

METHOD AND MEANING

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METHOD AND MEANING:
ESSAYS ON NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION
IN HONOR OF HAROLD W. ATTRIDGE

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IN HONOR OF HAROLD W. ATTRIDGE

Edited by

Andrew B. McGowan and Kent Harold Richards

Society of Biblical Literature

Atlanta

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ABBREVIATIONS

- 1Q22 *Dibre Moshe (Words of Moses)*, in D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 1 (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert [of Jordan] I)*; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), pls. XVIII–XIX
- 1QH^a *Hodayot^a or Thanksgiving Hymns^a*, in E. L. Sukenik, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1955), pls. XXXV–LVIII; figs. 14–17, 29–30
- 1QpHab *Pesher Habakkuk*, in M. Burrows (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery 1* (2 vols; New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950).
- 1QS *Serek Hayayad (Rule of the Community)*, in M. Burrows (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery 2* (2 vols; New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1951).
- 2 Bar (2 Apoc. Bar) *2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)* translated by A.F. J. Klijn in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 1* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; 2 vols; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 615–52
- 4Q368 *Apocryphal Pentateuch A* in E. Schuller et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam and M. Brady, *Qumran Cave 4.XXVIII: Miscellanea, Part 2* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert [of Jordan] XXVIII; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 131–50.
- 4Q369 *Prayer of Enosh* in H. W. Attridge et al., *Qumran Cave 4.VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert [of Jordan] XIII; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 353–416.
- 4Q377 *Apocryphal Pentateuch B* in E. Schuller et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam and M. Brady, *Qumran Cave 4.XXVIII: Miscellanea, Part 2* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVIII; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 205–18.
- 4Q541 *4QApocryphe de Lévi^b ar* in E. Puech, *Qumran Cave 4.XXII: Textes araméens, première partie: 4Q529-549* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXXI; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 225–57, pls XIII–XIV.
- 4QMMT *Miqsat Ma'asê ha-Torah (Some of the Torah Observations)*, in E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4.V: Miqsat*

	<i>Ma'ase ha-Torah</i> (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert X; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), I–VIII
AAS	<i>Acta apostolicae sedis</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992.
<i>Abr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Abrahamo</i> (<i>On the Life of Abraham</i>)
AcBib	Academia Biblica
ACNT	Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament
<i>Aen.</i>	Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentum
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
<i>Anima et res.</i>	Gregory of Nyssa, <i>De anima et resurrectione</i> (<i>On the Soul and the Resurrection</i>)
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972–
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i> (<i>Antiquities judaicae</i>)
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
<i>Ap. Jas.</i>	I,2 <i>Apocryphon of James</i>
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
<i>Bacch.</i>	Euripides, <i>Bacchae</i>
BAGD	Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Second ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Barnabas</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>b. B. Bat.</i>	<i>Baba Batra</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Third ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999
BET	Beiträge zur evangelische Theologie
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BGBE	Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese
<i>b. Hag.</i>	<i>Hagigah</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie

BINS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
<i>b. Meg.</i>	<i>Megillah</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
<i>b. Sanh.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
<i>b. Shab.</i>	<i>Shabbat</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
<i>b. Soṭah</i>	<i>Soṭah</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
<i>b. Ta^can.</i>	<i>Ta^canit</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTS	<i>Bible et terre sainte</i>
<i>b. Yebam.</i>	<i>Yebamot</i> (Babylonian Talmud)
<i>b. Yoma</i>	<i>Yoma</i> (= <i>Kippurim</i>) (Babylonian Talmud)
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>C. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i> (<i>Against Apion</i>)
<i>Cant.</i>	Gregory of Nyssa, <i>Commentarius in Canticum canticorum</i> (Commentary on the Song of Songs)
<i>Carn. Chr.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De carne Christi</i> (<i>The Flesh of Christ</i>)
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the <i>Damascus Document</i>
<i>C. du. ep. Pelag.</i>	Augustine, <i>Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum ad Bonifatium</i> (<i>Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians</i>)
<i>Cels.</i>	Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i> (<i>Against Celsus</i>)
CH	<i>Church History</i>
<i>Civ.</i>	Augustine, <i>De civitate Dei</i> (<i>The City of God</i>)
ConBNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica or Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
<i>Conf.</i>	Augustine, <i>Confessionum libri XIII</i> (<i>Confessions</i>)
<i>Conf.</i>	Philo, <i>De confusione linguarum</i> (<i>On the Confusion of Tongues</i>)
<i>Contempl.</i>	Philo, <i>De vita contemplative</i> (<i>On the Contemplative Life</i>)
<i>Corrept.</i>	Augustine, <i>De correptione et gratia</i> (<i>Admonition and Grace</i>)
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium. Edited by I. B. Chabot et al. Paris, 1903–
CSSH	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>
<i>Cur.</i>	Augustine, <i>De cura pro mortuis gerenda</i> (<i>The Care to Be Taken for the Dead</i>)
CurBS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>

<i>Cult. Fem.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De cultu feminarum</i> (<i>The Apparel of Women</i>)
<i>Decal.</i>	Philo, <i>De decalogo</i> (<i>On the Decalogue</i>)
<i>Descr.</i>	Pausanias, <i>Graeciae descriptio</i> (<i>Description of Greece</i>)
<i>Det.</i>	Philo <i>Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat</i> (<i>That the Worse Attacks the Better</i>)
<i>Deus.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i> (<i>That God Is Unchangeable</i>)
<i>Dial. Adam.</i>	<i>Dialogue of Adamantius</i>
<i>Dial. d.</i>	Lucian, <i>Dialogi deorum</i> (<i>Dialogues of the Gods</i>)
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin, <i>Dialogus cum Tryphone</i> (<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>)
<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didache</i>
<i>Div. quaest. Simpl.</i>	Augustine, <i>De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
D.L.	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Lives of Eminent Philosophers</i>
DNP	<i>Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike</i> . Edited by H. Cancik and H. Schneider. Stuttgart, 1996–
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EAC	<i>Écrits apocryphes chrétiens</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	Philo, <i>De ebrietate</i> (<i>On Drunkenness</i>)
<i>Eccl. Rab.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes Rabbah</i>
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar
<i>Enchir.</i>	Augustine, <i>Enchiridion de fide, spe, et caritate</i> (<i>Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love</i>)
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistolae, Epistle/s</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Pliny the Younger, <i>Epistolae</i>
<i>Ep.2.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Epistle 2</i>
<i>Ep. Pet. Phil.</i>	VIII,2 <i>Letter of Peter to Philip</i>
ErFor	Erträge der Forschung
ET	English translation
ETS	Erfurter theologische Studien
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	<i>Exodus Rabbah</i>
FG	Fourth Gospel
<i>Fid. symb.</i>	Augustine, <i>De fide et symbolo</i> (<i>Faith and the Creed</i>)
<i>Flor.</i>	Ptolemy (the Gnostic), <i>Epistula ad Floram</i> (<i>Letter to Flora</i>)
<i>Fort.</i>	Augustine, <i>Contra Fortunatum</i> (<i>Against Fortunatus</i>)
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>Fug.</i>	Philo, <i>De fuga et invention</i> (<i>On Flight and Finding</i>)
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
<i>Gen. litt.</i>	Augustine, <i>De Genesi ad litteram</i> (<i>On Genesis Literally Interpreted</i>)
<i>Geogr.</i>	Strabo, <i>Geography</i>
<i>Gest. Pelag.</i>	Augustine, <i>De gestis Pelagii</i> (<i>Proceedings of Pelagius</i>)

GNO	<i>Gregorii Nysseni Opera</i> , The Works of Gregory of Nyssa. Edited by W. Jaeger et al. Leiden: Brill.
<i>Gos. Bas.</i>	<i>Gospel of Basilides</i>
<i>Gos. Pet.</i>	<i>Gospel of Peter</i>
<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus haereses (Against Heresies)</i>
<i>Hel.</i>	Euripides, <i>Helena (Helen)</i>
<i>Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Cassius Dio, <i>Historiae Romanae</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Historiae</i>
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>Hom.</i>	<i>Homily</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTK	Herders theologischer Kommentar
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>Hervormde theologiese studies</i>
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume.</i> Edited by K. Crim. Nashville, 1976
<i>Ign. Eph.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Ephesians</i>
<i>Ign. Smyrn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Smyrnaeans</i>
<i>Inf. Gos. Thom.</i>	<i>Infancy Gospel of Thomas</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio oratoria</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JSHJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period Supplements Series</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series</i>
JSPSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)

LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
<i>Leg.</i>	Philo, <i>Legum allegoriae</i> (<i>Allegorical Interpretation</i>)
<i>Let. Aris.</i>	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
<i>Life</i>	Josephus, <i>The Life</i> (<i>Vita</i>)
LIMC	<i>Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae</i> . Edited by H. C. Ackerman and J.-R. Gisler. 8 vols. Zurich, 1981–1997
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996
<i>Marc.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Adversus Marcionem</i> (<i>Against Marcion</i>)
<i>Mart. Polyc.</i>	<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>
<i>m. 'Abot</i>	<i>Mishnah 'Abot</i>
<i>m. Ber.</i>	<i>Mishnah Berakot</i>
<i>m. Bik.</i>	<i>Mishnah Bikkurim</i>
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Apuleius Metamorphoses</i> II (trans. J. Arthur Hanson; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).
<i>Metam.</i>	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	Philo, <i>De migratione Abrahami</i> (<i>On the Migration of Abraham</i>)
<i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia</i>
<i>Mor.eccl.</i>	Augustine, <i>De moribus ecclesiae catholicae</i> (<i>The Way of Life of the Catholic Church</i>)
<i>Mos.</i>	Philo, <i>De vita Mosis</i> (<i>On the Life of Moses</i>)
<i>m. Sukk.</i>	<i>Mishnah Sukkah</i>
MTS	Marburger Theologische Studien
<i>Mus</i>	<i>Muséon: Revue d'études orientales</i>
<i>m. Yad.</i>	<i>Mishnah Yadayim</i>
NA27 (NA ²⁷)	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 27th ed.
<i>Nat. d.</i>	Cicero, <i>De natura deorum</i>
<i>Nat. grat.</i>	Augustine, <i>De natura et gratia</i> (<i>Nature and Grace</i>)
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NGS	New Gospel Studies
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NPNF	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	New Testament Studies

NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>Num.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Numa</i>
<i>Num. Rab.</i>	<i>Numbers Rabbah</i>
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	Philo <i>De opificio mundi</i>
<i>Onir.</i>	Artemidorus Daldianus, <i>Onirocritica</i>
<i>Orat. cat.</i>	Gregory of Nyssa, <i>Oratio catechetica</i>
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985
<i>Pan.</i>	Epiphanius, <i>Panarion (Adversus haereses) (Refutation of All Heresies)</i>
<i>Parm.</i>	Plato, <i>Parmenides</i>
<i>Pecc. merit.</i>	Augustine, <i>De peccatorum meritis et remissione (Guilt and Remission of Sins)</i>
<i>Pesiq. Rab.</i>	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i>
PG	Patrologia graeca [= Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886
PGM	<i>Papyri graecae magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> . Edited by K. Preisendanz. Berlin, 1928
<i>Phaedr.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i>
pl.	plate
<i>Plant.</i>	Philo, <i>De plantatione (On Planting)</i>
<i>Post.</i>	Philo, <i>De posteritate Caini (On the Posterity of Cain)</i>
<i>Praep. ev.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio evangelica (Preparation for the Gospel)</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	Origen, <i>De principiis (Peri archōn) (First Principles)</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod omnis probus liber sit (That Every Good Person Is Free)</i>
<i>Prot. Jas.</i>	<i>Protevangeliū of James</i>
<i>Ps.-Mt.</i>	<i>Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew</i>
<i>Ps.-Phoc.</i>	Pseudo-Phocylides
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
<i>Resp.</i>	Plato, <i>Respublica (Republic)</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>Rhet. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
<i>Sat.</i>	Juvenal, <i>Satirae</i>
SB	Sources bibliques
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>

<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
<i>Serm.</i>	Augustine, <i>Sermones</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
SJ	Studia judaica
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>S. 'Olam Rab.</i>	<i>Seder 'Olam Rabbah</i>
<i>Somn.</i>	Philo, <i>De somniis (On Dreams)</i>
<i>Song. Rab.</i>	<i>Song of Songs Rabbah</i>
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>Spec.</i>	Philo, <i>De specialibus legibus (On the Special Laws)</i>
<i>Spir. et litt.</i>	Augustine, <i>De spiritu et littera (The Spirit and the Letter)</i>
STDJ	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>
<i>StPatr</i>	<i>Studia patristica</i>
Str-B	Strack, H. L., and P. Billerbeck. <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch</i> . 6 vols. Munich, 1922–1961
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>
<i>SubBi</i>	<i>Subsidia biblica</i>
SubsHag	Subsidia Hagiographica
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica
<i>Tanḥ.</i>	<i>Tanḥuma (Tanhuma)</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976
TENT	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
<i>Tg. Onq.</i>	<i>Targum Onqelos</i>
<i>t. Hullin</i>	<i>Tractate Hullin (Tosefta)</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>Tim.</i>	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i>
<i>T. Mos.</i>	<i>Testament of Moses</i>
<i>T. Naph.</i>	<i>Testament of Naphtali</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>t. Soṭah</i>	<i>Tractate Soṭah (Tosefta)</i>
TSR	Texts and Studies in Religion
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBS	United Bible Societies
UBSGNT	United Bible Societies Greek New Testament
Vatican Inv.	Vatican Inventory Number, Vatican Museum
VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>

<i>Vir. ill.</i>	Jerome, <i>De viris illustribus, Lives of Illustrious Men</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	Philo, <i>De virtutibus</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WGRW	SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World Series
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>y. Mak.</i>	<i>Makkot</i> (Jerusalem Talmud)
<i>y. Ned.</i>	<i>Nedarim</i> (Jerusalem Talmud)
<i>y. Shab.</i>	<i>Shabbat</i> (Jerusalem Talmud)
<i>y. Ta^can.</i>	<i>Ta^canit</i> (Jerusalem Talmud)
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

MANY METHODS: THE DIVERSITY OF NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Andrew B. McGowan and Kent Harold Richards

There has never been a more diverse set of possibilities for understanding the canonical texts of the New Testament, other early Christian literature, and the history of the emergent Christian movement that was to become the Church.

Diversity in methods of reading the New Testament is of course as old as or older than the texts themselves. The first few generations of Christians struggled with basic questions of method and meaning in their own attempts to read and respond to the scriptures of Judaism. These attempts, various elements of development, interpretation and controversy, are documented both in the processes of composition as well as in canonization; without them the New Testament itself would not exist.

If the New Testament documents are themselves inscribed efforts at understanding the Jewish scriptures as well as the person and teaching of Jesus, they quickly became the objects of renewed interpretive debates, and the catalyst for further literary production. From arguments over esoteric and philosophically ambitious interpretation such as that of so-called Gnostics in the second century, through the methodological differences between the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools in the fourth century, the key doctrinal and other disputes that characterized ancient Christianity were centered on just how to read Christian and Jewish scripture.

CANONS AND CONTROVERSIES

Fundamentalisms, casual or assertive, are perhaps never more vulnerable than when faced with the pluriformity of canonical scripture itself. While theological debates both mirrored and fueled the ways Christian social formations developed, the emergent institutional and cultural divisions between churches were mani-

fested not only in preference for distinct interpretive methods, but in decisions even about the actual canons to which those methods are to be applied.

Debates over the extent and content of scripture reflected contention over the authentic borders of Christianity itself. This can be seen as when Marcion championed a Gospel without supposed accretions, or when “Montanists” claimed the ongoing reality of the Paraclete outside as well as inside the written word. From the ancient divisions between groups aligned with Chalcedonian Christology on the one hand and others such as Armenian, Ethiopian, and Egyptian Christians on the other, through the millennial schism between Eastern and Western Churches, and on to the Reformation, each large and enduring division has been accompanied by the entrenchment of discrepancies between canons. Those discrepancies as well as the subtler, more diffuse, but equally profound cultivation of differences in how to read those books accepted, has led to a lively debate.

Modern scholarship has added to these dilemmas, not only because of the increased awareness of cultural and canonical diversity through more immediate contact with different cultures and peoples, but also as a result of the discovery and publication of new sets of ancient documents pertaining to, or even purporting to be, scripture.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have raised unprecedented but unresolved problems in the presentation of extra-canonical Psalms interspersed with the familiar ones. The appearance of Ben Sira in Hebrew both there and in the documents of the Cairo Genizah has forced new perspectives. The Nag Hammadi codices shed remarkable light on the ways scripture could be re-written in the process of being read, as well as providing the now-famous *Gospel of Thomas*.

A BIBLE AT THE CENTER

Despite the differences just noted, the varied Christian traditions of the late-antique and medieval periods had in common tendencies to weave biblical traditions organically into their complex liturgical, spiritual, and doctrinal constructions. They continued to use earlier methods such as allegorical interpretation, if in new ways and with a new sophistication, tending at times to sophistry. They continued to use biblical texts for devotional practices such as *lectio divina*, and in the communal settings of eucharistic and other liturgies.

The Reformation brought the Bible to a quite new centrality in the West, via the principle of *sola scriptura* and the explosion of biblical translations, exemplified in the King James Version published four-hundred years before this volume, and provided its own layer of complexity to canonical issues. While an accompanying emphasis on “plain sense” of scripture was common, the exposure of

the Bible to the light both of the resources of emergent humanism such as that of Erasmus and of new emphases on evidence and rationality also heralded the arrival of modern critical scholarship, whether undertaken in pursuit of new theological wisdom, skepticism, or intellectual curiosity.

Like any other aspect of western thought, understanding of the New Testament and biblical literature generally was impacted profoundly by the Enlightenment and its successors such as Romanticism. Figures such as Spinoza and Hobbes noted issues that later scholars were to pursue more systematically. For the Hebrew Bible this was often the problem of Pentateuchal sources or the authenticity of Isaianic prophecies; the equivalent seed-bed for New Testament studies was the Synoptic problem and the closely related issue of the historical Jesus.

To a significant extent this volume reflects the current state of the modern biblical scholarship that emerged in the West from that time forward. This has come to include an array of technical and hermeneutical processes sometimes worked out as distinct “criticisms” but in fact often overlapping and interdependent. These have been used to establish the textual detail, as well as the canonical scope, of the New Testament; to consider its sources, literary composition, influences, and historicity; and to examine it in its ancient social, cultural, and religious contexts. This set of interdependent disciplines constitutes classical biblical criticism, which, while not necessarily a complete set of tools for considering the significance of the ancient texts in the modern world, cannot be dispensed with by any serious reader.

Before the mid-twentieth century, critical New Testament scholarship as a tool for exegetical and hermeneutical purposes was a largely Protestant phenomenon, enabled or allowed by the diffuse authority structures of those religious traditions but not universally accepted. The arrival of Roman Catholic scholarship in this modern sense was heralded by the encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu*, which affirmed the use of philological, historical, and literary studies to support faithful reading and understanding. This and other developments in scholarly ecumenism have meant that debates in the academy around biblical interpretation often have little correlation with expected confessional loyalties, and that even in New Testament studies the contributions of Jewish and secular scholars can and must have their acknowledged place, based on criteria of adequacy applicable in any discipline.

The second half of the twentieth century saw the emergence not only of additional methods, but also of approaches that generally assumed and often acknowledged established critical scholarship, yet sought to go beyond it. One broad set of methods has emerged from more recent philosophical and literary theory, wherein the literary character of the text has been reasserted not merely

as historic artifact for genre analysis, but as a dynamic reality whose life is interdependent with the act of contemporary reading. There have also been renewed calls for theological engagement, in particular with the canonical text, with what has been termed a “second naïveté” that acknowledges the results of critical study without reducing the text to them.

Scholars and readers have also become more aware of what was culturally specific and historically conditioned in pursuit of method, even in studies undertaken with “scientific” rigor and intent; that the assumptions of western modernity were not absolutes, and that the reality of Churches and academies dominated by white males was not irrelevant to the limits of scholarship or to its future prospects. The relationship between such new readings emphasizing diversity and liberation and what has been termed classical scholarship is not always clear, and their interaction along with debate continues.

This volume seeks to draw many, but of course not all, of these methodological threads together. Its aim has not been an exhaustive representation or description, but an attempt to present the *status quaestionis* for many disciplines and approaches. One of its purposes in doing so is to honor a scholar whose work encompasses a remarkable breadth of method and content. Harold W. Attridge is widely admired for his acuity and erudition, which has contributed authoritatively to textual criticism, exegesis, comparative literary and historical studies, and numerous other areas in New Testament and cognate fields. He is also a valued and respected colleague whose leadership has made a great contribution to the academy, and the editors and contributors offer this as a tribute, with thanks.

To some, and indeed to many readers of those texts today, such complex interpretive possibilities may seem confusing or unnecessary. This volume in its collective voice suggests something rather different, namely, that careful attention to questions of method in interpretation offers possibilities for fruitful readings of the texts themselves, and insights into other unavoidable issues for any who would read with understanding.

More than this, it suggests that interpretive method is not simply an issue that arises after the text, when as in every period individuals and communities have considered and contended about proper ways to read; rather, the individual writings and the canon of scripture are actually the products of such interpretive questions, and cannot adequately be understood except with attention to them.

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