

The day of the unstructured Festschrift, with essays on subjects chosen more or less at random by the several authors, seems to be waning. However, in the case of this book, heterogeneity offers a means of showing the nature of Myers' influence. The wide variety of topics selected and the diverse backgrounds of the contributors fittingly reflect the breadth of viewpoint, the multiple gifts, and the manifold accomplishments of Myers himself.

A word about the occasion of the Festschrift: The editors did not plan to mark a special birthday anniversary or to give particular recognition to the fact that in 1972 Myers completed thirty years as professor of Hebrew and Old Testament literature and theology at the seminary. They simply felt that the fullness of time had come, when the harvest of years of productive toil, unattended by fanfare, deserved some fitting recognition. Thanks to the efforts of those whose articles make up the volume, and those who have supported it financially, the honor has taken form in a contribution to biblical scholarship, which is exactly what Professor Myers himself would want the most.

Nearly all the papers in this volume were written in 1970. This means that some time has passed between the time of their composition and their publication, a fact that the reader should keep in mind.

It should be noted and acknowledged that a former student of Professor Myers has presented an anonymous gift to make possible the publication of this Festschrift.

The Editors

Ralph D. Heim
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Jacob Martin Myers

Every productive scholar creates his own autobiography, for he records his life and thought inevitably in his formal publications, and less tangibly, but just as importantly, he leaves his mark upon the minds and lives of his students, friends, and fellow scholars. We have chronicled below the major facts and achievements in Professor Myers' life—what he did, and when—yet these offer but the skeletal outline. To understand who he really is, how he thinks, and what he believes, one must go on to read his books and articles, and talk with those who know him personally.

Jacob M. Myers is the West Pennsylvania Synod professor of Hebrew and Old Testament language, literature, and theology in the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (LCA), a position he has held with great distinction since 1942. Prior to that appointment, he served the seminary, first as a lecturer in New Testament studies (1937–40) and then as instructor in the Old Testament department (1940–42). Thus his service to the seminary spans a period of more than three decades. Myers has also been a visiting professor at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, the Washington Theological Consortium, and the Gettysburg-Lancaster postgraduate program at York College. This briefly sets forth one facet of his life: his career in teaching.

The son of Harvey A. and Annie (nee Seiffert) Myers, Jacob Myers was born October 25, 1904, on a Pennsylvania farm in West Manchester township. Myers likes to refer to himself as a "York County Dutchman," and still dreams occasionally of buying "a little farm on which to retire." In any case, he has constantly manifested virtues highly prized in rural America: industry, simplicity of habit, friendliness, and helpfulness.

In 1926, he married Mary Helen Kimmel; they have one daughter, Helen Elizabeth Bream, and three grandchildren. No small part of their life has been invested in this growing family.

Myers prepared for college at the York County Academy, graduating in 1923. Gettysburg College awarded him the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1927 (and a Doctor of Letters in 1967) and he received the Bachelor of Divinity degree from Gettysburg Seminary in 1930. That same year he was ordained a pastor by the West Pennsylvania Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America.

His first public ministry was to Grace Lutheran Church and St. Luke Lutheran Church, which formed a multiple parish near Gettysburg. Inasmuch as this ministry did not end until 1950, it may be said that he has been pastor and teacher simultaneously for two decades—a fact which helps to explain why his scholarly work has never lost touch with the grassroots religious issues of life. Even today, he can sometimes be heard wishing for “a little—just a little—country parish again.” He still preaches regularly and over a wide area as a guest pastor, and frequently addresses church groups large and small, relishing this kind of direct contact with the man in the pew.

But that he is most at home in the study is clear not only from his writings but also from the fact that over the years he has built up a magnificent personal library of several thousand volumes, many rare and precious. They are his hobby as well as his professional tools for research.

Myers' pastoral and early teaching responsibilities were always accompanied by advanced study, first at Gettysburg Seminary (STM in 1931), then at Temple University in Philadelphia (STD in 1937), and finally at Johns Hopkins University (PhD in Semitics, 1946). It was at Johns Hopkins that he came under the profound influence of Professor W. F. Albright, the man who, as Myers has frequently and gratefully acknowledged, continued to affect his scholarship most influentially over the years.

Throughout his career, Myers has been a steadily productive scholar, writing with equal skill and clarity technical works for the specialist as well as more popular books and articles for the general reader. As his bibliography shows, his latter years have brought forth more books than articles. Most of his articles, in fact, were written before he received his degree from Johns Hopkins. Recently, he has completed the manuscripts for two more volumes in *The Anchor Bible, I and II Esdras*, and is currently preparing a lengthy article on Ezra and Nehemiah for *Encyclopedia Biblica*.

Myers is a member of several professional and scholarly societies: the American Oriental Society, the American Academy of Religion, the Archaeological Institute of America, and the Society of Biblical Literature. He

also belongs to the British Society for Old Testament Study, and has an honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa.

Fortunately, research and writing have not detracted from Myers' commitment to his students. He has always felt a love for education, and, through his classes as well as personal counseling, many a future pastor has been intellectually and spiritually enriched. Myers has also been alert to discover and encourage the student who has that extra something necessary for advanced study, and to such he has given his time and attention unstintingly. As a result, he has had the personal satisfaction of seeing protégés go on to become teachers and scholars who are a credit to their mentor.

While over the years he has enjoyed the difficult task of introducing students to the history, literature, and religion of the Old Testament, Myers has always found special delight in courses which deal directly with Hebrew. Here he is in his element. He has more than once said to a colleague that he comes from those class sessions “like a bridegroom leaving his chamber.” Those who know him well understand that he goes to his study early each morning with that same zeal.