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PHILIPPIANS. By Peter Oakes. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xv + 231. Cloth, \$100.95.

In this engaging and persuasive study Oakes models a method for investigating the social make-up of early Christian communities by focusing his attention on the early Pauline community at Philippi. Drawing on archaeological and literary evidence, he sheds light on the diverse range of people within the community while showing that Paul's letter to the Philippians is a call for unity in the face of economic suffering.

Following a very brief summary of past archaeological scholarship and a geographic overview of Philippi, Oakes investigates the process of societal development in the area of Philippi. His model (aided by diagrams) shows how the city developed over three processes: "initial occupation of land by the colonists; spread of colonial land to distant parts of the territory; concentration of land ownership" (p. 34). Land became concentrated in the hands of the rich, causing the majority of the population to move to the city, where power and benefaction by the elite predominated. The overall pattern of development "means that the *majority* of the population of the town were probably not Romans and not citizens" (p. 54, my emphasis) and were certainly not veterans (he suggests a proportion of 36% Romans to 64% Greeks [p. 76]).

Using these data, chapter 2 attempts to uncover a sense of who were the likely groups in the Philippian church and their likely proportions. Oakes concludes that the church does not reflect the same proportion of Romans to Greeks insofar as the Romans, who tended to be the elites, were unlikely to have been widely involved. Rather, the church was dominated numerically by Greeks, who worked in "service industries" (e.g., craft-workers, shopkeepers, slaves) and farmers who lived in the city while farming rented land in the area. Such people were economically dependent upon the Roman elite.

Chapter 3 takes up the themes of suffering and unity in Paul's letter. Oakes suggests that the Philippians are experiencing real suffering, based

largely on his reading of 1:27–30, and that the nature of this suffering is economic. Many of their normal social, and thus economic, activities would be curtailed through their commitment to Christ. Although the form of economic suffering for each sub-group varies—withdrawal of facilities by fellow crafts-people, withdrawal of custom, cancellation of tenancy, foreclosure of debt, breaking of patron-client relationships, etc.—the overall effect was likely to be the experience of financial hardship after joining the local Christian community. Such suffering, Oakes suggests, caused tension and ruptures in the unity of the church.

The final three chapters focus on how Paul addresses the issue of unity through a three-fold parallel drawn between Christ's suffering, Paul's suffering, and the Philippians' suffering. Chapter 4 focuses on Paul as a model for the suffering Philippians—his own life constitutes an "authoritative example" (p. 127) for the Philippians to imitate. Chapter 5 shows that Paul compares Christ to the Emperor in the imagery of the hymn of Philippians 2:9–11. Here Oakes draws widely on numismatic evidence to show that the titles and authority granted to Christ challenge those claimed by the Emperor (although here Oakes' conclusions seem most tentative; see p. 170). Chapter 6 looks at how Paul presents Christ as a model of self-abasement and obedient acceptance of suffering. Christ's Lordship, however, can also be claimed by the suffering Philippians as a basis for confidence, and thus unity.

Books such as this always leave room for quibbling over exegetical details, and some questions remain unanswered. For example, Oakes never addresses the issue of *how* the disparate group of people came to form the Philippian church in the first place (cf. pp. 181–82). Neither does he describe how Paul functioned as an itinerant preacher when he came to town, although he assumes the basic veracity of Acts (cf. p. 89). Prudent editing of the "dissertation"-like writing style would have helped the argument flow. Nevertheless, these are not key details, and the real strength of the volume is methodological. Oakes's conclusions are grounded not only in his exegesis but also in his research into the

social make-up of the Philippian urban center in which the church existed. His progression from modeling first the development of the town, then the social structure of the town, and only then the social structure of the church allows for greater certainty about the actual Christians at Philippi than other, more speculative, reconstructions. One hopes that in future a similar approach will be taken for other locales in which there were Pauline Christian communities.

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RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD: A SURVEY OF RECENT SCHOLARSHIP. Edited by Dan Cohn-Sherbok & John M. Court. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001. Pp. 237. Paper, \$39.95.

Although this collection of essays is several years old, it warrants review in this journal because of its interest in social-scientific issues. As the subtitle suggests, the goal of the essays is to describe the state of the field in various areas of the history of religion in the ancient world. The essays are of an inconsistent quality, and inconsistently edited, but mostly of a high quality and interesting.

Philip F. Esler opens the collection by making some fine social scientific observations on Palestinian Judaism. First he challenges the terms *Jew* and *Judaism* as translations of *Ioudaios/Ioudaismos*, arguing instead that the root represents a geographical and ethnic designation, and is better represented as Judean/Judeanism. He then points out three important aspects of first-century Palestine: it was an "advanced agrarian" society, characterized by the production of agricultural surpluses; this surplus led to a social schism between elite and non-elite interests, based on wealth and land-ownership; the institution of religion was not a stand-alone phenomenon, as it is in the modern world, but was embedded within other social institutions, namely kinship and politics. These three features are the foundation of

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Esler's distinction between political religion and domestic religion, and between the "great tradition" (elite interests) and the "little tradition" (non-elite interests). For Esler, the Temple and its cult, the Sadducees, High Priests, Pharisees, and Herodians are all examples of elite political religion, while synagogues, banditry, prophets and messiahs, and open revolt offer examples of non-elite domestic (and millenarian) religion. This is an excellent paper.

Also excellent is John M. G. Barclay's treatment of Diaspora Judaism. The term *Diaspora Judaism* is preferable to *Hellenistic Judaism* because it represents the variety of places Jews lived that were *not* Palestine (focusing on the geographical element), and at the same time recognizes that living in an often (though not exclusively) hostile environment, with the challenges of acculturation or isolation, gave Diaspora Jews a different experience of their religion from that of Palestinian Jews.

In the final of these three essays on Jewish topics, Charlotte Hempel simply surveys the arguments concerning the inhabitants of Qumran—whether or not they were Essenes—and the way the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls affected that debate.

In the first of three essays on Christianity, Donald A. Hagner discusses the recent proliferation of Historical Jesus studies, suggesting that what characterizes such studies—both old and new—is not that they seek a truer Jesus but simply a non-traditional one. For Hagner, only portraits of Jesus that are canonical are free of this characteristic. In line with this, Hagner takes tired pot-shots at the Jesus Seminar and at individual works produced by its members, and champions the work of Meier, Evans, and Wright, not because of their superior methodological insights, but because they are "the least upsetting to an orthodox understanding of Jesus" (p. 99). It is not clear how this essay belongs in this collection.

James D.G. Dunn shows how the Apostle Paul introduced a level of diversity into Second Temple Judaism that stretched it past the breaking point; at the same time he shows the great diversity in Paul's thoughts on such topics as his Christology, his ideas of salvation and church, and his principle of *praxis*. These show Paul not

contradicting himself, since there are common elements in his diversity, but rather "ransacking the language and imagery of his day" (p. 120) in order to adequately express his sense of the mystery behind these ideas. Finally, Thomas O'Loughlin shows how recent material discoveries (manuscripts, archaeology) and methodological advances (social scientific criticism, post-modernism) have forced scholars to recognize a far greater degree of diversity and complexity in the early church than is reflected in the scholarly work of the nineteenth century.

Graham Anderson shows that where scholars have often argued for diversity there is in fact uniformity in the practice of Greek religion. That is, scholars have tended to draw stark distinctions between elite and non-elite, intellectual and popular, and urban and rural religious expression, but Anderson shows that there is more uniformity than diversity. Robert McLean Wilson treats Gnosticism, referring to the various debates concerning its relationship to earliest Christianity. Wilson shows that much more work must be done before we can fully understand this relationship. And finally, John M. Court looks at the mystery religions, focusing on Mithraism and its relationship to Christian Origins. Court outlines the pitfalls of drawing parallels between the mystery religions and earliest Christianity too quickly, but also of rejecting them too easily. In the end, we know too little about them to draw strong conclusions.

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CHRISTIAN IDENTITY IN THE JEWISH AND GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD. By Judith M. Lieu. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Judith Lieu investigates the emergence of Christian identity in literature of the first century and a half (up to Polycarp), attempting to compare processes of identity formation in relation to Jews and others in the Greco-Roman world. Although the central argument remains somewhat ambiguous, one of Lieu's key points regards the multiform nature of identity formation; also, while Christians shared much in common with

their Jewish and Greco-Roman neighbors, there were also distinctive aspects at work in the case of the former. While the work is not ground-breaking, it does provide a valuable overview of identity formation in antiquity in a manner informed by the social sciences.

Lieu organizes the work around key issues and in each chapter begins by briefly looking at the Greco-Roman world before turning to Jewish and Christian literature. After surveying the role of texts in the construction of identity (ch. 2), Lieu goes on to look at the ways in which the stories of Jewish scripture were remembered and retold (ch. 3). She concludes that "the same history can be used differently by different claimants, while different histories may be reconciled with each other in a single text or author" (p. 97). Lieu then explores the role that boundaries played in the formation of identity, particularly focusing on Jewish notions of qualified separation which were taken on and reformulated by authors such as Paul and Ignatius of Antioch (ch. 4).

Drawing on insights from P. Bourdieu, Lieu discusses identity in terms of "embodied history" as manifested in the interplay between practice (action) and belief (thought) (ch. 5). It is in this chapter that some problematic idealizing or theological aspects of Lieu's approach stand out, particularly in the discussion of the Christian ideal of mutual support in connection with *agapē* and the supposedly distinctive fictive family idea (esp. pp. 164–69). Moreover, it is precisely these notions of mutual support that Lieu considers distinctive as "an inalienable element in the shared symbols that shaped early Christian identity" (p. 169). Strongly implied, but not properly investigated, is a claim that similar modes of identity formation were *not* characteristic of others (beyond Jews) in the Greco-Roman world.

Stronger and more balanced is Lieu's discussion of the role of gender and the body (ch. 6) and notions of place (ch. 7) in identity formation. In the former, she discusses how gender expectations (especially the active male and the passive female) were commonly shared among Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians. Nonetheless, she argues that there was an "earlier tradition," reflected in some Jewish and Christian literature, which "presents a distinctive view of the body as the site of personal and social integrity and

identity” (p. 190). In discussing “place,” Lieu delves into Christian uses of “sojourning” (*paroi-kh̄ia*) and begins to suggest that in Christianity we find the emergence of a universality which contrasts to primarily localized notions of identity.

In the “Christian Race” (chapter 8), Lieu considers the interplay between labelling (by others) and self-designation. She deals with the notion of Christians as a “race” (*genos*), which she believes originated as a denigrating epithet (as with the name “Christian”), only to be adopted and redefined by authors such as Aristides, Tertullian, and *The Letter to Diognetus*. This provides a firm basis for placing early Christian identity formation within the framework of ancient ethnographies and notions of the “other” (ch. 9). In this interesting chapter, Lieu further explores the dynamics of identity in terms of the “mutual interaction” of the sense of the self and definition of the “other.” She shows how similar ethnographic traditions were at work in Roman perspectives on foreign peoples (e.g., Tacitus on the Germans and on the Judeans) and in Jewish definitions of the “nations/gentiles,” and how similar dynamics play themselves out within Christian literature. Lieu concludes the book (ch. 10) with a modern theological discussion concerning the implications for Christian identity today, which seems somewhat out of place in light of the historical approach taken in much of the work.

There are many useful insights in this book, which provides a thematic overview of identity formation as it relates to a variety of early Christian writings, from Paul and 1 Peter to the apologists and martyrdom accounts of the second century. Yet this attempt to cover so much ground, along with a simultaneous claim of placing Christians within the Jewish and Greco-Roman framework, can also be viewed as a weakness of the work. Somewhat rapid wanderings from one writing to another and back over the stretch of the various themes (rather than a thorough investigation of specific authors) often results in overly brief comments on the literature, considerable repetition, and lack of clarity in argument. This also detracts from the goal of placing the discussion into a broader, Greco-Roman framework. Related is the question of audience, for if this book is intended for scholars, then much of the ma-

terial might come across as common knowledge and the theological applications or idealizations might seem out of place. If, on the other hand, a modern educated audience of Christians is intended, then the rapid touch-downs in various writings and the vocabulary used to discuss these writings might leave some readers mystified. Nonetheless, this book and the topics it raises deserve considerable attention, and the author’s incorporation of insights from the social sciences is commendable.

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MARTYRDOM AND MEMORY: EARLY CHRISTIAN CULTURE MAKING. By Elizabeth A. Castelli. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004. Pp. xvii + 335. Cloth, \$40.00.

In a global context of growing interest in the intersection of religion and violence, Elizabeth Castelli’s new book examines the origins of Christianity’s own understanding of martyrdom and reveals the ideological work that martyrdom does in Christian memory and its role in the creation of Christian identity. Castelli succeeds brilliantly in her aim to reveal the way martyrdom constructed a new ideology of Christian suffering that inverted and subverted Roman notions of civic duty, honor, and justice. Furthermore, she demonstrates clearly that this ideology continues to be enlisted (often ironically) in contemporary America to buttress evangelical claims to be the persecuted minority and to justify waging war on others.

Castelli opens (Introduction and Chapter One) by introducing us to recent work on collective memory—its formation, its social and cultural functions, and its role in “meaning-making,” especially with respect to how people identify with the memories of past martyrs. Drawing extensively on the work of Maurice Halbwachs, she writes that “memory is a social construction, the product of the individual’s interaction with his or her group” (p. 11). Through the process of being retold, preserved, and ritualized, collective memories provide “the conceptual and cognitive constraints that render past experience meaningful in and for present contexts” (p. 12). In the end, the “reality” of the events described in mar-

tyologies is less important than the *constructed memory* of what happened. In fact, she demonstrates that the memory of the events themselves is fluid and open to different interpretations and perceptions. Repeated retelling, however, and ritual re-inscription fix the narratives, endowing them with a “truth” that is removed from the event’s historical occurrence.

In Chapter Two, Castelli examines the ideological framing of martyr narratives, demonstrating the multiple strategies deployed to present the events in a cosmic framework and to give them meaning. Here Castelli begins to explore the conflicting worldviews of Roman civil authorities and Christian martyrs, showing how the martyrs’ willing embrace of an ignominious death was perceived by the Christian audience as a heroic victory and demonstration of manly endurance. Conceptions of gender and constructions of social power and prestige were thus manipulated and subverted in Christian narratives of martyrdom.

In Chapter Three, Castelli demonstrates how the concern for memory and for the formation of a usable past concerned at least some of the martyrs themselves, who chose to write their own stories and to some extent shape the narrative that would be told. This conscious “self-writing” of the early martyrs serves as a useful correction of Foucault’s work on this theme among fourth-century monastics.

Chapter Four examines the performative function of martyrdom as one stage on which Romans and Christians battled over fundamental social values. Castelli begins by identifying the ideological function of spectacles in imperial Rome, especially the arena where Roman social hierarchies and power structures were displayed and confirmed. She astutely demonstrates how Christian martyrs, by choosing to die an ignominious death, subverted the Roman justice system and revalorized humiliating death as a vanquishing of Rome’s power and a heroic triumphing over evil. In this way, Christians harnessed the power of the visual for their own propagandistic purposes.

Chapter Five considers the transmission and transformation of the story of an almost-martyr, Thecla. In the earliest account of her story, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Thecla is not actually martyred but miraculously saved, and becomes

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an apostle and itinerant ascetic. Over time, this element of her story is lost, and she is increasingly configured as a highly feminized martyr. This transformation demonstrates both the fluid nature of “memory” and the ability of martyrologies to conform to the social needs of the moment.

In a final interesting and provocative chapter, Castelli discusses the “martyrdom” of Cassie Bernal, a victim of the 1999 Columbine shootings, showing that recent “history” too can be contested, configured, and constructed in the process of “meaning-making” for the collective memory of a group. The Epilogue closes the book on a powerful and compelling note, addressing the events of September 11, 2001 and reflecting on the discourses of violence, power, and martyrdom.

One minor point of constructive critique: Castelli could have been more sensitive to the plurality of early Christianity in the years that she covers. Too often she discusses “Christianity” or “the Christian worldview” without adequately acknowledging that there were at that time competing forms of Christianity, some of which did not accept the sacrificial understanding of Christ’s death preached by Paul and consequently may not have viewed martyrdom as a pious imitation of Christ. For these Christians a different transcript was being followed. Of course, the view that she documents became the dominant one.

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THE WAYS OF OUR GOD: AN APPROACH TO BIBLICAL THEOLOGY. By Charles H. H. Scobie. Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003. Pp. xvii + 1038. Paper, \$45.00.

The massiveness of Scobie’s book—over a thousand pages—is due to its unusually long delay in coming out: though he always wanted to write it, it was not until he had retired in 1998 (Mt. Alison University) that he was able to compose this, his magnum opus on biblical theology (pp. x–xi). Scobie admits that as one trained in the theories and techniques of the world of academic biblical scholarship, he has often felt

its acute tension with the world of the Christian community which he has served. Although biblical studies and dogmatic theology went their separate ways a long time ago, he writes, preachers were still left with the task of explaining every week to their congregations how the readings of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures were connected (pp. ix–x). Hence, there was still the practical (if not, the theoretical) necessity for developing some kind of “biblical theology” uniting the testaments for Scobie and his community.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first, shorter part of the book, Scobie offers a brief, but interesting, “sketch” of the history of biblical interpretation, insisting that a *biblical* biblical theology should have as its subject matter the canonical scriptures of the church; biblical theology is canonical theology (p. 49). It is apparent that Scobie is heavily indebted to the work of Brevard Childs and the interpretive approach of canonical criticism. The author insists that every effort has been made to let the canonical text of the Bible speak for itself (pp. xiii–iv); Scobie’s ultimate success at doing that is evident on almost every page.

Scobie dedicates the rest of the first part of this book to describing his four-fold pattern for binding the two covenants into a comprehensive theology: proclamation/promise (Hebrew Bible); fulfillment/consummation (New Testament) (pp. 91–93). Additionally, he thinks it wise to identify a limited number of central themes around which associated sub-themes can be grouped and discussed. Thus, he suggests dividing the overarching fourfold pattern of the two testaments according to the biblical themes of God’s Order, God’s Servant, God’s People, and God’s Way (cf. pp. 94–99). Each theme is traced through the Hebrew scriptures as a proclamation of what God has done in Israel, while including a correlative promise of what God will do for his people. Then, Scobie follows the matter through its fulfillment in the New Testament to its final consummation in the triumph of God at the end of time. Additionally, he appends a concluding section where he offers his own (usually, fruitful) theological reflections.

The second part of the book (pp. 105–927) is concerned with applying Scobie’s four-fold model for a biblical theology. While by no means

doing full justice to Scobie’s detailed work, it might still be helpful here to look at some characteristic examples.

Under the main theme of “God’s Way” Scobie examines the sub-theme of loving one’s neighbor. After having traced the sub-theme’s development through Proclamation and Promise, he addresses its Fulfillment in the New Testament, organizing his approach according to the schema of individual, family, society, state, and nation. More specifically, under love of neighbor within the context of family, Scobie covers adultery, fornication, prostitution, and homosexuality (see pp. 833–58). He even has the stamina to include a brief section on celibacy (pp. 838–39). In his discussion of the title “son of man,” under the main theme of “God’s Servant” (pp. 335–64), Scobie outlines how the title translates a Hebrew or Aramaic phrase which has various usages throughout the Bible for both human beings and angels (pp. 337–39). While employing all human beings in his plan, God especially brings his message of judgment and salvation through special “sons of men,” like the prophets (p. 339). The allusion to “one like a son of man” in Daniel 7 is presented as part of God’s Promise that he will establish a new order through that personage. Scobie notes correctly that the phrase is used *collectively* in Daniel of all God’s faithful people, and not of a specific individual *per se* (pp. 339–40; cf. p. 122). Nevertheless, somewhere in the title’s history it became connected with one human being in particular, viz., an apocalyptic figure through whom God would establish a new world order. This person would be the ideal human being, like Adam and Eve in their innocence (pp. 343–44; see also pp. 340–41). Of course, for Scobie the Fulfillment of this title is Jesus of Nazareth. He comes as the Second Adam, the ideal human being, who as the Exalted One will usher in a renewed humanity. Though Jesus was an individual, Scobie argues that Jesus also represented what the people of Israel were intended to be, and thus preserved the originally collective nuance of the phrase (pp. 351–52). But, that is not the end for Christian believers: the Consummation of the title will come about when Jesus, the “son of man” of the new covenant, will return personally at the end of time, destroy the forces of evil, and establish

God's reign (p. 359).

Now for the requisite disagreements. I had difficulty accepting Scobie's reasoning for not including the deuterocanonical books as a legitimate part of the canon (pp. 60–65). Especially since those books have been accepted as part of the final and canonical form of Christian scripture by the greatest number of believers, for the longest period of time, his decision seemed inconsistent with his stated emphasis on the role of the community in recognizing which books should be read as scripture (cf. pp. 40–42). Scobie's statement that the Christian church has "never" been able to agree on whether to use the longer or shorter canon of the Hebrew scriptures is highly debatable in my view (p. 61). Further, his position becomes even more paradoxical when he confesses that the Hebrew Bible authors knew and used the deuterocanonals extensively (pp. 63–64; 71–72). But, his explanation that they did not accept the apocrypha as scripture, but only alluded to them insofar as they agreed with their views, is not based on any evidence that Scobie produces. Still, he is an honest scholar, and uses the deuterocanonals whenever they shed light on a point, which is often.

Further, though Scobie argues for an ecumenical approach to biblical theology which is "unblinking" by confessional leanings (pp. 77–79), this is not always the case in his writing. For example, his contention that it is only an *assumption* that the eucharist was a regular part of the early church's worship service, and that there was probably a separate service of prayer and scripture reading as well (p. 601), sounds more like special pleading for his own denomination's liturgical practice than his own reading of the Bible or the writings of the apostolic fathers (like Justin Martyr). Finally, two minor points: I would have appreciated a scripture index, which this book does not have. Also, though an outline of Scobie's biblical theology is presented at the end of the book (pp. 928–48), it is not very enlightening.

I warmly recommend Scobie's work as an extremely useful resource for clergy and lay educators, who should not be scared off by its bulk. It is a tribute to Scobie's intellect and years of study that he is able to acknowledge, rehearse, (re)appraise, and otherwise juggle a great bulk of material on both testaments of scripture, while

also offering his own theological reflections based on years of preaching. Any clergyperson or teacher of religious education will find this book invaluable for its clear management of a wealth of nuanced information on just about any topic imaginable. From holy war (pp. 824–25) to the title "rabbi" (p. 620), from the divinity of Christ (p. 395) to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (pp. 279–80), from the characteristics of Torah (pp. 750–51) to church councils (p. 640), Scobie provides a worthy example of scholarly biblical-theological reflection.

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JESUS' DEATH IN EARLY CHRISTIAN MEMORY: THE POETICS OF THE PASSION. By Ellen Bradshaw Aitken. *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus / Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 53. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Fribourg, Switzerland: Academic Press, 2004. Pp. 202. Cloth, \$51.92.

Aitken, now associate professor of New Testament at McGill University, undertakes an archaeology of the accounts of the passion of Jesus. This, she argues, is urgent for three reasons. First, the relation between, and the origins of, the three independent narrative passion accounts in Mark, John and the *Gospel of Peter* have not been sufficiently clarified, nor has there been adequate exploration of the architecture of the version of the passion story known to Paul. Second, form-critical analysis of the synoptic passion stories has left a confused picture. While it is clear that these stories are at least partly the product of reflection on the Hebrew Bible, it is unclear whether the setting of the earliest passion stories was apologetics, homiletics, or cultic reenactment. Nor is clear the degree to which those stories contain historical remembrances or are the product of scribal invention. Finally and most importantly for Aitken's thesis, the insights of Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and Gregory Nagy on the method of "composition in performance" have never been applied to understanding the passion stories.

Aitken argues that the discourse about Jesus'

death was formed in the context of cultic performance and that in this context, the performance of Jesus' death was shaped by covenantal language, by motifs drawn from the story of the exodus, wilderness experience, and entry into the land, and by language drawn from the cycle of hymns and psalms about the righteous sufferer. Hence, to use a recent schematic for understanding the debate about the passion story, Aitken inclines to the view that it is "prophecy historicized" rather than "history remembered." What distinguishes her work from that of Werner Kelber and Burton Mack, however, is her privileging of pre-scribal, oral performance. But this does not lead her, as it does in the case of other recent advocates of "oral performance," to lapse into an apologetics for the historicity of the passion stories. Indeed, Aitken scarcely touches the question of how much of the accounts of Jesus' death reflect genuine historical memory.

This is because Aitken chooses not to examine the passion accounts of Mark, John or Peter, but instead analyzes four non-narrative texts—1 Corinthians, 1 Peter, *Barnabas*, and Hebrews—which she assumes will afford more direct access to the cultic life of the early Jesus movement and hence a clearer glimpse of the liturgical context in which the passion stories, *ex hypothesi*, were formulated. In a close analysis of these four texts, or parts of them (1 Cor 10–11; 15:3–5; 1 Pet 2:22–25; *Barn.* 5–9; Heb 3:5–6; 5:7–10; 6:4–8; 8:7–13; 10:19–25; 13:10–16), Aitken demonstrates how allusions to Jesus' death have been fused with a range of texts from the Tanak: Exodus 17; 24; 32; Numbers 11; 14; 25; Deuteronomy 32; Isaiah 50; 53; Hosea 6:1–2; Zechariah 9–13; Psalms 22; 32; 34; 39; 114) so that the "performance of the cult legend of Israel with particular interest in the trials in the wilderness and the suffering of Moses, the stories and songs of the suffering righteous, the covenant as the interpretive framework for the practices of identity of the community, and the practice of a cultic meal" came to inform the memorialization of Jesus' death (p. 54). The process began, she conjectures, in the context of the ritual meals of the Jesus groups (p. 171).

JESUS' DEATH IN EARLY CHRISTIAN MEMORY represents an important corrective to scribally-based models for understanding the com-

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position of early Christian traditions, and one hopes that this is the first of a longer series of explorations. There are a variety of other tasks that remain if this approach is to become persuasive. First, although Aitken refers to “composition in performance” in other literatures, mostly epic poetry, she does not explain in detail how the model was thought to work there, and hence it is unclear whether a model developed for Homer is really applicable to the discourse of the early Jesus movement. Second, the presence of liturgical traditions is more assumed than it is argued. This also raises the question, largely unexplored, of how one understands the relationship between the hypothetical liturgical performers and the writers responsible for the literary composition of 1 Corinthians, 1 Peter, *Barnabas*, and Hebrews. Aitken moves rather too quickly from written text, which, whatever else it might be, is *scribal*, to a hypothetical oral stage without much reflection on the dynamics of textualization. There is also a certain irony in the fact that while Aitken’s focus is on the ritual context of the early passion traditions, there is very little discussion of theories of ritual. Despite these few reservations, however, Aitken has struck out in a new and potentially very productive direction. We can look forward to further explorations of composition in performance.

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REFRAMING HER: BIBLICAL WOMEN IN POST-COLONIAL FOCUS. By Judith E. McKinlay. *The Bible in the Modern World*, 1. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004. Pp. 195. \$29.50.

In this volume, McKinlay has nicely woven together eight chapters of new and previously-published material into a coherent whole. Judging by this first title to appear, the new series, *The Bible in the Modern World*, promises to pay attention to how the Bible has been variously used around the world, and how new methods or “postures” of reading and interpretation can offer fresh perspectives on and insights into familiar stories in the Bible.

McKinlay’s perspective is shaped by both

feminist hermeneutics and postcolonial criticism, highlighting the significance of social location not only for the biblical writers and editors, but also for the contemporary interpreter. She writes as a New Zealander, specifically as a *Pākehā*—the label used by the Maori population for those who are not Maori. This is a comparable position to that of the ancient Israelites, whose narrators crafted stories about their own settlement of the land of Canaan, where they emerged as a dominant “other,” while working strenuously to portray the rest of the Canaanite population as the real “Other”—tempting, dangerous, and to be avoided. McKinlay furthermore reflects critically on the missionary history of Christianity in New Zealand where the dominant Christian position has provided the standard interpretation of biblical characters and stories. She writes, then, as a postcolonial critic, but does so from the more unusual perspective of a “settler descendant.” As a member of the dominant culture, she is prepared to encounter “some uncomfortable, disquieting and challenging questions of interpretation and understanding” as she approaches the text (ix), which results in a helpful example of what postcolonial criticism looks like in practice.

McKinlay investigates the meaning of selected biblical stories in which female characters or feminine images appear prominently and asks about how one reads these texts in a postcolonial context: how does the dominant Israelite (colonizer) point of view shape the narrator’s representation of others (colonized)? How are women used as characters within the narratives in support of a “politics of dominance” (x)? How are the women represented in their roles? And for what purpose is the female imagery being used?

In particular, McKinlay is keenly interested in “how the biblical women and feminine images in the texts . . . were used to serve certain interests and wished-for realities” held by the narrators (x). More specifically, she is interested to see how women are used in biblical narratives to represent the “Other,” over and against whom the biblical writers created Israelite identity and maintained Israelite distinction in the land of Canaan. She argues that throughout the biblical tradition the storytellers used female characters and feminine images as “symbols of the threatening powers of disordered chaos,” often associated

with things considered “foreign” and dangerous to Israel. She highlights a particular rhetorical (and gender) strategy by which a “stock figure,” a female embodiment of evil “Otherness,” is used to support Israelite (and male) dominance (30). McKinlay identifies Jezebel as the “prime example of that very stock figure of ‘foreign’ evilness, whose seductive and sinister powers are inevitably deadly” (31). In her story and, in particular, in her death, Jezebel is constructed as a character embodying everything that Israel is not by the narrator who is concerned to establish Israel’s peculiar identity in the land.

McKinlay begins with Israelite monotheism, with its deity typically portrayed in masculine terms and images, and the sharp polemic in the Hebrew Bible against the goddesses who appear in ancient Israel’s religious environment. In fact, the goddess supplies one of the primary frames through which McKinlay reads the biblical tradition, seeing her in the background of the Bible’s representation of Eve, Jezebel, and the woman “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet” (Rev 21:1–2). She notes the effort on the part of Israel’s official storytellers to differentiate Israel from its neighbors on religious grounds, resulting in the attempt within Israel to eradicate the feminine representation of the divine as *asherah*/*Asherah*.

But immediately McKinlay wonders how the figure of Wisdom, so positively represented in Proverbs (and in which she sees traces of the feminine divine), escaped the anti-feminine polemic that was directed against *Asherah*. Her conclusion: one finally eradicates a female deity by transforming her into a metaphor (5). Wisdom may be feminine, but she is a feminine expression of some aspect of Israel’s male deity. The rest of the volume follows this *leitmotif* through the Bible. McKinlay argues that this effort to suppress the “Other” (and the goddess) can be traced in the portrayal of women elsewhere in the biblical text. Specifically, she takes up stories involving Eve, Sarah (and Hagar), Rahab and Ruth (“Others” who nevertheless appear positively in Israel’s story as heroines because of their having abandoned their Canaanite [Moabite] “otherness” and who speak the words their Israelite narrators have given them), Jezebel, the Syrophenician (Canaanite) woman

who encounters Jesus at Tyre, and the two cities—Babylon/Rome and (new) Jerusalem—portrayed as women, in the Apocalypse.

In each chapter, McKinlay draws on personal experience from her New Zealand (and *Pakeha*) context, as well as Maori religion and customs, and contemporary literature from New Zealand. In the conclusion she writes: “Just as over centuries scribes, editors, scholars, and creative imaginers have all taken these female characters and images and shaped them to fit their own careful construals, so I have been suggesting that for women and for (post)colonial readers there is a need to scrutinize them afresh and read them again with care” (163). McKinlay effectively draws readers, who may well enjoy a place of privilege within the dominant culture, into just such a careful rereading, with her clearly written study about biblical women. With this little volume in hand and in mind, the reader has new frames through which to read again the biblical tradition.

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THE GOD WHO PROVIDES: BIBLICAL IMAGES OF DIVINE NOURISHMENT. By L. Juliana M. Claasens. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004. Pp. xxiii + 145. Paper, \$20.00.

This monograph is the expansion of the author’s Ph.D. dissertation from Princeton Theological Seminary. She focuses on texts that reveal no explicit association of God with femaleness. Emphasizing the role of metaphor, here the metaphor of the God who feeds, she ably demonstrates that this female image of God enriches our ways of taking about God. Thus associations of the provision of food permit one to say something new about associations we have of God.

Following a model for biblical theology based on the work of M. Bakhtin, Claasens constructs a dialogue of both biblical and postbiblical voices around the metaphor of God’s provision of food. In every case the metaphor is studied in its own biblical context. To enhance her presentation, she adds both Jewish and Christian voices. Not

infrequently there merges the countervoice of different and even contradictory voice. Nonetheless the metaphor always remains open—it is never quite finished. Even though the metaphor may at first register shock, there is the eventual recognition that the metaphor says something vital about God. Indeed in the Eucharist the metaphor becomes a symbol.

Although God’s provision of manna in Exodus 16, Numbers 11, etc. finds expression in so-called gender neutral texts, Numbers 11:11–12 and Deuteronomy 32:13–14 allow one to read the former texts by understanding the God who nourishes in maternal terms. In fact, in some of the rabbinic interpretations there is a clear link between manna/food imagery and nursing imagery. “This narrative (Num 11:11–15) portrays God as the One who functions as the Mother, the One who ‘nurses’ Israel by providing food enough for each day” (p. 7). Thus Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 reflect God as an attentive mother who hears Israel’s cries, carefully notes her children’s complaints, and springs to action. However, one should also note that this metaphor of the God who feeds has its negative aspect, e.g., in the quail account in Numbers 11:1, 10, 33. In punishing the rebellious, God functions as a disciplinarian. Deuteronomy 8:15, moreover, links both metaphors: God is nurturing mother and disciplinarian. By having no surplus or scarcity of manna, God also appears as the competent household manager—a metaphor that challenges believers to create a social scene marked by equality and fairness.

In Genesis 1–2, Job 38, and Psalms 104:145–47 the God who provides is personally involved in the life process of all creation. As a result, there is a vital connection between God’s gift of life and God’s gift of food. In turn, this metaphor of God’s providing food for all creation offers an alternative moral vision that impacts our experience of God and our place in the world. In contradistinction to these texts, however, there are others where God does not feed, e.g. in Joel and Lamentations. Nevertheless this God who withholds food functions as an important countervoice that must be kept in tension with the

God who provides food. While God does not hear Zion’s plight in Lamentations 2, the narrator does—and perhaps the reader as well. To be sure, Second Isaiah re-reads Lamentations, offering hope to the exilic community.

In restoration texts, such as Jeremiah 31:11–14, Joel 2:18–19, and Amos 9:13–15, God is depicted as reversing the people’s fortunes by once more providing food. Significantly, postbiblical texts continue the notion of God’s eschatological banquet in Isaiah 25:6–9. A particularly relevant restoration text is Isaiah 66:11–13 with its image of a newborn who nurses from the abundant milk that Mother Zion makes available. “This striking metaphor . . . encourages us to think differently about the other texts that use the metaphor of the [sic] God’s renewed provision of food” (p. 81). Thus the female associations of Isaiah 66 and the image of God hosting a banquet in Isaiah 25 challenge the reader to imagine God as a hostess who throws a great party.

In the final two chapters Claasens discusses the role of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 9 as well as related texts and God’s provision of food in the Second Testament (especially Luke and John) respectively. She uses Philo to great advantage in the former where he states that God is said to feed, or actually nurse, God’s children through wisdom. Moving beyond the biblical texts, the author considers the metaphor of the God who feeds and the Eucharist. Here she duly notes that the God who enabled the saving work in Jesus is indeed the God who feeds.

This is a very compelling study that enhances our appreciation of the gynomorphic images for God in the Bible. An added feature of the work is the adroit use of rabbinic texts and commentaries by authors such as Philo. Moreover, the author also offers practical pastoral dimensions. For example, this “portrayal of the God who feeds in female terms invites the church to recover the female associations of the metaphor . . .” (p. 111). This monograph is a very auspicious start for a young scholar.

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