., *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006. Pp. 260, paper, \$29.95.

*Engaging the Bible* serves two purposes: to honor feminist Old Testament scholar Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, and to introduce unfamiliar readers to a broad selection of forms of feminist biblical interpretation. Sakenfeld, author of now-classic feminist volumes like *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today*, as well as gifted teacher and William Albright Eisenberger Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis and Director of Ph.D. Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, has influenced many of the contributors to this volume. Her unique talents at both scholarship and teaching provide for the dual format of this book. Similarly, Sakenfeld's focus on the Old Testament inspires *Engaging* to focus primarily on the Old Testament.

Contributors include Phyllis A. Bird, Nancy R. Bowen, L. Juliana Claassens, Linda Day, F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, Freda A. Gardner, Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Nyasha Junior, Jacqueline Lapsley, Eunny P. Lee, Patrick D. Miller, Christie Cozad Neuger, Kathleen M. O'Connor, Dennis T. Olson, Carolyn Pressler, J. J. M. Roberts, Kathryn L. Roberts, Anna May Say Pa, C. L. Seow, Beth LaNeel Tanner, and Sarah Zhang. Represented forms of feminist biblical interpretation include: mainstream feminist, from a mainly Caucasian, upper class American perspective; *mujerista*, a form of feminism centering on the unique experience of the American Latina community; "womanist," originating from African American women in response to mainstream feminism's lack of attention towards racial, class, and other types of oppression; Asian feminist, expressing the unique position of many Asian women in present-day patriarchal societies very similar to those represented in the Old Testament; masculist, a post-feminist form of interpretation incorporating issues of equality and gender-neutral language while engaging the text from a male perspective.

The broadness of perspective contained within *Engaging the Bible* does as much justice to the ever-expanding and evolving discipline of feminist biblical interpretation as is possible in 260 pages. Though the text does not seek to provide it, a rough history of the discipline can be easily discerned as some essays discuss very early feminism from over three decades ago, with others then reacting to those views, and still others reacting to those reactions. In addition, while academic study and feminist biblical interpretation have been the victims of much misplaced criticism in many Evangelical circles, each contributor's dedication both to Scripture and to its central teachings of justice and love inspire the reader's confidence in both the feminist hermeneutic and in scholarship as a whole. These features add to the compilation's value as a textbook.

Unfortunately, a side effect of the broad scope of the essays is that there is no central theme, except each authors' indebtedness to Sakenfeld. And the heavy emphasis on Old Testament Scripture--most likely a result of each contributor's being influenced by Sakenfeld--gives *Engaging* an incomplete or unbalanced feel. However, this is a small qualm with what is ultimately an interesting and comprehensive introduction to one of the most controversial and exciting disciplines in biblical scholarship today.

I would recommend *Engaging the Bible* as an introductory textbook on feminist biblical interpretation, or to anyone who would like to learn more about the discipline.

Benjamin Gemmel

Thomas N. Finger. *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: Biblical, Historical, Constructive*. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2004. 603 pages, hardback, \$35.00.

Systematic theologies do not abound in the Anabaptist tradition. Partly this is due to the original character of Anabaptism. It was a “folk movement” with few trained leaders, and those who were educated were soon lost to the movement through martyrdom. When it engaged theology, it was the practical instruction of Scripture rather than the creedal arrangement of doctrines that dominated the process. Thus, Finger sees his task as taking the implicit theology of Anabaptism and making it intentionally explicit (chapter 1). He believes Anabaptist theology has significant contributions to make to evangelical and ecumenical Christianity. He is also willing to engage historic and contemporary expressions of Christian theology interact with Anabaptist theology as a true partner in dialogue.

Part I of the book sets forth his methodology. Scripture is his primary source, aided by Anabaptist historical perspectives. He then engages contemporary Anabaptist theologians like C. Norman Kraus, John Howard Yoder, Gordon Kaufman, Duane Freisen, James McClendon, Nancy Murphy, and J. Denny Weaver. His agreements and disagreements with Anabaptist writers is one of the values of the book. He then interacts with other Christian traditions and perspectives: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Evangelical and contemporary theologians of many perspectives. Each chapter concludes with his own position clearly articulated as a legitimate Anabaptist theology for the present.

Part II is devoted to what he believes is the central conviction of historic Anabaptism: the new creation begun by Jesus Christ, carried on by the Holy Spirit, and drawn to eschatological completeness in God’s consummation of human history. He looks at new creation through three dimensions: the personal, the communal, and the missional. He is asking what salvation means for the individual, how this new reality is manifest in the church, and what these themes suggest regarding the Christian’s responsibility to the world. It is quite fitting that his Anabaptist theology devotes nearly one hundred pages to the doctrine of the church, not as an institution, but as an embodiment of the Kingdom values and teachings of Christ.

In Part III he explains what he believes was the convictional framework behind Anabaptism, even though it was not always expressed articulately or consistently, there being marked differences between various Anabaptist spokespersons. He therefore devotes three chapters to Christology, Anthropology, and Eschatology. The chapter on Jesus is the longest of the book, indicative, I believe, that Finger believes that the doctrine of Christ is most crucial for Anabaptists and all Christians. In keeping with the Anabaptist focus upon Jesus and the Gospels, he prefers the “Christus Victor” reading of

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atonement, though he believes some of the themes from the “substitutionary” and “moral influence” theories are compatible with the “Christus Victor” model.

He opts for Alexandrian Christology over Antiochene Christology, even though he admits that there are problems with the former and attractive Anabaptist parallels in the latter. Finger also defends the work of the early councils at Nicea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon as best representing the early church’s understanding of Christ. Consequently, he critiques fellow Anabaptists C. Norman Kraus, James McClendon, J. Denny Weaver, Gordon Kaufman, and John Howard Yoder at length in this chapter. He also is critical of James Dunn’s interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11 which rejects implications of Christ’s preincarnate deity and links it only to his resurrection. He believes it is most natural on both biblical and theological grounds to see Christ’s work in new creation in light of his preincarnate deity.

The book reflects extensive scholarship, not just in Anabaptist writings, but also in the areas of patristics, Reformation history and thought, and contemporary Christian doctrine as expressed in Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, mainline Protestantism, Evangelicalism, and post-modernist theology. His interaction with other theologians and theological traditions is generally genial and fair. He becomes more confrontational when issues of Scripture, Christology, the Trinity, atonement, and eschatology are the issue under discussion. At these points we encounter the real Thomas Finger and probably have the most to gain by hearing his theology.

For the present, Finger’s book is a good place for one to encounter the Anabaptist theological perspective. He is not as well known as John Howard Yoder was, but his contribution is more comprehensive than Yoder’s was. It will be some time before another Anabaptist theology can cover the issues as well as Finger does. Meanwhile, one hopes that his theology will be rewarded with a wide readership.

Luke L. Keefer, Jr.

Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine, A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2005. Pp. 488 , paper, \$39.95.

Kevin Vanhoozer continues his service to the academy and church in this volume that its author affectionately refers to as the “Great Pumpkin” due to its bright orange cover. This “Great Pumpkin” is a thorough, careful, and metaphor-driven explication of Vanhoozer’s trinitarian and canonical theology of scripture.

A major focus throughout the book is the way Vanhoozer’s thesis grounds the authority of the text in the canon itself in respectful distinction to Lindbeck’s work which finds the authority of Scripture on the its pattern of use by the Christian community. For Lindbeck, writes Vanhoozer, “the authoritative source of Christian doctrine is not the story in and of itself *but the story as read, or rather ‘practiced,’ in the Christian community*. Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic model betrays a structural instability of sorts



just at this point, unsure of whether it is accountable to the story or to the practice that allegedly embodies and enacts it" [emphasis original].

The story that is the illocutionary manifestation of what God does in saying is of paramount concern in Vanhoozer's canonical linguistics. The story, the drama of doctrine, is indispensable to both the understanding (*scientia*) and wisdom (*sapientia*) that is necessary for both propositional truth and the embodiment of the Gospel by the Church.

The idea of canonical doctrine as "theo-drama" isn't just an occasional word choice in Vanhoozer's book. For this volume, it is the driving metaphor that intentionally organizes, informs and enables the book to serve as a robust model for a theological hermeneutical paradigm in the academy and as an invigorating reintroduction of Scripture's unique authority in both church belief and practice. It seems in reading this volume that not one page of the divine theo-drama is left unturned or unexplored. The language, history and function of the playwright, script, actor, dramaturge, prompter, director, improvisation, performance, cast, audience, theatre, and even stage fights and props are all woven into Vanhoozer's often eloquent soliloquy celebrating what God has done in Christ Jesus. The only time the elaborate metaphor seems to get in the way or become a bit tiresome is when one doesn't need it anymore to get the point. The canonical linguistic approach in this work is a profoundly satisfying explanation of what Christians mean when we say that scripture is the word of God.

Vanhoozer's work has been reviewed by many fine scholars as an intra-academic conversation that recognizes keenly how Vanhoozer is building upon and, in refining and course-correcting the work of Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar. I would like to commend the Great Pumpkin for use in the classroom. I have used this book for an introductory class in hermeneutics for conservative evangelical students in the Master of Ministry program and I have taught Vanhoozer's canonical linguistic ideas to undergraduates in an upper division New Testament hermeneutics class every semester where I teach. These students who are usually very practiced at and comfortable with decontextualized propositional truth statements, cut-and-paste proof-texting, and would passionately defend "biblical inerrancy" (no matter what that might mean), have found in Vanhoozer's theo-dramatic theology a way to understand how to approach the "Holy Bible" as truly *holy* for the first time in their lives. God has spoken and God is still speaking what he has spoken. The "speech-act" of God in Christ and by the Spirit *was and is the story* alive, transformative, powerful then, still and forever.

In class, I parallel this idea by my own metaphor that reflects my "first life" in medicine. Understanding the theo-drama of canonical linguistics is like knowing the difference between an autopsy and surgery. In an autopsy the pathologist can get at the "truth" of a dead thing and it matters little exactly how you take "it" apart and put it all back together. In surgery, the surgeon carefully uncovers the "innards" of a person who still breathes and has a name, a family, a story. And it very much matters how you put it all back together. Much biblical study, research, hermeneutics and theology is the practice of pathologists not surgeons—and this is true whether the practitioner is a liberal dismissing a claim or a literalist proving a point.

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This volume could easily be relegated to the rarified air of the academic community and its conversation, but throughout the work, Vanhoozer reminds the reader that the theater for God's theo-dramatic presence, rehearsal and performance is the Church. In the preface Vanhoozer mentions that these ideas were first developed for people in his congregation. He closes the book with this compelling reminder, "Doctrine provides direction for what is ultimately a pastoral project, namely, that of helping congregations to create cruciform shapes of community life that can be practicably led in particular contexts...In soliciting the church's participation in the theo-drama, the pastor translates and extends canonical practices into congregational practices...the local church will become masterpiece theater only to the extent that its focus is on living out the drama of redemption and on rehearsing the kingdom of God that is its *raison d'être*".

Robbie F. Castleman, John Brown University

Chung, Sung Wook, ed. *Karl Barth and Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. 302 pp., paper, \$27.99.

A book that is a collection of essays or talks by a wide variety of theologians is often difficult to assess because the perspective of the theologians is different and because the original audiences, if the work was not done specifically for this book, may be different. This book gathers essays by a wide variety of evangelical theologians, some of whom are critical of Barth's contribution in the specific doctrine they work with, and some of whom are positive about Barth's contribution.

Gabriel Fackre's essay on Revelation seems to have been done some time before this work. It has only two recent bibliographic references, and those are from the 1990s. He examines primarily the Dogmatics (CD) IV.3/1 and I/1. He gives passing references to theologians like Rahner that can be confusing if you don't know the theologian. In his summaries he provides a vast mound of ideas and quotations, but he does not seem to discuss the strength of Barth's view of Scripture, the extensive exegesis within the Church Dogmatics that support his doctrinal positions.

Kevin Vanhoozer's work on the earlier evangelical criticisms by evangelical leaders and Barth's true positions is one of the longest articles. But some of the questions seem to share the older, conservative view of Barth's position. Are there really similarities between Van Til and Barth? Was Barth's position really that the Bible becomes the Word of God? And does what Vanhoozer calls "speech-act philosophy" really explain the differences between Barth and some evangelicals? What Vanhoozer recognizes that is different from Fackre is the importance of Barth's actual use of scripture in the Church Dogmatics.

Chung's own article is more hostile toward Barth, "evangelical theology should take issue at many points with Barth's theology." It is particularly Barth's idea of God in terms of substance, not acts, that Chung takes issue with. The question might be, don't we need to think about the implications of being tied to the traditional metaphor of substance as a mistake of the early church with its over-dependence upon Platonic