

sources plus material remains), Dever concludes that archaeology is superior for reconstructing ancient Israelite religion. He then summarizes cult terminology and practices from the Hebrew Bible and supplements this with the archaeological evidence for folk religion (versus official religion), including local shrines and the objects they contained (standing stones, altars, jewelry, figurines, etc.), items indicating magical practices, open-air sanctuaries and temples outside of Jerusalem. Dever discusses at length the nude female figurines found throughout Israel and Judah, which he argues represent Asherah and were used in votive rituals ("prayers in clay"), as well as the Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions mentioning "Yahweh and his *asherah*" and biblical references to *asherah*. He then outlines the development from polytheism to monotheism in ancient Israel. Surprisingly, in light of Dever's claim that archaeology is the superior method and resource, this section is almost exclusively dependent on biblical texts, with only brief considerations of archaeological evidence (the Asherah figurines and the destruction of the eighth century temple at Arad). The book concludes with reflections on the value of this "reclamation" of women's folk religion. This work is not as groundbreaking as Dever claims, but it does bring the archaeological evidence to bear on the topic in a way not yet done, reinforced with numerous illustrations. A lively and engaging read for informed nonspecialists and scholars alike.

John L. McLaughlin  
University of St. Michael's College

**ESSAYS ON ZARATHUSTRA AND ZOROASTRIANISM.** By Jean Kellens. Translated and edited by Prods Oktor Skjærvø. Bibliotheca Iranica. Zoroastrian Studies Series, No. 1. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2000. Pp. xvi + 131. \$19.95, ISBN: 1-56859-129-2.

Kellens has been one of the most important scholars of ancient Mazdean religion since 1965, with fifteen books and more than fifty articles to his credit, most of them in French. It is therefore a boon to scholars and others that Skjærvø has undertaken a translation and edition of a few of Kellens's articles. His concern in these articles is with the building blocks of Avestan scholarship: How old are the Gathas of Zarathustra? (He seems to favor a more recent dating, in the early centuries of the first millennium BCE rather than an older dating of about 800 years earlier, as is favored by many other scholars, bringing it more in line with the chronology of the R̥gveda.) Can we identify the Mazdean gods? (Yes, for the most part.) Were the Zoroastrian texts antiritualistic? (No, the function of many of the texts and commentaries was to talk to the gods about the ritual. Furthermore, it is clear that the ritual was the meeting ground of gods and men.) Do we really understand the language of the texts, particularly proper names and technical terminology? (We

are working on it.) Can we really regard Zarathustra as the author of the Gathas? (They seem to be the product of many hands.) Was there evolution in the ritualistic thought of different texts? (Yes, the Gathas are more individual-oriented while the Yasna is more community-oriented, among other things.) This volume represents a sampling of the thought of a major scholar who has spent most of a lifetime thinking and writing about these issues.

Frederick M. Smith  
University of Iowa

---

## Greece, Rome, Greco-Roman Period

---

**POETI EPICI GRAECI. TESTIMONIA ET FRAGMENTA. PARS II, FASC I.** By A. Bernabé. Munich: Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, K. G. Saur, 2005. Pp. lxxxv + 394. €112.00, ISBN 3-598-71707-5.

Bernabé's edition of the so-called Orphic fragments, poems attributed to the legendary figure of Orpheus, replaces Kern's edition of 1922, adds important new texts like the Derveni Papyrus, and includes a seventy-two-page bibliography covering all aspects of Orphism. Four sections present the evidence for the Orphic theogonies (1-378), an Orphic version of the story of Demeter and Persephone (379-402), various poems on the cosmos (403-20), and on the nature of the soul (421-69). Each fragment receives an extensive bibliography, a list of parallel passages, a textual apparatus, and interpretive notes. Bernabé's exhaustive erudition and the sheer mass of material make, following the different registers of exegetical commentary, difficult to use. Nevertheless, this volume will immediately become the standard edition of this material and essential reading not only for classicists but also for all serious students of ancient religion.

Jenny Strauss Clay  
University of Virginia

---

## Christian Origins

---

**VERSAMMLUNG, GEMEINDE, SYNAGOGUE: DAS HELLENISTISCH-JÜDISCHE UMFELD DER FRÜCHRISTLICHEN GEMEINDEN.** By Carsten Claußen. Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments, 27. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002. Pp. 368. €82.00, ISBN 3-53381-0.

Claußen argues that the ancient synagogues influenced the structure and organization of

early Christian house churches, both in Palestine and in the Jewish Diaspora. Following an introductory chapter, an overview of synagogue research, and a survey of epigraphic, papyrological, literary, and archaeological sources, Claußen gives sustained attention to investigating and interpreting the data around a number of issues pertaining to the synagogues: 1) geographic distribution, 2) terminology, 3) origins, 4) architecture, 5) functions, 6) legal matters, and 7) leadership terminology. Drawing on evidence from particular locales, he concludes that synagogues were spread throughout the Roman Empire, were known by various names (e.g., *synagōgē* and *prosuchē*), and took various architectural and organizational forms. In part 3, Claußen briefly argues that the early Christian house churches used Jewish synagogues as a model for their structure and organization, with the exception of their choice of leadership titles. Overall, Claußen provides an important and thorough investigation of the synagogues in and of themselves. Despite my misgivings concerning the genealogical connections drawn between synagogues and *all* early Christian communities, I would commend this book to those researching in this area.

Richard S. Ascough  
Queen's University

**EARLY CHRISTIAN FAMILIES IN CONTEXT: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE.** Edited by David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003. Pp. xxii + 412. \$28.00, ISBN 0-8028-3986-X.

Part of the Religion, Marriage, and Family Series project located at the University of Chicago, these collected essays are divided into six sections: 1) archaeology of the *domus* and *insulae*; 2) domestic values of equality and suffering; 3) women; 4) slaves; 5) children; and 6) implications for theological education. Besides the essays by the editors, there are contributions from Levine, Lampe, Myers, and others. As a whole, the essays provide penetrating insights into a world of the Bible that is often treated as if it were a modern creation and not a macrocosm of peoples who in many respects were very different from ourselves. Thus, the role of women in the early Christian movement is neither to be romanticized nor to be demonized; if women became Christians, they did so for very practical cultural, economic, and social reasons, above and beyond any theological notions they may have held regarding the superiority of Christianity over Judaism or paganism. In this regard, as elsewhere, there is no room for stereotyping individuals or classes; the reality was far richer and more profound than hitherto imagined by either laypersons or scholars. In short, this collection is well worth the attention of anyone who desires a clearer picture of the social and cultural world of the NT.

Casimir Bernas  
Holy Trinity Abbey

**HOUSE CHURCH AND MISSION: THE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY.** By Roger W. Gehring. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004. Pp. xxii + 408. \$29.95, ISBN 1-56563-812-3.

This translation by the author himself of his inaugural dissertation, *Hausgemeinde und Mission—Von Jesus bis Paulus*, presented in 1998 at the Protestant theological faculty of the Eberhard-Karl's University in Tübingen, begins with an introduction that describes research on the subject up to the present and continues with separate chapters concerning house churches before and after the events of Easter, their use in the Pauline mission field, and their theological meaning. An appendix contains floor plans and reconstructions. For Gehring, houses were prominent during the mission of Jesus as meeting places and centers of apostolic activity and table fellowship. At the same time, the stability of household life provided an alternative manner of being a follower of Jesus besides that of the peripatetic disciple. House churches became elements in the formation of leadership roles in the post-Resurrection church of Jerusalem. During the Pauline mission, the house church became evocative of the relationship between local churches and the great church as a whole. The house church meant that believers lived in the world yet were not of the world. In the post-Pauline Christianity witnessed by the Pastoral Epistles and other late NT writings, a college of elders along with an office of presbyter would not have been a mere copy of Judaism but would have been the product of a specifically Christian dynamic. Gehring concludes with lessons for the church of today: the decay of Christianity may be arrested in some measure by a return to the simpler mode of communitarian Christian existence exemplified by the house church. My own comment: this is precisely what the monastic orders have striven to do for nearly 2,000 years. All in all, this treatise is a magnificent contribution to the subject at hand and to the associated fields of ministry and church order.

*Casimir Bernas*  
*Holy Trinity Abbey*

**REDESCRIBING CHRISTIAN ORIGINS.** Edited by Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller. Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series, 28. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004. Pp. xvi + 539. \$49.95, ISBN 1-58983-088-1.

These collected essays deal with the origin-myths of the Christian movement. They originated at the 1992 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and continued over a period of eight years. The thirty-two articles, including introductions and conclusions, are divided into four main parts: 1) The Sayings Gospel Q and the Gospel of Thomas; 2) A Jesus School in Jerusalem? 3) A Pre-Pauline *Christos* association; and 4) "Metareflections." The contributors

accent the social locations, experimentation, and interests of the early Christians. In other words, we have here another social theory of religion that places the emphasis upon a humanistic understanding of religion. Only some snippets by way of example can be given here. For the Lukan notion of Jerusalem as the center from which the missionary work to the Jews and Gentiles proceeded, there is another division substituted—that of homeland and Diaspora. To explain Christian origins, instead of beginning with the customary developmental, linear sequence of Gospels, Letters, Acts, etc., it seems better to start with Q and the Gospel of Thomas and fit the canonical writings into their framework, not the other way around. The conclusions of this fine collection are not really as innovative or as radical as they may seem to be at first sight. In any case, they succeed in their avowed purpose of making the familiar sound strange in order to enhance our perception of the familiar—a great principle in any field of endeavor.

*Casimir Bernas*  
*Holy Trinity Abbey*

**NEUES TESTAMENT UND HELLENISTISCHE UMWELT.** By Dieter Zeller. Bonner Biblische Beiträge, 150. Hamburg, Germany: Philo, 2006. Pp. 253. €39.89, ISBN 3-86572-570-8.

Among European NT scholars who have investigated early Christianity in relationship to its Hellenistic environment, none has made more seminal contributions than Zeller, whose seventeen most important essays on this subject are published in this significant volume. They are arranged under five rubrics: 1) Easter, 2) Christology, 3) Baptism and the Lord's Supper, 4) Ethics, and 5) Cosmology. The essay on the history of religions considerations regarding the title "Son of God" in the infancy narratives is new; the sixteen previously published essays have been updated with various additions at key points. With one exception, all of the essays are in German, although one study is an expanded version of a treatment of "New Testament Christology in its Hellenistic Reception" that appeared originally in English in *NT Studies* 47 (2001). The exception is an extraordinarily fine contribution in English to the "divine man" debate, using discussions of Hippocrates to demonstrate that Hellenistic authors could use the attribute "divine" (*theios*) to connote divine origin and religious veneration. An English-language version of all the essays in this book would be an immensely important contribution to NT scholarship in North America. Highly recommended for research and seminary libraries and for all those interested in early Christianity and its Greco-Roman context.

*John T. Fitzgerald*  
*University of Miami*

**HAIL MARY?: THE STRUGGLE FOR ULTIMATE WOMANHOOD IN CATHOLICISM.** By Maurice Hamington. New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. x + 216. \$28.95, ISBN 0-415-91304-7.

In this wide-ranging overview of the history and social structure of the image of Mary, Hamington treats a variety of controversial subjects: 1) whose Mary? 2) the Virgin and sexual morality; 3) gender power; 4) woman as temptress; 5) women's ordination; 6) goddess worship; and 7) misogyny. In the process of tearing down false images of Mary in the past and the mind states that they represented, Hamington champions on a new picture of Mary that will represent the aspirations of Catholic women today: one must deconstruct in order to reconstruct. Hamington's project succeeds in many ways, but he does not completely escape the danger of overly categorizing a reality that is simpler than might be imagined. Creating pigeonholes into which the phenomena are neatly packed can unwittingly bring about a disregard for their basic wholeness. Hamington, however, accurately describes the matter when discussing Bernard of Clairvaux's child-like devotion to the Virgin: "Mary's character was and is unknown." After all the discussion, this is truer than ever. The liquid takes the form of the (scholar's) container. That there is still a place in this treatise for a scholarly assessment of the Virgin's role in Catholicism is a sign of vigor in Marian studies even when a reader does not agree with all of Hamington's assessments of Marian imagery and the "ultimate womanhood" that it should represent.

*Casimir Bernas*  
*Holy Trinity Abbey*

**JOSEPHUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.** By Steve Mason. 2nd ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003. Pp. xviii + 318. \$16.95, ISBN 1-56563-795-X.

Many changes have occurred in the field of Josephus studies since the publication of Mason's first edition in 1992. At that time, such studies were the prerogative of a few, both producer-scholars and consumer-readers. Today, the writings of Josephus are far better recognized for the many ways in which they aid in an understanding of the Jewish and Christian world of his time. Mason has extensively revised and updated his treatment in many places; less so in others. He describes 1) the misconceptions and erroneous inferences that have bedeviled the scholarly use of Josephus over the centuries; 2) the numerous Jewish parties and sects active at the time of the NT; 3) the important persons who appear both in Josephus and the NT (James the brother of Jesus, John the Baptist, Jesus himself); and 4) the literary similarities between the writings of Josephus and those of Luke-Acts. All in all, this is a splendid introduction to the life and legacy of Josephus. It responds admirably to Mason's aim of providing for the nonspecialist student a competent guide to an important nonbiblical author who (along with Philo) opens the door

to a world of insight into the NT and Judaism alike.

*Casimir Bernas*  
Holy Trinity Abbey

**CHRISTIANITY AND MONASTICISM IN THE FAYOUM OASIS: ESSAYS FROM THE 2004 SYMPOSIUM OF THE SAINT MARK FOUNDATION AND THE SAINT SHENOUDA THE ARCHIMANDRITE COPTIC SOCIETY IN HONOR OF MARTIN KRAUSE.** Edited by Gawdat Gabra. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005. Pp. xxxiv + 322. \$27.50, ISBN 977-424-892-9.

Published here are papers presented at a special symposium on ancient Christianity in the Fayum held in Egypt in 2004. The volume is dedicated to “the father of modern Coptology,” Martin K., Emeritus Professor of Coptology at Münster, on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, and includes a bibliography of Krause’s publications. In an introductory essay, S. Richter discusses “The Importance of the Fayoum for Coptic Studies” and stresses the importance of the Coptic manuscript discoveries at Hamouli and Madinat Madi. Eight essays are devoted to language and literature, fourteen to art, archaeology, and material culture, and two to preservation. Of special interest to this reviewer is S. Emmel’s article on “The Library of the Monastery of the Archangel Michael at Phantou (al-Hamuli)” and Richter’s article on “The Coptic Manichaean Library from Madinat Madi in the Fayoum.” This collection of essays is a welcome contribution to scholarship on ancient Egyptian Christianity.

*Birger A. Pearson*  
University of California

**THE FIRST URBAN CHRISTIANS: THE SOCIAL WORLD OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.** By Wayne A. Meeks. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, [1983] 2003. Pp. xvi + 303. \$18.95, ISBN 0-300-09861-8.

The text remains unchanged in this second edition, but Meeks has added a new preface and a supplementary bibliography of important works that have appeared since the publication of the first in 1983. The importance of the work was commented upon by reviewers twenty years ago, and since then, scholars and students have profited greatly by the insights provided by Meeks’s use of an interdisciplinary combination of sociology and biblical science that was, at the time, only beginning to be appreciated. Since then, of course, such a use of sociology has turned into such a standard method of scholarly procedure that it risks becoming hackneyed and clichéd. But reading (or rereading) Meeks is never a waste of time. We are again treated to a deeper understanding of the fact that Pauline Christianity was indeed an urban phenomenon, that the stratification of social life had immense consequences for the growth of Christianity, and that the liturgy of

the early Christians was an echo of their models of believing and doing. This reprint will enable another generation of students to appreciate the catalyst value of a seminal work in Pauline studies.

*Casimir Bernas*  
Holy Trinity Abbey

**PERSPECTIVES ON NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM: COLLECTED ESSAYS, 1962-2004.** By Eldon Jay Epp. Novum Testamentum, Supplements Series, Volume 116. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2005. Pp. xl + 849. \$238.00, ISBN 90-04-14246-0.

Epp, one of North America’s leading textual critics, is a master of the essay genre, which he has used to good effect throughout his career to discuss many of the leading issues facing the discipline. This volume conveniently collects in one place twenty-four essays, presented in chronological order. Reset but (essentially) unrevised, with the original pagination noted in the margins, the essays are preceded by a fourteen-page introduction, and all but one are followed by “Added Comments, 2004” (which range from a half to three pages in length)—a noteworthy and valuable feature. A full bibliography of Epp’s writings and five indices complete the volume. The chronological arrangement is doubly beneficial: not only does one see here the contours of Epp’s own interests and foci, but in many respects, one can discern here the story of the discipline over the last four decades—in particular a shift from a concern primarily for recovering the “original” text (and little more) to a more broadly conceptualized focus that encompasses the recovery of the earliest attainable form of the text, the history of its transmission, and the sociohistorical context within which it was transmitted. In view of the volume’s importance (and convenience), it is to be regretted that its price means that few other than research libraries will be able to acquire it. Nonetheless, it is an essential collection for anyone with an interest in NT textual criticism.

*Michael W. Holmes*  
Bethel University

**ASSOCIATIONS, SYNAGOGUES, AND CONGREGATIONS: CLAIMING A PLACE IN ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY.** By Philip A. Harland. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003. Pp. xv + 399. \$22.00, ISBN 0-8006-3589-2.

Harland wants to elucidate the cultural world of Western Asia Minor in “which Jewish synagogues and Christian assemblies lived and developed alongside many other associations.” His thesis is that associations, including synagogues and Christian assemblies, could participate in many areas of life in a polis under Roman rule including the recognition of imperial honors. There was more of a positive interaction between the life of these groups and larger society than has generally been sup-

posed. Particularly, synagogues and Christian assemblies were not necessarily sectarian groups that usually took an antagonistic stance toward larger society. Some were antagonistic (e.g., the author of the Apocalypse), but most seem to have been moderate “with regard to participation in . . . forms of imperial honors and connections.” NT scholars have not only presupposed antagonistic relationships between many associations and the larger Roman world, but they have also presupposed little or no interaction among the different associations themselves. The tendency of scholarship, therefore, has been to overstress sectarianism, antagonism, and isolation—“introverted communities living in a hostile environment”—and a clear-cut identity quite apart from the polis. An excellent study that uses not only literary but neglected archaeological evidence to argue its case.

*Fred W. Burnett*  
Anderson University

**NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE APPARATUM CRITICUM.** Edited by Constantine Tischendorf. Libronix Digital Library System CD-ROM ed. Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006. \$79.95 and \$44.99.

The title of this work is a bit misleading in that it essentially includes the complete text of the justly famous eighth edition of *Tischendorf’s Novum Testamentum Graece*: the two volumes of text with an accompanying apparatus (1869-72) and the third volume of *Prolegomena* by C. Gregory (1894). The text and apparatus, however, rather than sharing space on the same page (as in the printed volume), are separate files: this means that one can scroll through the apparatus alone, view it alongside Tischendorf’s own critical text, or set it up to scroll synchronously in conjunction with any other electronic Greek text available in the Logos system (such as NA<sup>27</sup> or Westcott & Hort). Placing the mouse pointer on any abbreviation produces a pop-up window giving the complete term (very useful in an apparatus making such heavy use of abbreviations). The entire text is searchable, and the text can be navigated via biblical references, Eusebian canon numbers, or page numbers. Tischendorf’s apparatus is a monumental thesaurus of variant readings that for many portions of the NT remains a still unsurpassed source of information upon which textual critics continue to rely. The availability of this hard-to-find resource in an affordable and well-executed electronic edition is a very welcome development.

*Michael W. Holmes*  
Bethel University

**THE TEXT OF THE EARLIEST NEW TESTAMENT GREEK MANUSCRIPTS.** Edited by Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001. Libronix Digital Library System CD-ROM ed.

Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006. \$44.99, ISBN N. A.

The 2001 print edition (reviewed in *RSR* 28.2 [April, 2002]:168) is now available in electronic format (either on CD-ROM or online), with one major difference: copyright restrictions have prevented the inclusion of any of the photographs in the printed volume from appearing in this edition. On the other hand, there are features in this electronic edition that compensate for the absence of photographs. For example, all the texts are fully searchable, and verbal concordances of individual papyri can be easily created. Also, the “compare parallel versions” feature can be utilized to produce parallel column formats of printed editions and one or more of the papyri in which the differences are highlighted in color—very useful for making a working collation of any of the papyri included in this volume. In addition, in some aspects, legibility is improved in the electronic edition (e.g., the brackets separating the actual text of a papyrus from the text supplied by the editors is much easier to see in the electronic version). In short, familiar data in a strikingly different and useful format with distinct advantages that many will prefer to the print version.

Michael W. Holmes  
Bethel University

**THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: A COMPREHENSIVE INTRODUCTION.** By Antonio Piñero and Jesús Peláez. Translated by David E. Orton and Paul Ellingworth. Tools for Bible Study, 3. Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2003. Pp. xxii + 579. \$59.95, ISBN 90-5854-006-5.

A translation and revision of *El Nuevo Testamento: Introducción al estudio de los primeros escritos cristianos* (1995). The overriding concerns of the authors are the history of NT interpretation and exegetical methodologies. Chapter 1 surveys NT interpretation “from the beginnings” through the “modern period” (to approximately 1990). Chapter 2 is a detailed summary of the text of the NT, while Chapter 3 is that of the languages spoken in Palestine at the time of Jesus including a section on the NT and current linguistics. Chapter 4 surveys the “historical-literary context” of the NT—the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, OT pseudepigrapha, Philo, Josephus, rabbinic literature, Gnosticism, and Hellenistic philosophy and religion. Chapter 5 focuses on “diachronic” methodologies—historical-critical methods and sociological methods—and “synchronic” methods—semantic analysis, lexicography, narrative-structural analysis, stylistics, and rhetorical criticism. There are two appendixes on translation theory and resources for the NT study (journals, monograph series, lexicons, grammars, and so forth) and an extensive bibliography on all of the literature they presented in chapter 4. With indices on biblical literature and persons, this is both a detailed introduction

to NT Studies for graduate students and a helpful reference book for seasoned scholars.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**MARXIST CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO MARXIST LITERARY THEORY AND THE BIBLE.** By Roland Boer. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003. Pp. xiii + 265. Cloth, \$105.00, ISBN 978-0-8264-6327-2; paper, \$42.95, ISBN 978-0-8264-6328-9.

After clearly explaining the theory of a particular Marxist literary critic, Boer cogently applies that theory to a particular biblical text. These pairings emerge: Althusser and Gen 25; Gramsci and Exod 32; Eagleton and Ruth; Lefebvre and 1 Sam 1-2; Lukács and 1 Kgs 17-2 Kgs 9; Bloch and Ezek 16; 23; Adorno and Isa 5; Jameson and Ps 108; and Benjamin and Dan 7-12. Despite the variety within the Marxist theory that Boer demonstrates, a coherent picture of (a) Marxist critique emerges as Boer focuses repeatedly on the questions of mode of production and ideology. Generally, the HB reflects an Asiatic mode of production (oriental despotism), and YHWH represents the ideology of the ruling class. In this precise context, Marxist criticism is anti-YHWH, and Boer focuses on moments when texts reveal tensions in the establishment or reassertion of ideology (e.g., Gen 25; Ruth; 1; Sam 1-2) or when protests against YHWH can be recovered or projected (here, the insights of Bloch and Benjamin are crucial). Boer’s conclusion reiterates these coherent Marxist themes and refines the notion of Asiatic mode of production vis-à-vis biblical texts by moving through the regulation theory to the important question of allocation and its supportive (YHWH) ideology.

Richard Walsh  
Methodist College

**CHRISTIANS AS A RELIGIOUS MINORITY IN A MULTICULTURAL CITY: MODES OF INTERACTION AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN EARLY IMPERIAL ROME.** Edited by Jürgen Zangenberg and Michael Labahn. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, 243. New York: T & T Clark, 2004. Pp. xiii + 202. \$130.00, ISBN 0-8264-6670-2.

Most of these essays were first presented at the Second Conference of the European Association for Biblical Studies in Rome in July 2001. The overarching theme for all of them is how group identity was maintained in a multicultural city such as Rome. The collection is divided into three parts: 1) essays on actual living conditions in first- and second-century Rome and how minorities, such as Christians, related to them (Kunst, Lampe, Williams, Noy); 2) what the texts reveal about how the majorities interacted with minority groups and what the NT itself reveals about early Christian

images of Rome (Labahn, Hodge, Pitta); and 3) how the post-NT Christian community in Rome during the second and third centuries lived and formed their identities within the social boundaries of multicultural Rome. Essays in this section deal with the figures of Peter, Paul, the Valentinians, and the writings of Clement. A helpful collection of essays on the actual material and social conditions of early Christians in an urban context.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**MOTHER OF THE GODS: FROM CYBELE TO THE VIRGIN MARY.** By Philippe Borgeaud. Translated by Lysa Hochroth. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. Pp. xix + 208. \$49.95, ISBN 0-8018-7985-X.

The “Mother of the Gods” is the structural designation that Borgeaud gives to any particular female divinity in the ancient Mediterranean world—Rhea, Cybele, Gaia, Demeter, Magna Mater, and so forth. He shows how the Mother was adapted by specified cultures to become a symbol in each of its arts, politics, and religion. Borgeaud questions the scholarly construction of a primeval matriarchal stage of society and of its corollary, the cults of the Great Goddesses, even as he builds upon it. He also calls into question the view that the Virgin Mary is the evolutionary pinnacle of the goddesses. Borgeaud does agree that the Mother is an archetype, but it is less clear how and whether or not particular and disparate representations and cultural understandings of particular goddesses reveal a single archetype, let alone what should constitute the evolutionary pinnacle of the Mother. It is best, therefore, to view the Virgin Mary as just one more complex representation of the Mother than as the standard by which all other representations should be measured. A rich and nuanced study of ancient Mediterranean religions and of their particular cultural settings that will interest primarily scholars.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**APOCALYPTICISM, ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE HISTORICAL JESUS: SUBTEXTS IN CRITICISM.** Edited by John S. Kloppenborg and John W. Marshall. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, 275. New York: T & T Clark, 2005. Pp. xi + 141. \$110.00, ISBN 0-56708-428-0.

Essays were originally presented at a symposium with this title at the University of Toronto (2003). Overall, the collection of essays deals not just with the question of whether or not Jesus was an apocalypticist but of why it matters ideologically and theologically (the word “subtext” seems to be a code, a sub-subtext itself, if you will, for “ideology”). Essays include: 1) “As One Unknown, Without a Name? Co-opting the Apocalyptic Jesus”

(Kloppenborg); 2) "The Cipher 'Judaism' in Contemporary Historical Jesus Scholarship" (Arnal); 3) "Compassion is to Purity as Fish is to Bicycle and Other Reflections on Constructions of 'Judaism' in Current Work on the Historical Jesus" (Fredriksen); 4) "Apocalypticism and Anti-Semitism: Inner-group Resources for Inter-group Conflicts" (Marshall); 5) "The Earth Moved: Jesus, Sex, and Eschatology" (Levine); 6) "The Problem of Apocalyptic: From Polemic to Apologetics" (Allison Jr.); and 7) "Theological Stakes in the Apocalyptic Jesus Debate" (Miller). The volume culminates with a helpful summary and response to the issues by Allison and Arnal. This is the most important volume in print on virtually all of the issues in the debate about apocalypticism and the historical Jesus.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**PHILOSTRATUS'S HEROIKOS: RELIGION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE THIRD CENTURY C.E.** Edited by Ellen Bradshaw Aitken and Jennifer K. Berenson Maclean. Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 6. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004. Pp. xxxiv + 452. \$49.95, ISBN 1-58983-091-1.

An interdisciplinary collection of essays by classicists, ancient historians, historians of early Christianity, and archaeologists. Most of the articles were presented at the conference "Philostratus's *Heroikos*, Religion, and Cultural Identity" (Harvard Divinity School, 2001). The overall aim of the writers is to elucidate the interaction of religion, cultural identity, politics, and literature in the Roman Empire. The text upon which they focus (early third-century CE) presents dialogues of Homeric heroes. The heroes refract cultural identities, politics, social customs, and understandings of myths, particularly as they negotiate with "outsiders" or non-Greeks. At the most general level, it is intriguing to see how Philostratus tries to develop an appreciation for all things Greek at this point in Roman history. On a more focused level, the essays present crucial details about the hero cults and the experiences of its believers. The essays are extremely important for scholars of early Christianity, but also for anyone who studies the development of religion in the West. Two important previously published essays are included: "Hero Worship and Christian Beliefs: Observations from the History of Religion on Philostratus's *Heroikos*" by H. D. Betz and an essay by W. Burkert on myth and ritual.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT IMITATE HOMER?: FOUR CASES FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.** By Dennis R. MacDonald. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003. Pp. xii + 227. \$38.00, ISBN 0-300-09770-0.

Building upon and reinforcing arguments adduced in his earlier *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark*, (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 2000) and other writings, MacDonald forcefully asserts that Luke in Acts creates stories out of whole cloth based upon elements in the Homeric epics (in this case, the *Iliad*) without overt reference to earlier Christian traditions. In other words, Luke creates his own fictional accounts, imitating Homer, un beholden to his Christian predecessors. MacDonald gives four examples from Acts that justify his position: 1) the visions of Peter and Cornelius; 2) Paul's farewell to the elders at Miletus; 3) the choice of Matthias; and 4) Peter's prison escape. He uses six criteria as a means of showing the plausibility of his thesis: 1) the easy availability of copies of the *Iliad* in the ancient world; 2) the custom of other authors in imitating the *Iliad*; 3) the large number of parallels between the *Iliad* and Acts; 4) their succession; 5) their distinctive traits; and 6) the ability of these representations to illuminate the alleged imitation. Is MacDonald's argument tenable? Absolutely! Is it possible? Certainly! Is it provable? By no means! Whether or not it is plausible will continue to remain open to debate. But at the very least, MacDonald's efforts provide for scholars an unsuspected insight into an overlooked aspect of the social and literary world of NT times.

Casimir Bernas  
Holy Trinity Abbey

**DISTANT VOICES DRAWING NEAR: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ANTOINETTE CLARK WIRE.** Edited by Holly E. Hearon. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004. Pp. 258. \$29.95, ISBN 0-8146-5157-7.

The essays are divided into four groups. Part 1 deals with "Women and Christian Origins," and the essays posit a historiography of early Christianity that issues in justice for women (Schüssler-Fiorenza) and deal with the examples of Phoebe (Yoon) and the various voices of women prophets and teachers (Maloney and Maloney). Part 2 gives "examples of how different tools and approaches serve to bring the women in texts into focus." The essays in this section are rich and diverse in both methodologies and subjects (Hens-Piazza, DesCamp, and Schottroff). Part 3 emphasizes both the historical and the social contexts of texts: 1) Hosea's "wife of promiscuity" (Chaney); 2) the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Waetjen); 3) the Syro-Phoenician woman (Kinukawa); 4) the "anti-societal language" in the story of Nicodemus in John 3:1-21 (Rohrbaugh); and 5) why sacrifice is an erroneous interpretation of Jesus's death (Dewey). Part 4 honors Wire's "commitment to bringing voices together across time and cultures," hence the volume's title (Lee, Coote and Coote, Green, Park, and Ruth Ohm Wright). A fitting and rich

tribute to Wire's own scholarly and personal interests.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE: COMMUNION AND CONFLICT.** By Michelle Slee. The Library of New Testament Studies. New York: T & T Clark, 2004. Pp. xiii + 214. \$59.95, ISBN 0-56708-382-9.

Slee primarily examines literature—Acts, Galatians, the Gospel of Matthew, and the *Didache*—to infer sociological conclusions about the composition of the church(es) in Antioch. She focuses upon the entry of Gentiles into the churches. From the controversy depicted in Acts 15 and Gal 2, she concludes that the churches in Antioch had been persuaded by messengers from James to hold separate eucharistic meals "unless the Gentiles would convert to Judaism." The *Didache* also reflects conflicts over the Eucharist between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch. The key issue was to devise a means by which Gentiles could attend the Eucharist without polluting the meal. The Matthean community demanded that Gentiles convert to Judaism and become fully Torah-observant (including circumcision). Negative statements in Matthew about Gentiles reflect the baseline (and earliest) hostility of this Jewish-Christian church toward Gentiles, and attempts to smooth these over are post-70 redactional glosses. Matthean passages that negatively portray the Pharisees are explained by the fact that Matthew's Torah-observant community did not like the kind of leadership being developed at Jamnia. A clarification of the relation of the various church communities in Antioch would be helpful, but this is an important and useful study.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**ANCIENT TEXTS FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES: A GUIDE TO THE BACKGROUND LITERATURE.** By Craig A. Evans. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005. Pp. xxxvi + 539. \$34.95, ISBN 1-56563-409-8.

Evans wants to provide for nonscholars, primarily students, a clear and manageable presentation of "the diverse bodies of literatures that are . . . cognate to biblical literature, especially to the New Testament." Unlike most compilations on NT "backgrounds," Evans's does not cite texts at length. Instead, he provides the necessary framework for reading the texts by explaining what they entail and who the authors were. He covers a wide spectrum: 1) OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; 2) the Dead Sea Scrolls; 3) Philo; 4) Josephus; 5) the Targums; 6) Rabbinic Literature; 7) the NT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; 8) Gnostic Writings (including Mandaean materials); 9) Early Church Fathers; 10) Greco-Roman Authors;

11) Corpus Hermeticum; 12) Samaritan Writings; and 13) Papyri, Inscriptions, Coins, and Ostraca. He includes twelve exegetical examples of how the NT uses its background material, along with six appendixes: 1) Canons that Include the Apocrypha; 2) Quotations, Allusions, and Parallels to the NT; 3) Parallels between NT Gospels and Pseudepigraphal Gospels; 4) Jesus' Parables and the Parables of the Rabbis; 5) Jesus and Jewish Miracle Stories; and 6) Messianic Claimants. Hellenistic rhetoricians and works of fiction are notably absent; this seems to reflect Evans's view that Jewish materials provide the primary background for the NT. Overall, with its lists of abbreviations and bibliographies, this is a very helpful source.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**DIDACHE AND JUDAISM: JEWISH ROOTS OF AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN-JEWISH WORK.** By Marcello del Verme. New York: T & T Clark, 2004. Pp. xv + 291. \$29.95, ISBN 0-567-02531-4.

The *Didache* can only be understood in light of the Jewish context from which it originated and in which it is still ingrained. Del Verme's task is to delineate the type of Jewish context that the Christianity of the *Didache* reflects. After a lengthy discussion of the history of interpretation of the *Didache*, del Verme concludes that a stream of Judaism growing out of the Essene movement influenced the *Didache*. He first investigates the institution of the "community of goods" reflected in Did 4:8. Unlike the community at Qumran, which held goods in common, the *Didache* reflects a less extreme type of Essene movement with its emphasis upon helping the poor. The polemic of Did 8:1 reflects an Essene view on the more appropriate days for fasting. The instructions on offering "first fruits" (Did 13:3-7) fit particularly with what is known of supporting the "prophets" in Jewish-Christian communities around Antioch, the geographical location for the *Didache*. Finally, Did 16 represents a Christian redrafting of the Two Ways tradition that is reflected in Did 1. The eschatological ideas in Did 16 also reflect the Essene tradition of "Enochic Judaism." Critics will find del Verme's lack of emphasis upon rabbinical materials less than convincing in his interpretation of the *Didache*, but his is, nonetheless, an important reconstruction to consider.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**COPTICA—GNOSTICA—MANICHAICA: MÉLANGES OFFERTS À WOLFPETER FUNK.** Edited by Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier. Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, "Études," 7. Québec: Peeters, 2006. Pp. xxxiv + 1052. €94.00, ISBN 90-429-1771-7.

Funk turned out to be one of the most productive of the East German scholars involved

in the Berlin Working Group for Coptic Gnostic Writings founded by the late H.-M. Schenke. Funk has made his mark in Coptic philology, in the editing of Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi, and most recently in the editing of the yet unpublished Coptic Manichaean texts. For several years, he has been based at the University of Laval, working with colleagues there on the Laval project. His Laval colleagues intended to honor him on his sixtieth birthday in 2003 with this *Festschrift* but were overwhelmed by the response of people invited to contribute. The volume contains forty-three essays, eight of them on Coptic philology, twenty-two on Nag Hammadi texts, six on aspects of Manichaeism, and seven on other early Christian literature. Unfortunately, no indices are provided for this enormous volume. Still, it is a nice tribute to a deserving scholar.

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

**THE SPIRITUAL SEED: THE CHURCH OF THE "VALENTINIANS."** By Einar Thomassen. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies, 60. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2006. Pp. xv + 545. \$174.00, ISBN 90-978-90-04-14802-4.

In this magisterial work, Thomassen presents a thorough analysis of the patristic testimonies and the Valentinian texts in the Nag Hammadi corpus and comes up with a comprehensive interpretation of the most important branch of ancient Gnostic Christianity. In part 1, "Valentinianism East and West," Thomassen presents a convincing picture of the differences between the "Eastern" and "Western" schools, particularly in terms of soteriology and the nature of the Savior's body. Part 2 is devoted to "the three dimensions of Valentinianism": 1) the historical manifestation of the Savior; 2) protological speculations on the origin of plurality and materiality; and 3) redemption enacted in ritual. Part 3 is a detailed study of the two main types of Valentinian protology as reflected in our sources. Part 4 is a thorough analysis of Valentinian initiation, its ritual acts, and ideology. Thomassen convincingly shows that there was no separate "bridal chamber" ritual, as some scholars have argued. (Thomassen makes no mention of Valentinian attitudes toward marriage and procreation.) In part 5, Thomassen presents what can be known about Valentinus and analyzes his teachings as reflected in the fragments. He also sketches a history of the Valentinian movement from its beginnings into the fourth century. This book is the most important work on Valentinian Gnosticism to be published since the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices.

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

**GNOSTIC REVISIONS OF GENESIS STORIES AND EARLY JESUS TRADITIONS.** By Gerhard P. Luttikhuisen. Nag

Hammadi and Manichaean Studies, 58. Boston: Brill, 2006. Pp. xviii + 208. \$119.00, ISBN 90-04-14510-9.

This book contains revised versions of sixteen essays published from 1988 to 2004, reorganized into eight chapters on Genesis interpretations and four chapters on Gnostic interpretations of early Jesus traditions. In the introductory chapter, Luttikhuisen sets forth his basic approach to the evidence, and in an epilogue, he comments on different types of readers of Gnostic texts: 1) intended readers; 2) Gnostic readers of the fourth century; 3) Irenaeus; and 4) modern readers. In his introduction, he applies the term "demiurgical-Gnostic" to the *Apocryphon of John* and related literature, rejecting the term "Sethianism." Since his first published article in 1988, Luttikhuisen has rejected the view of many (including myself) that Gnosticism arose in a Jewish environment, and he does not deviate from that position in his book. The book includes an appendix in which he takes issue with the usual view, based on the Cologne Mani Codex, that the prophet Mani grew up in an Elchasaite community.

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

**THE GNOSTIC GOSPELS OF JESUS.** By Marvin Meyer. San Francisco, CA: HarperSan-Francisco, 2005. Pp. xxix + 338. \$22.95, ISBN 0-06-076208-X.

The subtitle of this book is "The Definitive Collection of Mystical Gospels and Secret Books about Jesus of Nazareth," presumably supplied by the publisher for promotional purposes. The book contains breezy translations of nine of the forty-six tractates of the Nag Hammadi Codices (*Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Philip*, *Gospel of Truth*, *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* [*Gospel of the Egyptians*], *Apocryphon* [*Secret Book*] of *John*, *Apocryphon* [*Secret Book*] of *James*, *Book of Thomas*, *Dialogue of the Savior*, *Second Discourse of the Great Seth*, and one from the Berlin Gnostic Codex [*Gospel of Mary*]). For reasons that are not clear to me, the book also includes a work preserved by the church father Hippolytus of Rome, *Baruch*, written by an otherwise unknown Gnostic named Justin (*Refutation of All Heresies* 5.24.1-27.5), and a passage from the apocryphal *Acts of John* referred to here as "the Round Dance of the Cross," featuring Jesus in a circular dance singing verses of a hymn with antiphonal responses by the disciples (*Acts of John* 94-96).

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

**THOMASINE TRADITIONS IN ANTIQUITY: THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WORLD OF THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS.** Edited by Jon Ma Asgeirsson, April D. DeConick, and Risto Uro. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies, 59. Boston: Brill, 2006. Pp. xix + 307. \$128.00, ISBN 978-90-04-14779-9.

This book contains papers presented in sessions on Thomasine Traditions at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature from 1993-2001. S. Patterson discusses the place of the *Gospel of Thomas* in scholarship on Christian origins; Uro discusses the Gospel's social world; P. Sellew, M. Moreland, and M. Meyer analyze individual sayings of *Thomas*; DeConick sets the earliest speeches of *Thomas* into an apocalyptic context; P. Luomanen compares sayings in *Thomas* with parallels in Jewish Christian Gospels; Asgeirsson argues for the influence of Greek philosophy on *Thomas*; V. Robbins discusses "enthymematic logia" in *Thomas*; A. Marjanen discusses the Gospel's portrayal of Jesus; I. Dunderberg finds affinities between Valentinus's fragment 4 and *Thomas*; and P. Hartin analyzes the role and significance of the apostle Thomas in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*. This book is a good window into current scholarship on the *Gospel of Thomas* and Thomas Christianity.

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

**RECOVERING THE ORIGINAL GOSPEL OF THOMAS: A HISTORY OF THE GOSPEL AND ITS GROWTH.** By April D. DeConick. Library of NT Studies, 286. London and New York: T & T Clark, 2005. Pp. xvii + 290. \$130.00, ISBN 0-567-04342-8.

Of the forty-six different tractates contained in the Nag Hammadi Coptic Codices discovered in 1945, the *Gospel of Thomas* is the one that has attracted the most attention and the one over which there is the most disagreement in scholarly research. In this challenging book, DeConick sets forth a theory of composition that seeks to clarify and explain the evident anomalies in the text. In part 1, DeConick discusses the methodological approaches that have been taken and offers a new theory, "the rolling *Gospel of Thomas*." She clarifies how older sayings in *Thomas* have been developed into dialogues, question and answer units, and sayings with interpretive clauses in an effort to "update" for a developing community an inherited tradition of Jesus' sayings. In part 2, "Recovering the Kernel," she identifies five kernel "speeches" containing sayings that reflect an imminent end-expectation characteristic of a very early sayings tradition originating in Jerusalem. In part 3, "Assessing the Accretions," she shows how the earlier "kernel" of the Gospel has been reinterpreted in various stages to reflect the concerns of an evolving Thomas community in Syria, featuring an emphasis on protology, encratism, mysticism, and a "Hermetic" call for self-knowledge. DeConick dates the final redaction to around 120 (perhaps a little early). This is, in my view, one of the most important books on *Thomas* ever published.

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

**WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS? A COMPARISON WITH GRAECO-ROMAN BIOGRAPHY.** By Richard A. Burridge. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004. Pp. xiv + 366. \$34.00, ISBN 0-8028-0971-5.

Burridge's thesis has not changed since the first edition was published in 1992 (Cambridge University Press). He argues that the NT Gospels should be interpreted within the genre of the Greco-Roman biography (βίος), and they are not, therefore, unique literary productions. Burridge concentrates on the *reception* of the Gospels. Whether or not the gospel writers were literarily aware that they were writing biographies, first-century readers would have understood them as another instance of the βίοι. This does not necessarily mean that the Gospels should be read as historical fact; it only means that the gospel writers were interested in a past for Jesus. In terms of revisions, this edition is essentially the same as the previous one—Burridge details the literary characteristics of a βίος and then compares the Gospels with biographies written before and after the rise of Christianity. A new chapter helpfully summarizes and answers criticisms made in the first edition and gives the current state of the issue. There is also a new foreword by G. Stanton. Since the scholarly debate has not been settled about the genre of the Gospels, this edition is still as relevant and as important as the first edition.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**JESUS AND GOSPEL.** By Graham N. Stanton. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. xii + 239. \$23.99, ISBN 0-521-00802-6.

The volume contains an introduction and nine revised essays previously presented as lectures or seminar papers in a number of venues throughout the world. The subjects, though varied, are centered around the person of Jesus and the Gospels: one Gospel in four Gospels, Jesus traditions in Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, early objections to the resurrection, the place of the codex in early Christianity, evidence of the nature of the Gospels from the papyri, and others. As in his previous writings, Stanton finds the empty tomb traditions insufficient of themselves to have created the Easter faith of the disciples. In addition, it was not so much the resurrection itself as the person and work of the earthly Jesus that was the source of controversy between Christians and Jews in the earliest centuries of the church, and for some Jewish scholars, even down to the present day. In sum, Stanton furnishes his scholarly audience with many fine insights that combine rigorous scientific method with a sensitive approach to texts considered sacred by an immense number of Christians.

Casimir Bernas  
Holy Trinity Abbey

**THE ACTS OF PETER, GOSPEL LITERATURE, AND THE ANCIENT NOVEL: REWRITING THE PAST.** By Christine M. Thomas. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. xiii + 200. \$49.95, ISBN 0-19-512507-X.

Studies so far of generic designations for the *Acts of Peter* have generally argued that it is most like the ancient novel. However, the genre of the ancient novel does not seem to have been as fixed as many scholars have assumed and was itself influenced by many other forms so that "the range and nature of literary works that might be considered 'novels' in antiquity was broad." The *Acts of Peter* is a clear example of the perplexing multiplicity of forms by which a work could be understood, and Thomas wants to investigate how a Christian work such as the *Acts of Peter* might have been understood and classified by actual readers. She investigates how the *Acts of Peter* was rewritten and revised under the different historical circumstances of its real readers, who were operating outside of the process of canonization, and the kinds of ideal readers that they constructed. This is not only an important literary-critical study for the *Acts of Peter* but for early Christian literature in general. Methodologically speaking, perhaps the most important chapter is chapter 4: "Narrative Fluidity as a Generic Characteristic."

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**THE GOSPELS AND JESUS.** By Graham Stanton. 2nd ed. Oxford Bible Series. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. xvi + 324. \$29.95, ISBN 0-19-924616-5.

First published in 1989, this new version of a work that was highly praised in its first edition includes fresh advances in scholarly knowledge and a new bibliography with many additions. "Who was Jesus of Nazareth?" lies behind all the historical, theological, and literary questions underlying the treatise. The subjects treated are both specific and generic: the individual Gospels, then Jesus in the gospel tradition. Literary avenues to the subjects at hand, along with the Gospel of Thomas, receive greater attention. Stanton professes to concentrate on the texts themselves, eschewing scholarly controversies as much as possible. His stance toward the texts can be characterized as mildly critical. One example: the resurrection accounts are not meant to prove the resurrection but to render it plausible. To navigate through Stanton's prolix writing style requires careful attention, patience, and perseverance. We have here not a page turner but a study book; not a quick overall summary with pat answers but a treatise that leaves room for alternative solutions in a number of exegetical and interpretative areas, e.g., the tradition of the empty tomb. In the constantly growing field of Jesus interpretations, Stanton's volume should continue to find a place.

Casimir Bernas  
Holy Trinity Abbey

**THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS.** Edited by Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer, and Gregor Wurst. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2006. Pp. iv + 185. \$22.00, ISBN 978-1-4262-0042-7.

One of four tractates included in the fragmentary fourth-century Codex Tchacos inscribed in Coptic, the *Gospel of Judas* has recently attracted considerable attention in the press. In 2001, the Maecenas Foundation in Basel commissioned Kasser to prepare a critical edition of the codex, and subsequently, the National Geographic Society undertook to publish the critical edition and to publish an English translation of the *Gospel of Judas* reviewed here. Scholarly study of the codex has been restricted by the Maecenas Foundation and the National Geographic Society to Kasser and Wurst (transcription) and to Meyer (English translation), but the Coptic transcription is available on the National Geographic website. The *Gospel of Judas* is the gospel by that name said by Irenaeus to have been in use by certain Gnostics (*Against Heresies* 1.31.1). In it, Judas is represented as the only one of the disciples to whom Jesus entrusted gnosis; the “Twelve” are denounced as worshippers of the foolish creator of the world. Judas is commissioned to hand Jesus over to the authorities so that, by dying, he might escape the body in which he is “clothed.” The Gnostic myth revealed to Judas is essentially the same as that found in “Sethian” Gnostic texts of which the *Apocryphon of John* (NHC II,1; III,1; IV,1; BG, 2) is the most important. The original Greek version was probably produced sometime around the middle of the second century.

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

**READING THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: CHARACTER FORMATION AND DECISION MAKING IN MATTHEW 5-7.** By Charles H. Talbert. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004. Pp. 181. \$29.95, ISBN 1-57003-553-9.

The Sermon on the Mount (SM) is not primarily concerned with “ethics,” particularly as regulations, but with forming persons with *Jesus’* kind of character. Jesus’ own character is Matthew’s indicative in the SM, and the primary function of this text is to form the character and guide (not legislate) the decision making of its readers. Talbert tries to understand how both a general reader in the ancient Mediterranean world and readers in Matthew’s community would have read the SM. In part 1, Talbert clarifies the conceptual world of Matthew’s text. It is more of a world of piety than previous scholars have supposed—one grounded in loyalty to God and to members of one’s covenant community. Overall, Jesus in Matthew exemplifies this primary virtue of covenant loyalty, and, in fact, for the reader and “auditor of this Gospel, the closest analogy to the teacher Jesus and his disciples would have

been a philosopher and his disciples.” The function of the SM in Matthew, therefore, is to produce a virtuous life grounded in the covenant as portrayed by Jesus. Part 2 is a detailed exegetical examination of the SM’s themes and narrative techniques. A very important and suggestive study.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**LEX TALIONIS IN EARLY JUDAISM AND THE EXHORTATION OF JESUS IN MATTHEW 5.38-42.** By James F. Davis. Journal for the Study of the NT Supplement Series, 281. New York: T & T Clark, 2005. Pp. xv + 192. \$115.00, ISBN 0-567-04150-6.

The book falls into three parts—how Jesus’ statement about “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” relates to: 1) the OT; 2) first-century Jewish teachings on this topic; and 3) the theological implications of lex talionis. Lex talionis in the OT emphasizes proportional justice rather than revenge. Lex talionis is to be carried out by the proper judicial authorities, and limits are always specified. Davis points out the diversity of early Jewish interpretation, but then he drives toward a unifying view that “in the first century the literal interpretation of the lex talionis was not only a viable view but a major one as well.” Jesus’ view of lex talionis does not contradict or cancel OT teaching, but it transcends it and other forms of first-century Judaism by casting lex talionis within his teaching of a “higher righteousness.” Jesus’ view “represents a new perspective, different from that of the OT lex talionis or NT-era Judaism,” and is essentially a “reverse” lex talionis that emphasizes loving and merciful actions, particularly in the face of unjust treatment. A helpful survey but an unpersuasive thesis.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: THE SCHOLARS VERSION ANNOTATED WITH INTRODUCTION AND GREEK TEXT.** By Robert T. Fortna. The Scholars Bible. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2005. Pp. 269. \$22.00, ISBN 0-944344-60-7.

Regarding the physical layout of this volume, the English *Scholars Version* of Matthew, with some modifications, appears on the right side of the opening pages, with the Greek text (taken from the 1975 third edition of the United Bible Societies version) on the left-hand portion. The Introduction discusses the meaning of a Gospel, the sources, author, date, structure, and purpose of Matthew. Several excursions touch upon special questions. Fortna places his brief annotations at the bottom of each page. A helpful glossary, bibliography, and brief indexes complete the work. The overall approach and tone of the commentary is what one would expect from a member of the Jesus Seminar: far more skepticism regarding the historicity of the events depicted in Matthew than

would be allowed for by a plethora of other exegetes. This having been said, the treatise contains many fine insights, couched in a simple and direct style. Though Fortna intends his work for everyone from scholar to neophyte, I wonder who his real readers might be. The Greek text is superfluous for beginners (despite his disclaimers) while the commentary is too elementary for most serious scholars. Newcomers will profit from the volume as long as they realize that this is only one interpretation of the gospel and the Gospels.

Casimir Bernas  
Holy Trinity Abbey

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW’S DEPENDENCE ON THE DIDACHE.** By Alan J. P. Garrow. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, 254. New York: T & T Clark, 2004. Pp. xxxiii + 272. \$150.00, ISBN 0-8264-6977-9.

A doctoral dissertation (D. Phil., Oxford University, 2002) supervised by C. M. Tuckett that tries to reconstruct the compositional history of the *Didache*. Garrow presents an extremely complicated compositional history, replete with diagrams, which are even more clearly presented on a website ([www.didache-garrow.info](http://www.didache-garrow.info)). His most important conclusion is that the author of the Gospel of Matthew depended upon early compositions of the *Didache*, and later, in the last compositional stages, editors of the *Didache* referred to the Gospel of Matthew. For Garrow, this interactive compositional history presents “a relatively simple explanation of the two texts’ relationship; namely, that various elements (disparate in terms of style, origin and age) were incorporated into the *Didache* over time and that, at a later date, Matthew drew on the resulting text in the construction of his gospel.” Overall, Garrow delineates five stages in the compositional history of the *Didache*, which he summarizes succinctly in chapter 10. Copious charts identify to which layer each part of the *Didache* is to be assigned. Although overly atomistic and speculative at points in his source-critical assessments, Garrow’s work merits a careful study; at a minimum, he provides the basis for a clearer redactional reading of the *Didache*.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW IN ITS ROMAN IMPERIAL CONTEXT.** Edited by John Riches and David C. Sim. Journal for the Study of the NT Supplement Series, 276. New York: T & T Clark, 2005. Pp. viii + 202. Cloth, \$125.00, ISBN 0-56708-448-5; paper, \$49.95, ISBN 0-56708-458-2.

These essays deal with the nature of Roman colonialism, how different groups reacted to it, particularly in the post-70 context, and where Matthew’s group fits among this spectrum of responses. The attitudes of Josephus (McLaren)



and of Jewish apocalyptic and rabbinical writers (Esler) toward Roman rule are examined. Lenski's sociological model is used to study power relations reflected in Matthew's characters (Duling). The views of other NT writers toward Rome are diverse, although most acknowledge with awe Rome's power (Oakes). Riches suggests that Matthew's apocalyptic view supplies a juridical "answer"—punishment for sin—for why God has allowed Rome to exercise power. However, Rome is deluded about its rule since its royal ideology does not realize what Matthew's theology maintains—that God is actually in charge of the entire cosmos (Carter). Sim argues that Matthew's apocalypticism is a thoroughgoing dualism in which Rome will ultimately be defeated as an evil power. Weaver argues that the fear and confession of the soldiers (that Jesus is God's son) reveal a subaltern—if not subversive—view of Roman power in Matthew's community. Although the conclusions are predictable ones, this is an important collection.

*Fred W. Burnett*  
*Anderson University*

**PERFORMING THE GOSPEL: ORALITY, MEMORY, AND MARK: ESSAYS DEDICATED TO WERNER KELBER.** Edited by Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper, and John Miles Foley. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006. Pp. xvi + 239. \$35.00, ISBN 0-8006-3838-X.

The subtitle and dedication neatly summarize the collection's theme. The essayists challenge the dominance of the print paradigm in biblical studies whose assumptions have led to fruitless quests for the original text/saying and the historical Jesus. Instead, for the essayists, oral performance and social memory in early Christianity are active, participatory, and contested. Horsley's introduction and Hearon's essay review the state of these issues in NT Studies. Jaffee works with orality and the development of identity in rabbinic materials vis-à-vis other people of the book. Draper works with interconnections between orality and textuality in a twentieth-century prophetic movement in KwaZulu-Natal. Assmann continues his work on cultural memory and its ritual and textual transmission. Foley studies poetic oral performance cross-culturally. Aitken depicts Jesus as the heroic performer of tradition common in hero cults. Schröter rethinks canon by starting with the premise of oral performance, which leads to a living, flexible tradition, not to a notion of an authoritative text. Robbins, Shiner, and Horsley continue their ongoing work on Mark and respectively pursue their interests in rhetorical culture, oral performance and memory, and village-based renewal movements. Perhaps, more interaction with followers of Derrida and Marx working in biblical studies lies ahead.

*Richard Walsh*  
*Methodist College*

**SOLIDARITY AND DIFFERENCE: A CONTEMPORARY READING OF PAUL'S ETHICS.** By David G. Horrell. London and New York: T & T Clark, 2005. Pp. xvi + 339. \$49.95, ISBN 0-5670-4322-3.

Throughout this study of Pauline "ethics" (what others would prefer to call "morality"), Horrell uses the extensive writings of Habermas (the liberal) and Hauerwas (the conservative whom Horrell numbers among so-called "communitarians") as foils against which he can measure the perennial value of Pauline teaching on human actions. Horrell avoids what Paul might have taught on concrete issues such as abortion, homosexuality, slavery, and the like. Rather, he sees the building up of the community as Paul's changeless overarching principle that lies behind such particular teachings, which in themselves can be time-conditioned and transitory. This is an excellent study: it treats NT topics from a point of view that the biblical expert per se may well have either ignored or disregarded. At the same time, it raises the recurrent question, Who (or what), and by what right, is empowered to render present-day moral judgments based upon the NT (or any ancient text, secular or religious)? Is it to be the nonreligious, uncommitted modern scholar? An individual believer? A church (which one)? A Pope? These questions and their various answers will not go away. Horrell certainly does not solve them, but he does rephrase in a modern manner ancient controversies that will never find a definitive solution.

*Casimir Bernas*  
*Holy Trinity Abbey*

**PAUL, MONOTHEISM AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM TRADITIONS FOR EARLY JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.** By Nancy Calvert-Koyzis. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 273. London and New York: T & T Clark, 2004. Pp. xiv + 173. \$120.00, ISBN 0-56708-378-0.

In this book, Calvert-Koyzis examines Paul's use of the figure of Abraham against the background of early Jewish traditions. After surveying the treatment of Abraham in *Jubilees*, Philo, Josephus, pseudo-Philo, and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, Calvert-Koyzis concludes that the patriarch functioned as a "prototype" of the ideal Jew. Abraham's monotheism and his pre-Mosaic obedience to God's law were very often used to define the boundary of the covenant people. Calvert-Koyzis suggests that both in Galatians and in Romans, Paul is reacting (at least in part) to believers in Christ who maintain that Torah observance is still necessary for membership in God's people and who appeal to the example of Abraham in support of this claim. In Paul's response, Abraham continues to define the boundary of God's people. The patriarch is also still characterized by belief in the one God. Paul denies, however, that Abraham kept

Torah, and the apostle redefines the patriarch's monotheistic belief as trust in God's redemptive promises—promises that always included the salvation of Gentiles and which came to fulfillment in Christ. Hence, Abraham is transformed by Paul into the forerunner of a law-free approach to God.

*Ian W. Scott*  
*King's University College*

**JUSTIFICATION AND VARIEGATED NOMISM, VOLUME II: THE PARADOXES OF PAUL.** Edited by D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004. Pp. xiii + 545. \$55.00, ISBN 0-8010-2741-1.

This collection of essays presents a critique of the "New Perspective" on Paul including detailed exegesis of Romans and Galatians alongside broader thematic studies. The quality of the essays is mixed. Nevertheless, the authors make important contributions to the debate surrounding Paul's view of the law. M. Seifrid, for example, challenges the view that "justification" is for Paul merely a cipher for "salvation," while S. Gathercole reminds us that Paul is concerned in Rom 3-5 with how Israelites can find righteousness, not just with Gentile inclusion. Likewise, T. Laato observes that "New Perspective" discussions often assume a false dichotomy between participatory and juridical categories in Paul's thought, and Carson usefully reframes the question of Paul's relationship to his heritage in terms of the tension between "mystery" and "fulfillment." T. George's discussion of Luther's thought is also refreshing at a time when caricatures of the reformer are so rampant. One of the monographs by S. Westerholm, T. Schreiner, P. Stuhlmacher, Seifrid, Gathercole, A. Das, etc. might make a better point of entry into the growing response to the "New Perspective," but graduate students and Pauline scholars alike will find much here to reward a close reading.

*Ian Scott*  
*Tyndale Seminary*

**THE UNITY OF THE CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE.** By David R. Hall. New York: T & T Clark, 2003. Pp. ix + 280. \$59.95, ISBN 0-5670-8422-1.

Contrary to much of the literature on the Corinthian discourse, in this book, Hall argues that Paul is the author of the entire canonical correspondence, and 2 Corinthians is a single, intact document. 1 and 2 Corinthians are neither pseudo-Pauline nor redacted from fragments. Furthermore, canonical 1 and 2 Corinthians are the entire Pauline correspondence with Corinth; references to a "tear-stained" prior letter and so forth found in 2 Corinthians refer only to 1 Corinthians. Hall bases these assertions on "echoes" of thought or intertextual allusions between the letters as well as on his reconstruction of the "oppo-

nents" of Paul derived from both letters. According to Hall, any differences in tone, theme, or topic are manifestations of Paul's pastoral rhetoric. *Unity* will be of most interest to scholars of Paul, the Corinthian discourse, or those seeking arguments that defend traditional authorship and content of canonical writings. The work presumes competence in NT Greek and is best suited to advanced students or scholars.

*Robert Paul Seesengood*

*University of North Carolina at Pembroke*

**THE TEXT OF THE APOSTOLOS IN EPIPHANIUS OF SALAMIS.** By Carroll D. Osburn. *The New Testament in the Greek Fathers*, 6. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004. Pp. xiv + 283. \$34.95, ISBN 1-58983-139-X.

The history of the transmission of the NT during the first four centuries of Christianity has long marked a conundrum for scholars. With the publication of Osburn's analysis of the text of the *Apostolos in Epiphanius of Salamis*, another important piece of patristic evidence is available for understanding the NT text in the Eastern Mediterranean. Based on an extensive revision and enlargement of his 1974 dissertation, Osburn argues that Epiphanius's strongest textual affinities are not Byzantine, as commonly assumed, but "Late Egyptian" in Acts and the Pauline Epistles. His textual affinities in the Catholic Epistles still, however, suggest a Byzantine text form—although here, the evidence is so scant (ten units of variation) that it should probably not be seen as conclusive. Osburn's work largely conforms to the format and methodology that has come to characterize the series *The New Testament in the Greek Fathers*: a historical sketch of the Father's life, methodological explanation, and presentation of the text followed by textual analysis and conclusion. A limited examination of the critical apparatus indicated careful attention to detail and accuracy—the sole exception being the attestation of P<sup>46</sup> for 1 Cor 1:23 where the papyrus is actually lacunose. Though there is little to seriously criticize, it would have been helpful if Epiphanius's quotations had been arranged in canonical order and had been distinguished as citations, adaptations, or allusions. In any case, Osburn's work demands the attention of any textual scholar or historian interested in the transmission history of the NT.

*Carl P. Cosaert*

*Walla Walla College*

**THE QUEST FOR PAUL'S GOSPEL: A SUGGESTED STRATEGY.** By Douglas A. Campbell. *Journal for the Study of the NT Supplement Series*, 274. New York: T & T Clark, 2005. Pp. xi + 290. \$130.00, ISBN 0-567-08332-2.

The search for a systematic theology in Paul's letters has generated much debate.

Campbell argues that without a single "grand strategy," exegetical work on specific Pauline texts is impossible. Campbell asserts, contra many "postmodern" readings, that a central idea must underlie Paul's work; otherwise, the Pauline literature would have been of little value to the church. Rejecting the idea that Paul is intellectually inconsistent or too contextually located, Campbell asserts that Paul's underlying Gospel is "pneumatologically participatory martyrological eschatology." Individuals are called to imitate both Paul and Christ in Spirit-led witness (which often entails suffering) to the end-of-time arrival of God's kingdom. Campbell also develops his own presentation of Paul's response to the ordination of gay clergy and briefly touches on Paul's relationship to Judaism. In making his case, large swaths of current approaches to Pauline coherence (postmodern readings, postcolonial readings, New Historicist readings, "New Perspective") are either ignored or dismissed in a few paragraphs—and Campbell is adamant that his reading is distinct from the "New Perspective." *Quest* provides in a single volume much of Campbell's prior research. As a book, it is most relevant for studies of Paul, exegesis of Romans and Corinthians, and the history of NT scholarship.

*Robert Paul Seesengood*

*University of North Carolina at Pembroke*

**CELEBRATING ROMANS: TEMPLATE FOR PAULINE THEOLOGY.** Edited by Sheila McGinn. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004. Pp. xix + 276. \$36.00, ISBN 0-8028-2839-6.

The topic of this Festschrift for R. Jewett is especially timely given the announcement that his long-awaited Romans commentary (*Hermeneia*) will appear in 2006. The essays are produced by a group of seasoned scholars such as J. Dunn, G. Snyder, W. Campbell, and C. Osiek as well as former students and associates. The essays are grouped into five areas of study on Romans that are considered to be of special interest to Jewett: 1) Theological Approaches, 2) Rhetorical Approaches, 3) Social-Historical Approaches, 4) Feminist Approaches, and 5) Romans in Dialogue with Contemporary Life. The net effect is a useful collection of essays that move over a broad area ranging from critical exegetical studies to an account of the use of Romans in a simulated classroom setting. While Jewett's interests are covered fairly, his archaeological interests are not given sufficient attention. Perhaps P. Lampe's short article on Judaeo-Christian households in the early Roman Church is meant to cover this deficiency. Overall, however, the essays underscore Jewett's view that Romans vitally reflect Paul's interaction with the Roman Christian community in light of his wider Christian mission. It will serve as a very helpful companion to his forthcoming substantive commentary on Romans.

*Allan J. McNicol*

*Austin Graduate School of Theology*

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE ROMANS: THE SETTING AND THE RHETORIC OF MARK'S GOSPEL.** By Brian J. Incigneri. *Biblical Interpretation Series*, 65. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2003. Pp. xiv + 426. \$130.00, ISBN 90-04-13108-6.

Incigneri's fresh, intriguing interpretation of Mark focuses on the author's rhetorical aims vis-à-vis his first pathetic, flesh-and-blood readers. Incigneri locates these readers in Rome, relying most heavily on his analysis of Mark's rhetoric about martyrdom. At the time of the writing of Mark, Christians had died for the Gospel only in Rome. Given Mark 13, Incigneri specifically locates Mark's writing soon after details of the Temple's destruction arrived in Rome in July/August 71 and after the triumph of Titus. For Incigneri, Mark does not associate the apocalypse with the Temple's destruction. Instead, Mark's so-called apocalypse ("the end" in 13:7, 13) is about his readers' own potential martyrdom. The life of Mark's Jesus from baptism through trials to death becomes a model for these potential martyrs, encouraged by Mark to die for the Gospel. Mark's disciples, particularly Peter, incarnate the worldly values of Roman society, characteristics that Mark perceives in his readers. Mark's readers should beware these values and the corresponding betrayals and denials of the disciples. However, Mark also creates sympathy for Peter and implies Jesus' forgiveness of him (14:72; 16:7). That emotional rhetoric encourages Mark's readers to forgive those who were traitors and deniers during the Neronian persecution but who now wish to return to the Markan community.

*Richard Walsh*

*Methodist College*

**1 CORINTHIANS.** By Alan F. Johnson. *Volume 7. The IVP NT Commentary Series*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. Pp. 343. \$22.00, ISBN 0-8308-1807-3.

In keeping with the series' goal to combine faithful exposition with contemporary relevance, this volume provides a nontechnical yet scholarly treatment of 1 Corinthians for a broadly evangelical readership. Johnson takes as a unifying theme the call to transform cultural values according to the self-giving love modeled by the crucified Christ. After a brief introduction that touches upon both the social and cultural context of ancient Corinth and traditional views about the letter's occasion and purpose, Johnson presents an outline dividing the letter into ten sections. He begins each section with an overview of interpretive problems and contemporary issues before offering a commentary on specific verses and paragraphs. Although he relies heavily on other interpreters (especially A. Thiselton, B. Witherington and B. Winter), Johnson includes a wide range of unique illustrative material including song lyrics, poetry, anecdotes from missionaries, and occasional personal testimonies. Recom-

mended for pastors and teachers in church settings.

*David Charles Aune*  
*Ashland University*

**ESCHATOLOGY IN GALATIANS: RETHINKING PAUL'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN GALATIA.** By Yon-Gyong Kwon. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, II/183. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2004. Pp. 258. \$99.50, ISBN 3-16-148438-X.

This revision of the author's dissertation (King's College, University of London, 2001) challenges traditional readings that view salvation for the Galatian believers as having been fully realized in the Christ event. Kwon begins by identifying Paul's central concern in the letter as the apostatizing behavior of the Galatian converts rather than the theological views of the agitators in Galatia. In this context, Paul not only chastises his readers for departing from their obedience to the truth but also warns them about the potentially disastrous future consequences of their current actions. Kwon then argues that the major theological themes of justification, sonship, promise, and inheritance have a distinctively future-oriented eschatological thrust in Galatians seen perhaps most clearly in 5:5 ("we wait for the hope of righteousness"). Kwon accounts for the future eschatological orientation in this letter as Paul's pastoral response to the moral crisis in Galatia. This monograph merits a thoughtful consideration because substantial theological questions are based on careful argumentation and solid exegesis. A valuable contribution to Pauline studies.

*David Charles Aune*  
*Ashland University*

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON: A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY.** By Robert McL Wilson. *International Critical Commentary*. New York: T & T Clark, 2005. Pp. xxxvi + 380. \$100.00, ISBN 0-567-04471-8.

Careful attention to the Greek text is the foundation upon which this excellent commentary is built. With regard to the two key introductory issues for this letter, authorship and the identity of the "heresy" opposed by the author, Wilson suggests that it was composed by a Pauline disciple (possibly Timothy) shortly after Paul's death to confront a new form of teaching about which we know very little with any certainty. (In view of the multitude of claims regarding the Colossian "heresy" and its alleged links to "Gnosticism" of some form or sort, the reticence of an acknowledged expert on the subject is noteworthy.) Indeed, it may not be a case of "heresy" as much as a matter of differently placed emphases: whereas the author's "opponents laid their emphasis on certain things, he is concerned to bring out the supreme significance of Christ as Lord of all, and as the one in whom God has reconciled all

things to himself." In the commentary proper, one typically finds not long lists of previous commentators lined up on either side of controverted issues but rather Wilson's own judicious opinion (and the considerations upon which it is based) accompanied by useful references to key secondary literature. Classical exegetical difficulties (such as the reference in 1:24 to "the deficiencies in the afflictions of Christ") are handled concisely and judiciously. In short, the commentary is comprehensive, thorough, and thoughtful, with careful attention to syntax and philology—very much in keeping with the best of the ICC tradition.

*Michael W. Holmes*  
*Bethel University*

**APOCALYPSE DE PAUL (NH V, 2).** By Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl and Michael Kaler. *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi*, "Textes," 31. Leuven: Peeters, 2006. \$77.00, ISBN 97-90-429-1600-5.

In 2 Cor 12:1-4, the Apostle Paul gives a brief account of an ascent experience that he had had fourteen years earlier. He was "caught up" to Paradise in the "third heaven." This account attracted the attention of later Christians, including the author of the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V, 2), who reports that Paul actually got all the way to the tenth heaven. In this book, Rosenstiehl presents a Coptic transcription and a French translation of the tractate as well as a lengthy introduction. Kaler presents a commentary in English preceded by an extensive introduction. Rosenstiehl interprets the text as a non-Gnostic Christian apocalypse whose author drew on a wide range of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. He does allow for the possibility of "Gnosticizing" glosses. Kaler interprets the text as a Gnostic writing but probably goes too far in specifying a Valentinian context for it. Their book is an excellent addition to the Laval series of Coptic Gnostic writings.

*Birger A. Pearson*  
*University of California*

**THE WISDOM OF JAMES: PARALLELS WITH MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM.** By John P. Keenan. New York: Newman Press, 2005. Pp. viii + 266. \$24.95, ISBN 0-8091-4168-X.

This volume offers a standard section-by-section commentary on James interspersed with "perspectives" from Mahāyāna Buddhism that are easily distinguished from the main text by being printed on a gray background. The notes and bibliography are more extensive than is usually the case in a commentary of this type and size. Keenan discusses the existence of any causal or other relationship (beyond that of being a "parallel") between James and Buddhism during his treatment of individual words or phrases: thus, the importance of doing, not just believing; discrimination against poor members of the community; freedom from delusion brought about by the practice of wisdom; the transitory nature of all created things;

desire as a basis of human suffering; etc. Keenan admits that James may have been influenced in some of his ideas and judgments by the Buddhism that was not far distant geographically and culturally from the Mediterranean world inhabited by James. In sum, this is a well-balanced overview of modern scholarly opinion on James leavened by insights from a world of religious thought that is usually unknown or ignored by students of the OT and NT.

*Casimir Bernas*  
*Holy Trinity Abbey*

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARALLELS BETWEEN 2 PETER AND OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.** By Michael J. Gilmour. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002. Pp. xiii + 176. \$29.95, ISBN 1-58983-049-0.

The title aptly describes the contents of this study, whose final conclusions about the significance of parallels in 2 Peter can profitably be applied to any piece of literature. Briefly summarized: after meticulously examining other early Christian writings, Gilmour finds little value in the parallels to this letter in other early Christian literature, although the similarities with the Pastorals are striking. This negative judgment, however, is no reason to discard 2 Peter as being out of sync with mainstream early Christian thought. The letter (really a last testament) should be allowed to speak for itself as the witness of one pastor (who writes in the guise of Peter) to a form of Christianity whose doctrine and morals he himself represents. We are to avoid fitting his writing into some preconceived grand scheme of early Christianity. We should hear the author on his own terms, at his own particular moment in history (almost surely second century and thus the latest writing in the NT canon), and as a person writing to his own constituency (unknown to us). Gilmour's reasoning and conclusions are cogent. They remind us that the little people of antiquity (as of today) are no less worthy of being heard than are the mighty—under whose cloak the author of 2 Peter attempts to clothe his message.

*Casimir Bernas*  
*Holy Trinity Abbey*

**THE SECRET REVELATION OF JOHN.** By Karen L. King. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. Pp. 416. \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-674-01903-4.

The *Apocryphon of John* is the most important document of "Sethian" or "Classic" Gnosticism, extant in four Coptic translations representing two basic versions, a shorter one (BG, 2; NHC III, 1) and a longer one (NHC II, 1; IV, 1). In this book, King presents a new translation of both versions, BG, 2 and NHC II, 1 on facing pages, with variants in NHC III, 1 given in notes. King does not believe that "Gnosticism" ever existed, and she rejects the view of a number of scholars (including myself) that the *Ap. John* as we know it repre-

sents a Gnostic myth that has been secondarily "Christianized" with its frame story (Jesus' revelation to John) and its dialogue features (Jesus answering questions posed by John). In her learned commentary, she shows how its author reinterpreted Plato's *Timaeus*, the book of Genesis, Wisdom literature, and the Gospel of John. While some of her interpretations are open to question, e.g., extrapolating healing practices from the longer version's account of the creation of the various parts of Adam's "psychical" body by demonic beings, her sympathetic and insightful reading of the *Ap. John* as a Christian text linking "social critique with spirituality" has something to commend it.

Birger A. Pearson  
University of California

---

## History of Christianity

---

**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY.** Edited by Erwin Fahlbusch, Jan Milič Lochman, John Mbiti, Jaroslav Pelikan, and Lukas Vischer. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Statistical editor, David B. Barrett. Volume 3 (J-O). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003. Pp. xix + 884. \$100.00, ISBN 0-8028-2415-3.

**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY.** Edited by Erwin Fahlbusch, Jan Milič Lochman, John Mbiti, Jaroslav Pelikan, and Lukas Vischer. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Statistical editor, David B. Barrett. Volume 4 (P-Sh). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005. Pp. xxx + 952. \$100.00, ISBN 0-8028-2416-1.

Translated from *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, third edition (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht 1997), these volumes follow the format of volume one (reviewed in *RSR* 26:89) and contain approximately 600 articles. In the English translation, the content of *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon* has been expanded to include more articles that would be of interest to English-speaking readers, particularly biographical and geographical articles as well as Christianity's relationship with other religions. Three features make this an outstanding encyclopedia. First, although the genesis of the project was in European Protestantism, the entire history of Christianity is presented in balanced theological, political, and sociological terms. Second, the cultural diversity and the varied institutional sites of newly acquired writers provide an important cross-cultural emphasis for the series. Finally, these volumes continue to include the most current demographic information (compiled by D. B. Barrett) as well as the history and current status of Christianity in approximately 200 countries. In addition, many articles now include small

countries that have never received much press in European and American publications. The encyclopedia should prove to be an invaluable starting point for research on indigenous voices and their particular relationship to Christianity. Although the dominant focus of these volumes continues to be on the history and theology of Christianity in any particular region, ethnographic and political issues are not completely neglected. At a minimum, most articles provide a bibliography for further research that includes social and political concerns. These four volumes are already essential for research libraries, but when the fifth and final volume is completed, the set should take its place as the standard reference work on the history of Christianity.

Fred W. Burnett  
Anderson University

---

## History of Christianity (Early)

---

**WHEN CHILDREN BECAME PEOPLE: THE BIRTH OF CHILDHOOD IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY.** By O. M. Bakke. Translated by Brian McNeil. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005. Pp. ix + 348. \$18.00, ISBN 0-8006-3725-9.

Dealing primarily with patristic sources, Bakke's book fills a hole in current childhood studies. Expanding on work begun by W. A. Strange, Bakke seeks to move away from metaphoric understandings of children evident in the extant literature about childhood in Christianity toward an anthropology of children. He is specifically concerned with what it was like to be a Christian child in antiquity and how ancient Christianity influenced thinking about children. Beginning with an overview of children (actual and imagined) in the Greco-Roman world, Bakke focuses on themes like abortion, infanticide, and child-adult sexual relations. Juxtaposing them with Greco-Roman writers, Bakke argues that the church fathers offered new perspectives on children, seeing them as innocent and pure exemplars of Christian devotion, as moral subjects, and as individuals with dignity that made them (like adults) recipients of God's salvation. The work is a thorough and engaging exploration of the place of children in social history and in early Christian thought, and contributes significantly to a largely unexplored area within patristics as well as to the still underdeveloped field of childhood studies.

Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg  
Colgate University

**PROCLUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE CULT OF THE VIRGIN IN LATE ANTIQUITY: HOMILIES 1-5, TEXTS, AND TRANSLATIONS.** By Nicholas Con-

stas. Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*, 66. Leiden: Brill, 2003. Pp. xiv + 450. \$124.00, ISBN 90-04-12612-0.

A fascinating study of christological controversies in the Eastern Mediterranean during the fifth century. At issue: the meaning of the Marian title *theotokos* (lit. "God-bearer") and its implications for understanding Christ's human and divine natures. A key player in the debates was Proclus (d. 446), a priest who defied his own bishop Nestorius's ban on the title and preached in its defense. As bishop of Constantinople, Proclus promoted the new feast days and cult devoted to the Virgin Mary. The book consists of three parts: a theological and historical study of Proclus's role in fifth-century debates over the incarnation followed by five festal sermons in Greek (four of which lacked critical editions prior to Constan's publication), lucid translations, and an astute commentary drawing from a diverse range of classical and patristic writings. Encyclopedic yet apt, Constan's commentary rewards multiple readings. The final section expertly investigates two key themes in patristic biblical interpretation: Mary's impregnation by the Word, or *conceptio per aurem* (cf. Luke 1:26-38), and weaving metaphors for the incarnation. Both essays yield rich insights into early Byzantine attitudes toward the senses, gender, and metamorphosis. Appended with rich indices, the volume is a trove for expert and non-expert alike. Far more than a collection of sermons, the entire book deftly illuminates depths of the Byzantine theological imagination. An outstanding achievement that belongs in every undergraduate, seminary, and university library.

Georgia Frank  
Colgate University

**FEAST, FAST OR FAMINE: FOOD AND DRINK IN BYZANTIUM.** Edited by Wendy Mayer and Silke Trzcionka. *Byzantina Australiensia*, 15. Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2005. Pp. ix + 215. \$49.90, ISBN 1876503-18-1.

This collection of thirteen articles covers a wide range of topics concerning food and drink in Byzantium. Two of the articles take an economic approach, one analyzing with precision the logistics of "feeding the army" (Haldon), the other giving very general thoughts on the relations between metropolis and hinterland (Fitzpatrick). All other contributions deal with social history and allow fascinating glimpses into the practices associated with food and drink. The hierarchy of imperial banquets and the ways in which it is expressed (Malmberg) show the centrality of the emperor, which also comes out in the description of the banquet at an imperial wedding where the orator uses food to highlight the emperor's generosity and wisdom (Stone). In the twelfth century, food-related humor staging gluttony and hunger served to define