IMPRINTS, VOICEPRINTS, AND FOOTPRINTS OF MEMORY

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IMPRINTS, VOICEPRINTS, AND FOOTPRINTS OF MEMORY

COLLECTED ESSAYS OF WERNER H. KELBER

by

Werner H. Kelber

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In Memoriam

John Miles Foley
1947–2012

Curator's Professor of Classical Studies and English
W. H. Byler Distinguished Chair in the Humanities, University of Missouri

Founder of the journal *Oral Tradition*
Founding Director of the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition
Founding Director of the Center for eResearch

Recipient of grants and awards from the ACLS, the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEH, the Fulbright Program, and the Mellon Foundation.

At home in the ancient Greek, the Anglo-Saxon, and the Serbo-Croatian epics, Foley was the world's foremost authority in comparative oral traditions.

In his own words, he was "vitally interested in the oldest and the newest of humankind's communicative technologies, Oral Tradition and the Internet, and especially in their unexpected similarities."

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Foreword

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the work of Werner Kelber for biblical studies. His groundbreaking 1983 monograph, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, challenged the core foundations of biblical scholarship by offering a paradigm shift of sweeping proportions. Over the last three decades he has affirmed, revised, refined, and expanded his work in conversation with others who work in the same field and who are interacting with his scholarchip. The articles and papers arranged in chronological order in this volume chart that pioneering course. Every essay makes an original contribution, even when Kelber is reviewing the work of others. I have learned an enormous amount from this opportunity to study them.

In Kelber's view, biblical scholars of early Christianity and the New Testament have not adequately taken into account the ancient media of communication. Quite the contrary, historical-critical scholarship has worked instead by using assumptions and methods of modern print culture. In Kelber's analysis, this approach represents an anachronistic understanding of the arts of communication in antiquity, resulting in flawed historical reconstructions and inadequate interpretations of biblical writings. Even more problematic, this print-media mentality has left out of account the actual ancient media of communication—a "myopia" in the way we have traditionally studied biblical cultures and texts.

Drawing on current scholarship in cultural anthropology, orality studies, memory studies, classical scholarship, psychology, and other fields, Kelber proposes a bold alternative hermeneutic that shifts the center of gravity away from a focus on texts in print-mode to a model with four interrelated components: oral speech, memory, scribality, and performance. These provide the key elements of the complex communication arts of the ancient world. In unpacking these components, Kelber discusses features of the early Christian culture of orality, the overarching significance of memory as the main storehouse of tradition, scribing and manuscripts as seen in interrelationship with orality and memory, and

the importance of performance. Whereas numerous scholars have developed one or the other of these components, Kelber's body of work offers a comprehensive, innovative, and coherent theory of the ancient arts of communication that can guide our future work.

Furthermore, Kelber demonstrates how oral speech, individual and collective memory, chirographic manuscripts, and performances all served the social, political, ethical, and cultural ethos and identity of the community. To characterize the pervasiveness and importance of this cultural ethos, Kelber refers to it as the "biosphere" of a particular community. It is the life-world that a community shares and that gives a community its identity. It is the collective social memory that selects, omits, revises, adapts, re-creates, and expands the traditions to serve the needs of the community in particular times and circumstances. Within this ethos, the components of communication interrelate in various ways to create and maintain the cultural traditions that give social identity, stability, adaptability, and innovation to the community.

Also, in Kelber's view, at an even deeper level, the particular communication arts of a culture shape its individual and collective mentality in ways that are distinct from cultures with other means of communication—just as our current electronic means of communication are changing the collective ways we think and relate in the modern world. The challenge Kelber offers biblical scholarship is to overcome the mental and social assumptions of the print culture that have dominated biblical scholarship and to seek to grasp the mindset of ancient cultures, where speech, memory, and performance held priority and where the nature and function of scribal manuscripts are to be distinguished from modern print.

In making these points, Kelber deals not only with communication arts in antiquity but also with the communication media of medieval culture, premodernism, Gutenberg's print revolution, and the Reformation. In other words, these essays do not merely cover New Testament texts, history, and interpretation. They also invite readers to think about the significance of media communications across the span of Western history up to modernity. This long-range perspective serves to facilitate comparative thought by enabling readers to become aware of the modern media sensibilities that have dominated our scholarly approaches to the Bible.

Kelber makes clear that the foundational shift from a print mentality to a focus on ancient communication arts is neither an add-on nor a blind spot to be investigated with the same tools we have been using. Rather,

seeing early Christianity as part of an oral-memory-scribal-performance culture represents a paradigm shift that pulls the rug from under so much of what we do and boldly proposes different presuppositions and procedures that require new tools and methods. As such, Kelber's work is revolutionary, and, as such, it is has the potential to change a great deal of biblical scholarship at the concrete level of historical reconstruction and literary interpretation. In applying the new hermeneutic, Kelber emphasizes that all the key components—oral speech, memory, scribality, and performance—were interrelated in multiple ways. Such complexity makes it necessary for us to attempt to be specific about the presence and interaction of these components in any given instance under study.

Kelber himself develops numerous examples that demonstrate how attention to the ancient media might impact our understanding of the New Testament and related writings. He offers interpretations of Mark, Paul's letters, Q, and the Gospel of Thomas, each of which manifests different configurations of the arts of communication. Kelber also shows the potential impact of the new model in several traditional historical-critical disciplines such as form criticism, source criticism, and textual criticism. He shows how these disciplines that are based on the assumptions of a print culture have led to mistaken conclusions, and he illustrates potential outcomes using alternative methods of study based on the model that employs oral, memorial, chirographic, and performative arts of communication. In the course of these arguments, Kelber reconceptualizes the model of tradition itself—not only the Gospel tradition but also the proto-Masoretic tradition of the Hebrew Bible, the early rabbinic tradition, and the Hellenistic school tradition, inviting us to discern media commonalities across all four traditions.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with every specific of Kelber's communication model or with the way he reconfigures disciplines or with his interpretations of particular works, there is no getting around the radical challenge of his work to the roots of biblical studies—his foundational critique of our anachronistic print-culture approaches and his call for another set of assumptions to guide us into a new era of biblical studies. At stake, in Kelber's view, is the historical-critical paradigm itself in its current form. In an even larger sense, it can be said that the central metaphors of Western thought are affected by this media change: text and speech, tradition and composition, authorship and reading, writing and text, memory and imagination, cognition and logic, and performance and interpretation.

Few scholars have produced works that change the landscape of biblical studies. Werner Kelber is one of them. Since the onset of Kelber's clarion call for new media foundations, many scholars have contributed to the field. They have also incorporated, expanded, engaged, and challenged Kelber's insights and proposals—in papers, conferences, seminar sections of scholarly societies, monographs and dissertations, collections of articles, websites, publishing series, and much more. This volume of collected essays represents a giant leap forward by making Kelber's work accessible in one place to a wide range of scholars, and the rippling implications left in the wake of his work will undoubtedly continue to shake the scholarly world.

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Acknowledgments

Chapter 1 was delivered in April 1985 at a symposium hosted by the Theology Department at Marquette University on the theme of Call and Discipleship in New Testament Perspectives, then published in *Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 24–46.

Chapter 2 was published in *Semeia* 39 (1987): 107–33. Titled *Orality, Aurality, and Biblical Narrative*, that issue was edited by Lou H. Silberman and devoted to a discussion of my book *The Oral and the Written Gospel*. The article was reprinted in revised form in *The Interpretation of Dialogue* (ed. Tullio Maranhao; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 75–98. A French translation appeared as "Récit et Révélation: Voiler, Dévoiler at Revoiler," *Revue D'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 69 (1989): 389–410.

Chapter 3 appeared in *Semeia* 43 (1988): 1–20 (with response by Frank Kermode, 155–67).

Chapter 4 was published in the *Journal of the American Academy* of *Religion* 58 (1990): 69–98.

Chapter 5 was published in *Semeia* 65 (1994): 139–67.

Chapter 6 was delivered in October 1993 as the ninth annual Milman Parry and Albert Lord Lecture at the University of Missouri-Columbia. It was published in revised and expanded form in *Oral Tradition* 10/2 (1995): 409–50.

Chapter 7 appeared in the reprint of *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) as my response to critical reviews fourteen years after the initial publication of the volume.

Chapter 8 was delivered at the University of Natal, South Africa, in August 2000 and at the Russian Institute for Cultural Research, St. Petersburg, in June 2001. The lecture was pulished in the *Bulletin for Contextual Theology in Africa* 7/3 and 8/1 (2000–2001; double issue): 12–24, and in the series International Readings on Theory, History and Philosophy of Culture 12, in a volume titled *Ontology of Dialogue: Metaphysics and Religious Experience* (ed. Liubava Moreva; St. Petersburg: Eidos, 2002), 181–207.

Chapter 9 was delivered in October 2002 at a symposium hosted by the Evangelische Akademie, Loccum, Germany, titled "Deutungen von Wirklichkeit—erkenntnistheoretische Voraussetzungen und Geltungsanspüche religiöser und philosophischer Interpretationsmodelle." It was published in *Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit: Beiträge aus geschichts-theoretischer, philosophischer und theologischer Perspektive* (ed. Jens Schröter und Antje Eddelbüttel; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 153–68.

Chapter 10 was published as "The Quest for the Historical Jesus: From the Perspectives of Medieval, Modern, and Post-Enlightenment Readings, and in View of Ancient, Oral Aesthetics," in John Dominic Crossan, Luke Timothy Johnson, and Werner H. Kelber, *The Jesus Controversy: Perspectives in Conflict* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999), 75–115. A revised version was delivered in June 1999 at the University of Hamburg under the title "Der historische Jesus: Bedenken zur gegenwärtigen Diskussion aus der Perspektive mittelalterlicher, moderner und postmoderner Hermeneutik." It was published in *Der historische Jesus: Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung* (ed. Jens Schröter and Ralph Brucker; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 15–66. A further revision was presented in April of 2004 at the University of Leuven, Belgium, under the title "The Theological Refutation, Linguistic Dilemma, and Ethical Validity of the Search for the Historical Jesus."

Chapter 11 was published in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (ed. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher; SemeiaSt 52; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 221–48.

Chapter 12 appeared in the form of a review essay in *Review of Biblical Literature* 9 (2007): 1–24.

Chapter 13 was published in *Saintly Influence: Edith Wyschogrod and the Possibilities of Philosophy of Religion* (ed. Eric Boynton and Martin Kavka; New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 175–201. The piece is a contribution to the Festschrift in honor of the late Edith Wyschogrod, who served as the J. Newton Rayzor Professor of Philosophy and Religious Thought at Rice University (1992–2003) and served as president of the American Academy of Religion (1993).

Chapter 14 appeared in *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives* (ed. Werner H. Kelber and Samuel Byrskog; Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009), 173–206. In that volume, my essay constitutes the final, summarizing response to contributions by seven colleagues who revisit *Memory and Manuscript*, Birger Gerhardsson's landmark contribution to twentieth-century New Testament studies. Following the introductory essay (Samuel Byrskog), the contributors discuss form criticism (Christopher Tuckett), Jesus' message as oral tradition (Terence C. Mournet), the Jesus tradition in the Pauline letters (David E. Aune), "reoralizing" in the talmudic texts (Martin S. Jaffee), memory and tradition in the Hellenistic schools (Loveday Alexander), and memory (Alan Kirk)—principal themes treated in Gerhardsson's *Memory and Manuscript*. My concluding essay reflects on all seven essays as autonomous pieces and as responses to Gerhardsson's magnum opus.

Chapter 15 was delivered in April of 2008 at a conference that was part of a series of orality-literacy conferences inaugurated in 2001 in South Africa and over the years convened on three continents: Africa, Europe, and North America. This, the seventh conference in the series, was organized under the title "Oral-Scribal Dimensions of Scripture, Piety and Practice in Judaism, Christianity and Islam" and took place at Rice University, Houston, Texas. The lecture was initially published in revised form in *Oral Tradition* 25/1 (2010): 115–40, then republished in *The Interface of Orality and Writing* (ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 71–99.

Chapter 16 was delivered on April 7, 2005, at a conference convened under the title "Walter Ong's Contribution to the Humanities at St. Louis University," celebrating the legacy of Walter J. Ong, S.J. It was published in *Language, Culture, and Identity* (ed. Sara van den Berg and Thomas M. Walsh; New York: Hampton, 2011), 49–67.

Abbreviations

Primary Sources

1 Apol.	Justin Martyr, *First Apology*
Ap. Jas.	*Apocryphon of James*
Dial. Sav.	*Dialogue of the Savior*
Did.	*Didache*
Eph.	Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*
Gos. Thom.	*Gospel of Thomas*
Hist. eccl.	Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*
Inst.	Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*

Secondary Sources

ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
AJT	*American Journal of Theology*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BTZ	*Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina
CWS	Classics of Western Spirituality
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HvTSt	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
HSCL	Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature

HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
Int	*Interpretation*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio divina
LTQ	*Lexington Theological Quarterly*
MoRev	*Missouri Review*
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
Phil	*Philologus*
PL	Patrologia latina. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris: Migne, 1844–1864.
POxy	Oxyrhynchus papyri
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
RGG	*Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Edited by K. Galling. 3rd ed. 7 vols. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957–1965.
RHPR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
JSLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
StPatr	*Studia Patristica*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
TorSTh	Toronto Studies in Theology
TS	*Theological Studies*
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TTS	Trierer theologische Studien
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	*Word and World*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Introduction

> That manuscripts are different from modern printed editions is obvious enough. Yet only when we have spent some time among manuscripts do we begin to realize just how powerful this difference is.
>
> —John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture*

> We have yet to appreciate fully the extent to which contemporary literary theory is founded upon an archi-typography.
>
> —John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture*

The essays collected in this volume and arranged in the chronological order of their composition were published between 1985 and 2011, spanning a period of over a quarter of a century. All the pieces have previously been published, and all have been reworked and edited. To enhance readability, to facilitate cross-referencing, and to improve the coherence of the whole, the sixteen chapters have been subdivided into sense units and numbered across the volume. All essays have been written after the publication of my earlier study *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (1983). They take their starting point from that book and seek to develop the premises initiated in it.

In the most general terms, *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory* offers analyses of the ancient world of communication as it manifested itself in voice and chirographic practices, in oral-scribal interfaces, in compositional processes and performative activities, and in memory both as an individual and a social phenomenon. Some essays extend the topic of communication beyond ancient culture across the Middle Ages and into modernity. The title articulates the core issue explored in these essays: the dominantly typographical mediation of ancient chirographic, oral, and memorial communication processes. Until the recent advent of the electronic medium, the bulk of our studies of ancient biblical texts has been processed via the print medium. Although there is little consciousness of this fact, it has influenced every aspect of modern biblical

scholarship. We tend to be least conscious of that which affects us most deeply. This volume seeks to develop a *Problembewusstsein*, a consciousness of the media problematics rooted in the authority of the modern print Bible and in the historical-critical paradigm. There is a media gap that separates by two millennia our scholarly treatment of the print Bible, processed mostly in the print medium, from the media world in which the biblical texts were composed, reoralized, and remembered. While no doubt inspired by current electronic technologies and their transformative impact on our social and political life, on consciousness and the human sensorium, these essays are intellectually indebted to the pioneering work of humanistic scholars such as Milman Parry, Frances Yates, Albert Bates Lord, Walter J. Ong, Eric Havelock, Martin Jaffee, John Dagenais, Ruth Finnegan, John Miles Foley, Elizabeth Eisenstein, Michael Giesecke, Mary Carruthers, and others who in many and diverse ways have initiated and advanced our knowledge of oral tradition specifically and of the relations between media technologies, culture, and cognition in general. In moving oral, scribal, memorial dynamics and their transformation through the print medium to a point of central reflection, the essays collected here strive after a paradigm that thematizes the materiality and aesthetics of communicative practices.

The oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm that is being developed in these essays poses challenges to the reigning historical, documentary, source-critical paradigm. The latter has served as the intellectual impetus for biblical scholarship since premodern times and far into postmodernism. Most of our exegetical practices and theoretical assumptions about the verbal arts in ancient, early Christian, and Jewish culture are deeply entrenched in this classic paradigm. Professional biblical scholarship has been conducting its business for over five centuries in the medium of print, and has been accustomed to experiencing the Bible as a technologically constructed objectivity. Put differently, from the perspectives developed here, the historical-critical paradigm appears culture-bound and beholden to modern media dynamics that are many centuries removed from the ancient communications culture. The first epigraph to this introduction articulates this media gap. The challenge I pose to the historical-critical paradigm is not meant to be a categorical objection to it. To the contrary. The accomplishments of the historical examination of the Bible are incontestably huge. They mark a high point of the intellectual ethos of modernity. My concern is rather that the historical-critical paradigm is not historical enough. What is advocated here is a novel sense

of sensibilities that seeks to come to terms with what Foley has called "an inadequate theory of verbal art." More is involved than the correction of an imbalance. A new theory of the verbal art that is commensurate with the ancient culture of communication—that is what I have been attempting to accomplish over the past quarter of a century. The studies brought together in this volume are therefore not merely to be viewed as an embellishment or modification of conventional historical, predominantly textual studies, something to be added to the existing scholarly paradigm. Instead, these essays invite readers to examine a set of concepts that are widely viewed as a given of the historical paradigm and are often thought to require no critical reflection any more. Notions about text and speech, tradition and composition, authorship and reading, writing and text, memory and imagination, cognition and logic—central metaphors of Western thought—are all affected in the effort to rethink what in my view is a paradigm driven by a dominantly post-Gutenberg intellectualism.

Nomenclature has been a concern throughout these essays. Historical criticism by and large lacks the language to express the oral-scribal-memorial-performative dynamics of ancient word processing. I am struggling to wrest myself free from technical terms and definitions that represent typographically conditioned logic and habits, and yet I have found myself again and again slipping into the language of modernity's print medium. Ideally, the vocabulary we use must be derived from and have a direct bearing on the phenomena we observe. Nomenclature is therefore of the essence. For example, in the course of writing these essays, I have grown increasingly uneasy about the use of terms such as *text* and *textuality*, words that are loaded with assumptions derived from modern literary criticism and print technology. I now prefer *manuscript* and *scribality*, *chirography* and *scriptography*, *scriptum* and *scripta*, all terms that denote the craft of handwriting. Throughout this volume, readers will encounter the following technical terms: *equiprimordiality*: a plurality of originals as over against the single original; Jesus as *Erinnerungsfigur* (J. Assmann): a memorially engaging and accessible personage, rather than a historically retrievable and verifiable one; *archaeology of memory*: retrieval of past traditions for present identification and mythicization; *commemorative keying* (Schwartz and Kirk): a tradition's linking with archetypal figures, images, and events of the past; *reoralization*: recycling of scripts into discourse; *dedicated medium*: stylized, patterned language rooted in oral performance and designed to achieve maximal communicative effects; *mnemohistory* (J. Assmann): history as a continuous stream of rememorizing

activities and processes; *damnatio memoriae*: the suppression of memory for psychological but also for political reasons; *typographic captivity*: communication and scholarship in the post-Gutenberg era conditioned and controlled by print technology; *biosphere*: tradition viewed as a live matrix of oral, scribal, memorial features and dynamics; *mouvance* (Zumthor): the recensional activity of a living manuscript culture in the process of persistent regeneration; *Traditionsbruch* (J. Assmann): a rupture in the tradition, typically after a forty years interval when (remembered) history has to yield to rememorization; *memorial threshold*: a memory crisis at the end of a generational period demanding a reconfiguration of memory; *virtuality* and *virtual text*: terms associated with the digital medium, denoting a textual reality not in the concrete, but in an electronically enhanced and transfigured sense; *scribal activism*: scribes' compositional, memorial intervention in the products of their trade; *interior visualization*: a feature of ancient rhetoric (and medieval memory theory), adverting to the interiorization of knowledge via images; *vox intexta* or *voiced texts:* scripted verbalization designed to reach its communicative realization in oral performance; *intermediality*: interaction of oral with scribal communication; *Rezitationstexte*: the nature of many ancient manuscripts to be reperformed in oral discourse; *enculturation* (the central concept in Carr's paradigm of the ancient verbal art, but employed by others as well): the educational function of ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean manuscripts to be inculcated in people's minds and hearts; *print capitalism* (Anderson): a new cultural phenomenon in Western history characterized by the confluence of the high tech of the fifteenth century with a rapidly growing entrepreneurship; *originalism*: fascination with origin, including the search for the original saying, the original text, and so on; *les cadres sociaux* (Halbwachs) and *Bezugsrahmen* (J. Assmann): referring to a central thesis of cultural memory which postulates that the past is never directly accessible apart from memory frameworks supplied by present social experiences; *reconstructivism*: a key feature of cultural memory stating that the past has to be continually reorganized to be preserved; *loci communes* or memory places: the creation of mental spaces for the storing of knowledge (used in this book also in reference to commonplace patterns in the passion narrative).

The readers following these essays in the chronological order of their composition will observe a shift from an initial focus on literary, narratological issues towards understanding the oral-scribal-memorial-performative dynamics and a growing theoretical grasp of the subject matter.

Among the wide range of issues covered in this volume, there are four central topics to which I return repeatedly and in different intellectual contexts. The first topic is *originalism*, a term at home in jurisprudence, and a characteristic trait of the historical-critical study of the Bible. Originalism, in the words of a sitting Supreme Court justice, is "to give the text the meaning it had when it was adopted." In biblical scholarship, originalism is a defining feature of its rationality. It refers to the search for what has often been referred to as the original Greek text of the New Testament, and our efforts to recover the singular originality of Jesus' *ipsissima verba* or their *ipsissima structura*, the original text of Q, and the original version among textual variants. It is a driving force in the historical Quest, in form criticism, in text criticism, and in Q research. My argument throughout is that the search for the single origin is incompatible with the oral-scribal dynamics of the early tradition.

The notion of *the one original* reflects the experience of the print medium, a point made in the second epigraph to this introduction. As long as texts remain actively involved in a performance process, each reactivation is authentically original. We have to think the—for us exceedingly difficult—concept of multiple originals, instead of the single reference point.

Originalism is a principal impulse of the discipline of *form criticism*, the second central topic in these essays. One of the most consequential methodological principles underlying modern biblical scholarship, it is based on the premise that oral items embedded in texts are identifiable, accessible, and detachable from their contents. The discipline was initially designed to come to an understanding of the nature and processes of oral tradition, but it was early on enlisted, and, I propose, misdirected toward the Quest for the original sayings of Jesus. I argue that current orality-scribality studies compromise nearly every aspect of form criticism, including that of the detachability of oral speech, the linearity of the oral, oral-scribal tradition, and the notion of the insignificance of the Gospels' narrative poetics. I suggest that already the discipline's very own designation in terms of form criticism is misconceived, because form is a visually based concept ill-suited to capture the phenomenon of oral discourse. True to the actual processes of oral tradition, the discipline should have called itself performance criticism, in the manner in which it is presently being developed by David Rhoads. In view of the immense influence form criticism exerts over biblical scholarship, I argue the case against the discipline in detail, and in the process reiterate and enlarge my own understanding of the oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm.

Tradition and *Oral Tradition* is the third topic treated extensively in these essays. I am keenly aware of the nationalistic and ethnocentric connotations that have been attached to this "intriguing and appealing and sometimes treacherous concept" (Ruth Finnegan). Both terms, *oral* and *tradition*, are multivalent, and the compound *oral tradition* does not credibly lend itself to a single, simple definition. Still, Foley is right, and Finnegan would no doubt agree, that "94 percent of our historical experience depended wholly on an alternate technology, the technology of oral tradition." Writing came exceedingly late, and it was very rare for the longest part of human existence—and even print verbalization may turn out to be a mere episode. Biblical criticism has been ill-served by the neglect or misapprehension of oral tradition. The time is long past that we can dismiss it as illusionary, or, as some would have it, as campfire romanticism, or as a residue of folklore studies that are becoming extinct in the humanities. In biblical studies, the oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm has rapidly proliferated over the past thirty years, and the relevant scholarship has grown in historical exactness and theoretical sophistication. Still, the modern scholarly view often is that oral discourse is an appendage to writing, whereas in ancient culture, and far into the Middle Ages, the relationship was precisely the other way around: writing served the imperatives of recitation and memorization.

Oral tradition has both a synchronic and a diachronic dimension. Once writing had come into existence, oral tradition may broadly be described as a verbal-social context larger than any single papyrus or vellum-bound verbalization. For the period of late antiquity, I have introduced the concept of *biosphere*, a matrix that carries the oxygen necessary to sustain human life. Diachronically, I have throughout my writings objected to a linear, developmental concept. I suggest that the perception of an oral-scribal-oral feedback loop, rather than a chain of causalities, may approximate oral tradition more accurately than the concept of trajectory. Importantly, the medieval Church and Catholicism to this day have institutionalized tradition by placing it (along with papal and conciliar authority) on equal footing with the authority of the Bible. I also reflect on the sixteenth-century Reformers' repudiation of tradition, thereby empowering the Bible with an authority it never had achieved before in Western culture. The fateful decision, I argue with others, is closely allied with the invention of the *high tech* of the fifteenth century. I devote some space to discussing the print revolution and its impact on the role of the Bible and its interpretation. Among typography's consequences are the rise of

the historical-critical paradigm, biblical literalism and fundamentalism, a notion unthinkable in ancient Christianity and the medieval church, and the Bible's commercialization, its transformation into a source of revenue and into a product that one day will be available on every night table in our hotels.

Memory, the fourth topic in this book, entered my work in the mid-1990s. Since then, my interest in the concept has steadily grown. Beginning with chapter 6, numerous aspects of memory are introduced, and various features of ancient and medieval culture are illuminated in connection with it: memory in ancient mythology, philosophy, and rhetoric (6.32), St. Augustine's meditation on memory (6.34), medieval reconceptualization of memory (6.35), memory's compositional processes (7.42), the ordeal of remembering in Judaism and Christianity (8.48–49), *mnemohistory* (8.50), studies on the ancient and medieval memory culture by Yates and Carruthers (9.51), early Christianity as *mnemohistory*, a process of constructive negotiations of (remembered) history and traditions (ch. 11), memory and violence (ch. 13)—including the passion narrative's commemorative strategies in response to a traumatic death (12.88), Gerhardsson's *Memory and Manuscript* (ch. 14)—including "eight faces of memory" (14.97), memory in the *enculturation* paradigm (15.98), the spatial model of memory (15.101), and memory and manuscript in medieval culture (15.102). Much to my own surprise, I observed in the process of editing these essays that memory had emerged as a key concept in my work. Memory is presently in the process of becoming a recognized research topic in biblical scholarship. But it is worth noting that with rare, though very distinguished, exceptions (Gerhardsson, Rodriguez, Kirk, Thatcher), memory in the past has found no place in historical criticism, in the subdisciplines of form criticism and textual criticism, and little recognition in hermeneutics. *Mnemosyne*, mother of the nine Muses, goddess of imagination and memory, one of the five canons of ancient rhetoric, whom Augustine counted, along with will and understanding, as one of the three powers of the soul, forces that were represented in the Trinity, "the matrix of all human temporal perception" (Carruthers), this deep space of the human mind, has played next to no role in modernity's study and interpretation of the ancient texts of the Bible. Few issues demonstrate as clearly the difference between the historical-critical paradigm and the oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm as the role of memory, its virtual absence in one model versus its rise to central position in the other. In these essays, I am as interested

in exploring the many faces of memory as I am in considering the reasons for its demise in biblical scholarship.

Memory, not unlike tradition, is a multivalent and quintessentially interdisciplinary category, and I have taken pains to demonstrate its applicability in diverse cultural contexts. In that vein, a particular concern of mine has been to enlarge the focus on memory toward the wider field of memory, language, cognition, sense perception, and also logic—because logic is not a given, it has a history. Understood in this broadly inclusive sense, these studies on communication processes cover ancient history, run through medieval culture, and also focus on the print revolution and its impact on modernity. Among the rhetoricians, epic singers, philosophers, and theologians whose relevant thoughts have been integrated are Homer, Gorgias, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Eusebius, Quintilian, Origen, Augustine, Abailard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, Luther—not to forget, the blacksmith, goldsmith, artisan, printer, publisher, and entrepreneur Johannes Gutenberg. The placement of the historical-critical paradigm into this broad sweep of Western communications history is intended to facilitate comparative thought, bringing self-awareness to the modern study of the print Bible via printed texts by confronting it with ancient and medieval media sensibilities.

The treatment of one aspect of memory merits special attention. In chapter 8, I discuss four case studies that manifest poisonous acts of remembering, conflicting memories, and the ordeal of remembering. Features of the New Testament, especially their rememorizations, and aspects of New Testament scholarship itself have been, and in some ways continue to be part of, an anti-Jewish discourse. I show how the fateful verse Matt 27:25 was reimagined under social, political circumstances different from those under which they were written, triggering demonizing fantasies and murderous actions throughout Western history (8.46). As far as the Middle Ages are concerned, I use the case of the noted Barcelona Disputation of 1236 between Rabbi Moses ben Nahman and Pablo Christiani to demonstrate that their irreconcilable positions are comprehensible as a clash of cultural memories (8.47). In modern times, I interpret Elie Wiesel's novel *Night*, and its complex compositional history, as an example of the ordeal of remembering transpiring under memory's stern mandate to carry the past over into the present (8.48). I finally analyze the appropriation of the trauma of Auschwitz by Jews and Christians, Polish Jews and Polish Catholics, national and religious interests. I argue that the atrocities live on as a tragic struggle of conflicting memories and identities (8.49).

All four cases, I demonstrate, lend themselves to the application of the social or cultural memory theory.

I have found some of these case studies helpful in reconsidering the approach to the passion narrative. I conclude that the historical-critical search for source-critical precision, textual originality, accurate chronology, and for the bedrock of historical facticity misses what, I think, matters most about the sacred story: the commemorative and psychodynamic impulses that feed it. I proceed from the concept of trauma and interpret the passion narrative as a commemorative story that applies various memorial strategies to carry out the impossible objective of projecting the hideous atrocity into the present.

I have dedicated these essays to the late John Miles Foley, a shining light in the humanities, and a very dear friend of mine.