



Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory: Collected Essays of Werner H. Kelber

Werner H. Kelber

Jesus and his followers defined their allegiances and expressed their identities in a communications culture that manifested itself in voice and chirographic practices, in oral-scribal interfaces, and in performative activities rooted in memory. In the sixteen essays gathered in *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory*, Werner Kelber explores the verbal arts of early Christian word processing operative in a media world that was separated by two millennia from our contemporary media history. The title articulates the fact that the ancient culture of voiced texts, hand-copying, and remembering is chiefly accessible to us in print format and predominantly assimilated from print perspectives. The oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm developed in these essays challenges the reigning historical-critical model in biblical scholarship. Notions of tradition, the fixation on the single original saying, the dominant methodology of form criticism, and the heroic labors of the Quest—stalwart features of the historical, documentary paradigm—are all subject to a critical review. A number of essays reach beyond New Testament texts, ranging from the pre-Socratic Gorgias through medieval manuscript culture on to print's triumphant apotheosis in Gutenberg's Vulgate, product of the high tech of the fifteenth century, all the way to conflicting commemorations of Auschwitz—taking tentative steps toward a history of media technologies, culture, and cognition of the Christian tradition in the West.

Werner H. Kelber is the Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Rice University. He is the author of many titles, including *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Fortress) and *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Fortress; Indiana University Press), and co-editor (with Samuel Byrskog) of *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives* (Baylor).

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