

RECENSIONES

Please address all books for review and related correspondence to:
Editorial Office, *Biblica*, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Piazza della Pilotta 35, I-00187 Roma.

Vetus Testamentum

José Luis SICRE DÍAZ, *Jueces* (NBE). Estella, Verbo Divino, 2018. 607 p. 16 × 24. €50,00

This commentary on the book of Judges should serve as another reminder of the scholarly importance of Spanish-language biblical research. Among the particular readers Sicre Díaz has in view for this commentary are scholars versed in historical criticism and redaction criticism. Additionally, his book also attends to interpretive issues that would indeed be of interest to literary critics, textual critics, feminist critics, and biblical theologians. Relying mainly on biblical scholarship written in German and English, Sicre Díaz opens his commentary with an extensive introductory discussion on the structure, religious-theology (*religioso-teológico*), and textual formation of Judges. In terms of his book's structure, Sicre Díaz easily divides Judges into three major parts, 1) Introduction (1,1–3,6); 2) History of Judges (3,7 – 16,31); 3) the Decline (17–21), which is a division scheme that is common in most modern Western commentaries (19th-21st centuries).

For Sicre Díaz, the overarching religious-political message of Judges is that no system of government, neither judicial nor monarchical, guarantees well-being and peace. As he writes, it is “only the faithfulness to God (*solo la fidelidad a Dios*)” (55). Not uniform in Sicre Díaz's view are the interpretations that different readers may have of this message — depending on their vantage point. As he explains at the end of the book, for readers focusing solely on the book of Judges, it becomes clear that the judicial system has gone from bad to worse. Moreover, when there is neither a judge nor a king, it is “fatal” (494). Yet for those reading Judges within the context of the first prophets (Joshua–2 Kings) or the grand history of Israel (Genesis–2Kings), they are likely to conclude that the king needed is David and his eternal dynasty.

In dating Judges, he follows the scholarship of Walter Gross and Yaira Amit and hence argues that the book had a very late formation. He accepts the notion that its redaction began at the end of the 8th century, which was several centuries after the book's imagined historical context. Within this historical spectrum, Sicre Díaz argues that readers contemporary with the reign of Josiah likely would have had an optimistic view of the monarchy and the divine promise to David. Yet for Babylonian exilic readers, they likely had a negative view of the monarchy, blaming the kings for their captivity (494).

In his first major section entitled “*La decadencia progresiva del pueblo* (1,1–3,6)”, Sicre Díaz is concerned primarily with historical-critical issues within the text, which is repeated in the other two major sections of the book. Based on his own translation of the Masoretic Text, Sicre Díaz’s commentary generally moves from textual critical concerns to redaction history, then to biblical geography, and finally to his commentary on individual passages. Often this trajectory leads Sicre Díaz to what may be regarded as his book’s most interesting contribution, and that is his commentary on the religious-theological message of Judges. Despite the historical discrepancies in the book, which Sicre Díaz meticulously identifies, the purpose and function of Judges are not historical concerns but rather religious tradition, which as he argues is often missed in other commentaries. Similar to G.W. Trompf, Sicre Díaz identifies a quartet-scheme to Judges’ religious-theology: sin-punishment-clamor-salvation (144).

The second major section, “*La decadencia progresiva de los jueces* (3,7–16,31)”, contains the bulk of the book’s commentary material, from Othniel to the minor judges to finally Samson. At times, Sicre Díaz’s summaries of the various scholarly arguments regarding the text’s historical context and redaction history outweigh his original commentary on Judges. Such a strategy perhaps reflects more the gravitational pull of Western historical criticism in the guild, particularly in Europe, such that scholarly innovation must negotiate between originality and the reigning authorities in the discourse. Yet when Sicre Díaz does offer original commentary, it is indeed insightful, perceptive, and creative. Among Sicre Díaz’s original contributions are his intertextual/canonical readings of Judges, which are a staple feature of his lexicographic studies after each translated section. As for the particularities of this reading strategy in his commentary, the section on Deborah and Barak (4–5) shows its value. Here he catalogues clearly the differences between the prose version of Deborah and Barak in chapter 4 and their lyrical poetic version in chapter 5, with the most notable being that the latter elaborates further on the action of God (*teofanía*, cf. heaven and earth in Ps 68,92; 2 Sam 22,8-9; mountains in Mic 1,3; Pss 97,5, 144,5) and people groups (186-191; 225-226). For Sicre Díaz, reading across the canon intertextually not only reveals the development of deuteronomistic theology like divine retribution and idol worship but also provides support to his arguments on the scribal development of Judges. In the instance of the prose and poetic versions of Deborah and Barak (4–5), their differences — as revealed through his intertextual reading — logically mark chapter 5 as the older text. As he argues, it was composed for an audience who had witnessed the events told in the song or had at least heard about them. In terms of the prose version in chapter 4, Sicre Díaz concludes that it was based on a completely different oral tradition (191). Finally, the Samson cycle is another noteworthy section where his intertextual reading enriches his commentary of Judges, particularly chapter 13.

For the final section, “*El hundimiento* (17–21)”, Sicre Díaz divides it into two parts: 1) The Sanctuary of Dan, Fruit of the Eight Sins (17–18); 2) The Crime of Gibeah and its Consequences (19–21). For the first part, Sicre Díaz rightly emphasizes its Yahwist character and argues that these chapters were likely edited by an ancient Jewish author who was not very pro-Levite and not very ethnocentric (506-507). The phrase in Judg 18,30, “until the land went into captivity”, is of particular interest for Sicre Díaz in that it reveals the horizons of the Jewish

editor's historical knowledge. Similar to G.F. Moore and G.L. Studer, he argues that the exile mentioned here pertains to the Northern Kingdom, hence occurring during the reigns of Pekah of Israel (740-731) and Tiglatpileser III of Assyria (527). Moreover, Sicre Díaz views Judg 18,31 as the cutoff point for the most ancient part of the book of Judges (the starting point being 2,6). Noteworthy in the second part (19–21) is Sicre Díaz's intertextual reading of Judges 19 and Genesis 19. Here again, he demonstrates his skill with this reading strategy, particularly how it allows him to draw out a deeper sense of the themes of violence conveyed in these texts.

Indeed, Sicre Díaz's commentary on Judges reflects a level of scholarly rigor and interpretive depth that should not be overlooked in the English speaking world. His research stretches across multiple time periods (ancient to modern) and a wide spectrum of languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, and English). His arguments are well crafted and show enormous respect for the authoritative voices in the study of Judges — sometimes to the detriment of his own scholarly voice. As with any scholarly contribution, however, there are few gaps that could have received a bit more attention in this book. Although Sicre Díaz does acknowledge the violence in Judges, particularly Judges 3 and 19, it would have been equally helpful to expound on the postcolonial trauma undergirding this violence. Here, postcolonial criticism can assist historical-critical readings of violence in biblical texts, especially those redacted after the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests. Apart from refining our understandings of the nature of the violence in Judges, postcolonial criticism can also offer viable explanations for why the redactors exaggerated on details related to war and conquest. From a postcolonial perspective, exaggerations and hyperboles may point more to a coping strategy, as in the case of emasculation, than to a benign storytelling strategy. Despite these interpretive gaps, Sicre Díaz's book represents an essential resource for postcolonial critics seeking depth to their historical contextualization of the book of Judges.

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
100 E. 27th Street
Austin, Texas 78705 (U.S.A.)

Gregory L. CUÉLLAR

Adam H. HENSLEY, *Covenant Relationships and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. London, T&T Clark, 2018. vii-311 p. 16 × 24. £85,00

La monografia in oggetto costituisce, nelle parole dell'autore, un'analisi della relazione tra l'alleanza davidica e quelle premonarchiche, così come è rappresentata nel Salterio: «[w]hat is the relationship between the Davidic Covenant and its premonarchic counterparts in the Psalter?» (2). Il libro dei salmi viene assunto nella prospettiva dell'esegesi canonica — vale a dire, letto ed interpretato come un'opera unitaria, con un suo messaggio globale e un suo piano editoriale. L'autore sottolinea l'intreccio tra concezione dell'alleanza e struttura del Salterio: «most editorial theories on the Psalter imply a particular relationship between the covenants or presuppose one» (2) e, allo stesso tempo, «views on how editors understood covenant relationships are often a consequence of how the Psalter's

editorial history is understood and, in many cases, its “redactional layers”» (14). L’assunto di fondo dell’opera è, quindi, che il modo in cui è concepito il rapporto tra l’alleanza davidica e quelle con Abramo e Mosè determina, in modo speciale, il piano editoriale del Salterio.

La metodologia adottata dall’autore si può riassumere a partire dalle indicazioni sparse nella sua argomentazione. Innanzitutto, viene apparentemente adottata una prospettiva affine a quella che D.M. Howard («The Psalms and Current Study», *Interpreting the Psalms. Issues and Approaches* [eds. D. Firth – P. Johnston] [Downers Grove, IL 2005] 28) definisce «semantic field or thematic approach», che usa i dati raccolti «to comment on the organization of the entire work» (29). Tale prospettiva viene anche qualificata come, in larga parte, *sincronica*: «the approach [...] was [...] synchronic in its attention to existing textual data, while remaining mindful of diachronic possibilities» (271). L’analisi tematica e sincronica serve ad identificare la percezione che gli *editori* avevano sia del materiale con cui lavoravano (i salmi), sia delle alleanze stesse: «the degree of unity and conceptual overlap that editors perceived between the covenants is precisely what this survey sets out to explore» (77). E ancora: «[t]his investigation is concerned with *editorial* perception of the tradition, not a historical investigation of narrower traditional strata» (80; enfasi dell’autore). Per questo motivo, l’autore spesso ripete come i rapporti tra le alleanze vadano indagati a partire dal testo stesso e non presupposti di principio (71).

La ricerca è strutturata in tre parti fondamentali, precedute da un’introduzione e coronate da una conclusione finale. Nella parte iniziale (capitolo 1), l’autore offre un breve *status quaestionis* sulle ricerche circa le relazioni tra le differenti alleanze nel Salterio e dichiara, a grandi linee, la propria metodologia. Nella parte I («Editorial Evidence and the Psalter»), dopo un brevissimo *status quaestionis* dell’esegesi canonica (capitolo 2), vengono analizzati i dati esterni (capitolo 3, «external evidence»: Qumran e la LXX) e interni (capitolo 4, «internal evidence»: sovrascritte; l’uso del nome divino; Sal 72,20; i «doppioni»; dossologie; legami lessicali e tematici) che permettono di identificare la struttura complessiva del Salterio e possono, di fatto, essere utili all’identificazione del suo «piano editoriale». Secondo Hensley, i dati testuali non permettono di appoggiare l’idea di una redazione in più fasi («multistage») e che è più ragionevole supporre, alla maniera di Mitchell, «one redactional impulse behind the Psalter’s macrostructure» (71). Per questo, la continuità o la discontinuità di prospettive tra le varie sezioni del Salterio va dimostrata e non data per scontata (71). Va notato come Sal 72,20 venga considerato dall’autore un dato della tradizione accolto dagli editori e interpretato come segnale del passaggio dal «Davide storico» (libri I-II) a quello «messianico» (libri III-V).

Nella parte II («An Exploratory Survey of Covenantal References and Allusions in the Psalter») l’autore si occupa di mettere in luce i riferimenti alle alleanze all’interno del Salterio, adottando due criteri di identificazione (come spiegato nella premessa metodologica al capitolo 5): lessicografico e «intertestuale» (locuzioni, lessemi, formule, temi, ecc.) alle differenti alleanze: «potential indicator [...], not a strict condition of an allusion to a covenant» (77). Lo scopo di tale parte è quella di mettere in evidenza i salmi in cui diversi generi di riferimenti o allusioni alle alleanze si intersecano e che occupano una posizione rilevante nella struttura del Salterio. Tali salmi, secondo l’autore, sono Sal 1–2; 72,17; 86,15; 103,8; 145,8.

È degno di nota come la dimensione intertestuale o di «allusione intrabiblica» (l'autore usa entrambi i termini) venga concepita: il punto di partenza è «the editorial reception and reuse of the individual psalm in which this dynamic has already occurred» (79). Gruppi e sequenze più che singoli salmi sono il «testo» e questo conferma la probabilità che «editors perceived an allusion in a specific instance through other reinforcing allusions» (79), dato che il focus è «to examine the *editor's* perspective rather than that of the psalm's author». Oltre che allusioni *testuali* si prendono anche temi e vocabolario, «without specific or obvious dependency on any one covenantal text» (79). Si assume che le allusioni siano state tanto più *percepite dagli editori* quanto più numerosi sono i contatti riscontrati (80).

Vengono prese in considerazioni prima le occorrenze del termine *b'rît* (capitolo 5), i richiami alla «formula di alleanza» (capitolo 6), ad alcuni testi o lessemi considerati di matrice mosaica (capitolo 7), ad Esodo 15, al dono della terra e ai riferimenti al Sinai/Oreb (capitolo 8). L'ampia ricognizione conduce l'autore ad alcune conclusioni, tutte, in qualche modo, collegate prima di tutto alla definizione di «Davide» nel Salterio, come colui che — nella percezione degli editori del Salterio — compie e porta a pienezza le alleanze con Abramo e Mosè. In questo senso, l'uso del termine *b'rît* mette in luce come «the unity of the covenants is in some sense a *theological* unity [that] lies in their common fulfilment through a future Davidic king», nel senso di una «theological “royalization” of the Abrahamic/Mosaic covenants rather than a “democratization” of the Davidic covenant» (110). Il Davide futuro, da questo punto di vista, viene ritratto come «covenant partner *par excellence*», «observer of the Mosaic covenant», «a *Moses-like singer of praise* who praises God for a new Exodus-like salvation», «a *priestly mediator* of YHWH's blessing and a *Moses-like intercessor*» (77-78).

Nella parte III («Psalms 72:17, 86:15, 103:8, and 145:8 in their Psalm and Book Contexts, and Psalms 1-2 as an Introduction to the Psalter») l'autore analizza, per l'appunto, Sal 72,17; 86,15; 103,8; 145,8, nel contesto dei rispettivi libri. Questi sono «psalms with the strongest potential to answer the question of covenantal relationship in the Psalter» (15). Per tutti e quattro i passaggi viene offerta un'analisi nel contesto del rispettivo salmo e, poi, per l'appunto, nel libro in questione. Le ultime tre occorrenze, in particolare, sono collocate all'interno di una trattazione un poco più ampia sull'uso della «formula della grazia» (Es 34,6-7) nel Salterio (capitoli 10-13). Quest'ultima «was important to those who arranged the Psalter, whether one posits multiple editorial stages or a single editorial impulse behind the Psalter's composition» (209). La conclusione è simile a quella raggiunta nella parte precedente: «Davide» è mediatore come Mosè che prega e dichiara il tempo della restaurazione di Sion e ringrazia Dio per la sua grazia. I riferimenti al proprio «peccato» (Sal 86,5; 103,3) vanno intesi come espressione formulaica: in nessun passaggio dei libri III-V il re è colpevole, ma il popolo. «In this light, it seems more likely that editors saw in these psalms the king's identification with sinners as a petitioner on behalf of God's people, not his personal guilt *per se*» (254). Infine, «Davide» è anche identificato con il «servo», il vindice del povero, figura sacerdotale legata a Sion. L'analisi dei Sal 1-2 («these psalms contain some of the strongest allusions to the covenant»: 255) conduce a conclusioni analoghe.

Nella parte IV, quella dedicata alle conclusioni, l'autore riassume sinteticamente le acquisizioni maggiori della sua analisi per trarne una risposta generale alla domanda posta in apertura. L'idea che il Salterio sia struttura in modo da riflettere una scansione binaria nella concezione della regalità e nel senso di una democraticizzazione di quest'ultima vengono rigettate: «editors royalized the premonarchic covenants and their associated promises and obligations [...] [they] anticipated an ideal Davidic successor who keeps torah and intercedes for God's people» (267). In ultima analisi, l'autore identifica una «strong continuity» (270) nelle prospettive dei diversi libri riguardo a «Davide» e giudica l'idea di una crescita «a diverse fasi» del Salterio non sufficientemente sostenuta dai dati testuali (270-271).

La monografia rappresenta lo studio più ampio finora edito del tema delle alleanze nel Salterio. Come tale, si inserisce principalmente nel dibattito circa l'esegesi canonica dello stesso. In particolare, il lavoro si inserisce a pieno titolo nella discussione circa la «editorial agenda» del libro dei salmi e si schiera a favore della posizione di D.C. Mitchell (*The Message of the Psalter. An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* [JSOT.S 252; Sheffield 1997]). Allo stesso tempo, l'autore prende posizione anche a proposito del dibattito circa il processo di formazione del Salterio. Quest'ultimo avrebbe già raggiunto la sua forma finale — quella del TM — prima delle testimonianze di Qumran (41) e sarebbe il frutto non tanto della rielaborazione di testi traditi quanto della loro incorporazione, *senza alterazione*, nel libro in formazione (69-70). I responsabili di tale lavoro vengono genericamente indicati come «editors» (al plurale e senza articolo), senza ulteriori specificazioni.

Il lavoro di Hensley offre un contributo prezioso, sia a livello metodologico che a livello di contenuto, allo studio del Salterio. Evidenziamo un punto «strutturale» dell'argomentazione aperto al dibattito: quello del rapporto tra forma testuale e *intenzione* («perception») degli editori. L'autore si mostra, in alcuni passaggi, cauto e possibilista in proposito; tuttavia, visto che l'analisi letteraria ha, da diverso tempo, messo sotto esame la possibilità di poter compiere questo passaggio (cf. ad es. D. Compagno, «Theories of Authorship and Intention in the Twentieth Century. An Overview», *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 1 [2012] 37-53) una riflessione supplementare sull'argomento è necessaria (cf. anche D. Willgren, «Did David Lay Down His Crown? Reframing Issues of Deliberate Juxtaposition and Interpretive Contexts in the "Book" of Psalms with Psalm 147 as a Case in Point», *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period* [eds. M.S. Pajunen – J. Penner] [BZAW 486; Berlin - Boston, MA 2017] 212-230). Ci sia anche concesso di sottolineare, infine, come il lavoro avrebbe anche beneficiato di alcuni riferimenti bibliografici ulteriori (cf. ad es. S.M. Attard, *The Implications of Davidic Repentance. A Synchronic Analysis of Book 2 of the Psalter (Psalms 42–72)* [AnBib 212; Roma 2016]; M. Pavan, «He Remembered That They Were But Flesh, A Breath That Passes and Does Not Return» [Ps 78,39]. The Theme of Memory and Forgetting in the Third Book of the Psalter [Pss 73–89] [ÖBS 44; Frankfurt a.M. 2014]). Nonostante queste osservazioni, il lavoro è senz'altro un contributo di grande valore per la recente *Psalmenforschung*.

Marieke DHONT, *Style and Context of Old Greek Job* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 183). Leiden, Brill, 2018. 409 p. 16 × 24.5. €125,00

Marieke Dhont's monograph on Old Greek (OG) Job moves through five distinct sections with the aim "to describe the language and style of OG Job within its literary and cultural context and explain why the book of Job was translated the way it was" (2). First, she introduces the field of research into OG Job before unpacking recent trends within the theoretical translation frameworks and opting for the approach of Polysystem Theory (PST). She then analyzes in detail both the Greek stylistic and rhetorical features of OG Job over the course of five chapters. The final chapter ties the work together in its synthesis of both data and theory in order to account for OG Job in its literary environment.

Since Origen's asterisked material in Septuagint (LXX) Job contains later additions to the OG, Dhont methodologically privileges the OG in her research as it is found in Joseph Ziegler's 1982 Göttingen edition. Regarding the differences between the Masoretic Text (MT) and the OG, Dhont holds that "the parent text of the Greek translator of Job did not differ extensively from the MT in length and that the origin of the shorter OG text lies with the translation technique" (33). Dhont approaches the origins of the OG in terms of its literary context and the multicausality at play in the translation technique. Thus, the origins of OG Job are "the result of a translator's conscious and unconscious approaches toward the source text" (19). This contrasts an interest in the LXX primarily concerned with textual criticism and geographical provenance.

Dhont's work also challenges vague assessments often repeated in LXX research pertaining to the skillset of Septuagint translators — did they write in "good" Greek, "literary" Greek, "stylistic" Greek? — and proposes that "a more nuanced understanding of OG Job is a desideratum" (3). In light of a translation that is "characterized by variation" and "complex in nature" (11), the remainder of the work seeks a more nuanced assessment of the data. Instead of describing elements of the translation as "good", "literary", or "stylistic", Dhont employs terminology she deems to be more precise: "natural Greek", "unnatural Greek", "high register" Greek. The term "natural Greek" refers to "to the language as it is used conventionally within the broader Hellenistic Greek world" (43). Thus, "unnatural Greek" refers to "lexical uses or syntactic constructions that do not appear outside of the LXX or literature dependent on the LXX" (43). And the phrase "high register" Greek applies to "those elements of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax that are characteristic of literary or poetic texts rather than of documentary and administrative texts" (42). These descriptors should be understood sociolinguistically and not qualitatively.

Chapters 2 and 3 survey theoretical models of translation and situate LXX research in terms of PST. PST conceives of language as a semiotic "system" which contains many layers sharing innumerable interactions. And while PST is really a theory of human culture, it can also apply to the literatures of any specific culture. As such, PST provides the theoretical basis to shift translation research away from simply focusing upon the transfer of linguistic data from source to target texts toward understanding translation as "a complex transaction taking place in a communicative, socio-cultural context" (48). In light of this, Septuagint

research must view the LXX as a socio-cultural document and not merely as a resource for text-critical information. Dhont positions PST as a model that can account for the multicausal phenomena involved in the creation of the LXX.

As it applies to LXX studies, PST may be understood in the following way. The larger macrosystem of Hellenistic Greek literature contains everything written in Greek within the Hellenistic timeframe. This macrosystem also encompasses all translated texts into Greek, including those categorized as Jewish-Greek literature. But these latter subsystems overlap with one another since Jewish-Greek literature contains both translated texts and original compositions. Furthermore, since the Jewish-Greek subsystem contains the LXX Pentateuch, an influential source and model for later Jewish-Greek translation and compositional literature, we can consider this to be a productive and independent polysystem in its own right. With these theoretical pillars in place, Dhont then analyzes the text of OG Job in the following five chapters.

In chapter 4, Dhont assesses features of Septuagintal and “natural Greek” usage throughout OG Job. She surveys such diverse phenomena as word order, syntactic and grammatical features of the Hebrew, features of Koine Greek, transliteration, and Septuagintalisms. Chapter 5 investigates instances of “high register” Greek which breach the patterns of consistency evidenced in “natural Greek” usage. Dhont discusses this higher register language as it pertains to vocabulary, syntactic, and rhetorical features. She concludes that such intentionality can be detected when Greek deviations from the Hebrew occur with non-standard lexical choices.

Chapter 6 surveys previous approaches to Hebrew poetry and rhetoric before providing a taxonomy of rhetorical features relevant to OG Job. These rhetorical features include chiasms, symmetry, anadiplosis, mesodiplosis, and others which the translator of OG Job employs in contextually sensitive ways. Chapter 7 continues this discussion by surveying sections of OG Job at the level of the colon. And Chapter 8 illustrates how the translator of OG Job employs several rhetorical tactics simultaneously. Here, Dhont discusses examples from OG Job which demand multicausal explanations of the translation process and advocates attention to linguistic context, literary context, other LXX translations, and familiarity with patterns of other Jewish-Greek literature.

Chapter 9 concludes the argument of the book by reconsidering the placement of OG Job in its literary and cultural environment. Dhont discusses the translator’s educational and cultural background as one who was highly educated and worked “within the Jewish polysystem as a part of the Hellenistic macrosystem” (307). She assesses OG Job’s translation technique in terms of its Hellenistic setting: “It is because of the development of Jewish-Greek compositional literature towards the use of a higher register of Greek, that it became acceptable for translators to use a more natural and elevated style of language as well, which subsequently influenced the translation technique used by Jewish translators of texts such as the book of Job” (313). And she concludes the book by investigating why Job was deemed a suitable book for translation. Dhont highlights Job’s popularity in the Hellenistic period and discusses how readers would have viewed its status as authoritative.

I have very few criticisms of Dhont’s work on OG Job. Her research is thorough in primary and secondary sources. And her documentation is meticulous. This is evidenced by more than 1,100 footnotes which are fully documented in her bibliography which exceeds 50 pages. While the depth of research results

in dense argumentation at times, the benefits are worth the effort. Her work will prove to be a valuable resource for scholars working in the various avenues of Septuagint research since the monograph touches upon the following research areas: translation theory, the Hellenistic world, translation technique, Septuagint style and rhetoric, Hebrew and Greek poetics.

The monograph should also be praised for its goal of deepening the theoretical framework which undergirds Septuagint studies. Dhont's discussion of PST is novel to the field and convincing since it seems to account for the multicausality of influences upon the translator of OG Job. As she anticipates in the volume, much work needs to be done to develop and flesh out how PST can inform Septuagint studies. But the theoretical coherence and simplicity of PST should enable its acceptance by many scholars in the field.

Some minor typos occur throughout the work. But overall the monograph is well edited and organized. A fairly obvious error of analysis occurs on page 109 where Dhont discusses the Greek genitive absolute as evidence of high register Greek. While this grammatical feature is surely evidence of stylistic Greek, the example she provides from Job 38,8 does not contain this construction. It merely contains a nominative participle functioning adverbially. However, this singular error is not detrimental to her overall argument.

Regarding features of the Jewish-Greek polysystem, I was surprised to see that Dhont omitted any mention of the misunderstanding of Hebrew terms among the LXX translators. Emanuel Tov, Jan Joosten, Seulgi Byun, and Anne-Françoise Loiseau have all published on this topic in the past twenty years, noting how the Aramaic linguistic milieu of the LXX translators influenced their understanding and rendering of certain Hebrew lexemes. Discussion of this phenomenon would have aided Dhont's discussion of Job 23,16 on page 232 where we encounter the Hebrew term **בהל**. In biblical Hebrew, this term means "to be dismayed", but in Aramaic the same root means "to make haste, be eager". This latter meaning corresponds with the OG rendering of $\sigma\pi\omicron\upsilon\delta\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ and suggests that the translator of OG Job read **בהל** in terms of its Aramaic semantics. Recognizing these linguistic and semantic features would have further nuanced Dhont's description of the Jewish-Greek polysystem, resulting in a more complete presentation. Perhaps future research will incorporate these phenomena into the theoretical framework of PST.

Last of all, the depth of discussion concerning PST in the opening of the monograph receives little attention throughout the remainder of the work. Both the theoretical and analytical discussions were equally persuasive in their own right. But the monograph lacks an overall synthesis of theory and analysis. The final chapter attempts to tie these two elements together, but it comes across as somewhat unbalanced. Even though Dhont tends to mention PST in the conclusion of each analytical chapter, I would still have appreciated a more integrated approach of theory and data throughout the work. Nonetheless, Dhont does supply the following caveat early in the work: "this book will represent a frame of reference that calls for further elaboration and refinement of the use of PST in LXX studies and, as such, opens up new paths of investigation" (65). We can hope that future LXX research will take up Dhont's excellent proposal and bring the theory and analysis into tighter focus.

Novum Testamentum

Joshua J.F. COUTTS, *The Divine Name in the Gospel of John*. Significance and Impetus (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 447). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2017. xvi-259 p. 15.5 × 23. €79,00

Cette thèse de doctorat soutenue à l'université d'Edinburgh en 2016, sous la direction de L. Hurtado, se signale par des caractéristiques remarquables. Tout d'abord, elle fait le point sur l'état de la recherche au sujet d'un axe important du texte johannique d'un point de vue exégétique et littéraire. L'exhaustivité de l'information est admirable. La clarté de la présentation facilite la lecture d'un texte dense grâce à des introductions, des subdivisions, des sommaires et des conclusions à l'intérieur de chacun des cinq chapitres qui composent l'œuvre. Le ch. 5 surprend par sa brièveté eu égard aux précédents ; c'est qu'il anticipe déjà la conclusion qui synthétise les résultats de l'enquête. La méthode, quant à elle, s'avère féconde en distinguant, dès le sous-titre de l'ouvrage, à chaque étape de l'investigation, des distinctions pertinentes entre «réfèrent»-*referent*, «fonction»-*function*, «sens»-*meaning*, «signification»-*significance* et *impetus*-«influences» ou «contexte» des versets ou des péripécies étudiés. Dans l'aire francophone, il est plutôt question d'«explication», «compréhension» et «interprétation», aux différentes phases du travail sur les textes. Les influences sont surtout mises au compte de l'intertextualité, biblique et extra-biblique, de nos jours. L'établissement de «réseaux» ou «constellations»-*networks* et de «groupes»-*clusters* permet d'affiner l'élucidation de connotations et d'associations dans l'étude scrupuleuse des relations entre les différents champs sémantiques traversés. Le souci est permanent d'articuler le Nouveau Testament: l'évangile johannique et les œuvres apparentées des I^{er} et II^e siècles de notre ère, à l'Ancien, en particulier sous l'angle du Deutéro-Isaïe. Alors que tant de données rassemblées militent en faveur d'une authentique théologie biblique grâce à cette corrélation entre l'un et l'autre Testament, le souci de l'auteur se cantonne surtout à l'étude de concepts et de conditionnements socio-historiques. En tout état de cause, ce précieux matériau permet des prolongements au-delà des limites méthodologiques proposées.

Une copieuse introduction passe en revue l'intérêt johannique pour le nom divin à la lumière de la recherche en cours. L'acquis est résumé en traçant l'orientation des cinq chapitres. Le premier établit qu'Isaïe occupe un rôle prédominant en donnant forme aux convictions de Jean sur la catégorie du nom divin, sans préjudice pourtant à l'impact d'autres traditions comme celles de l'Exode. Le chapitre deux enchaîne avec la prise en compte de la glorification et de la révélation (Jn 12,28; 17,6.26): la variation des verbes pour la «connaissance» serait-elle purement stylistique (76 n. 15)? On peut en douter en ce qui concerne un vocabulaire aussi restreint que celui de Jean et préférer, contre la tendance majoritaire en la matière, adopter l'option d'après laquelle, à la différence entre des mots, même proches, correspond une différence de sens. La demande et la finalité concernant les croyants de garder le nom donné à Jésus (Jn 17,11-12) fait l'objet du chapitre trois. L'agencement des expressions de la venue ou des œuvres de Jésus dans le nom (Jn 5,43; 10,25 ; cf. 12,13) occupe le chapitre quatre. Le

cinquième chapitre propose un *impetus* socio-historique destiné à éclairer l'intérêt de Jean pour le nom, ce qui a pour effet de renforcer encore la pertinence de l'argument majeur. Le ton est objectif, dénué de la passion qui agite souvent ces débats, ce qui fournit à l'ensemble du dossier un bel équilibre. La discussion ne tourne pas tant autour de l'assemblée de Yavné-Jamnia qu'autour de la Birkat Haminim: ce dernier aspect de la question est peut-être plus relativisé qu'il ne convient (186).

Au terme, la conclusion ressaisit l'ensemble de la démarche, enrichie du résultat des études minutieuses qui jalonnent les cinq chapitres. S'y donnent libre cours des considérations imposées par le sujet traité. Après le sommaire de l'argument, il est question du lien entre le travail opéré et la théologie johannique. La problématique croise dès lors celle du *Logos* dès le prologue et le verset de Jn 1,14 au sujet du «Verbe, chair, devenu», dont «nous avons admiré la gloire: gloire de l'Unique-engendré du Père, accompli de grâce et de vérité». «La signification associative du nom ouvre une fenêtre sur Dieu dans l'évangile de Jean et donne accès à la dynamique Père-Fils dans la christologie johannique» (199). À cet égard, Jean est concerné autant par la christologie que par la théologie. En identifiant Jésus avec le nom divin, Jean présente Jésus dans les termes de la plus haute catégorie dont il puisse disposer. Il définit en ce sens Jésus à la fois dans les termes du Dieu juif et (re)définit le Dieu juif dans les termes de Jésus (200). Pour ouvrir à des recherches ultérieures, l'Apocalypse mériterait, selon l'auteur, d'être étudiée en lien avec l'évangile de Jean. Des travaux sont déjà disponibles dans cette perspective (Y. Simoens, *Apocalypse de Jean, Apocalypse de Jésus Christ*. 1. Une traduction; 2. Une interprétation [Paris 2014]). Quoi qu'on en ait dit et que l'on en dise encore, les composantes du *corpus* johannique s'interprètent au mieux l'une par l'autre (voir Y. Simoens, *Croire pour aimer*. Les trois lettres de Jean. Une traduction, une interprétation [Paris 2011]). L'inventaire d'autres textes et traditions pourrait également fournir d'utiles prolongements au travail accompli. La méthode suivie promet aussi une entrée renouvelée de la réception des textes et des traditions, encore trop dominée par l'étude des citations, allusions ou parallèles entre textes apparentés.

Pour contribuer à l'excellence du travail et ouvrir aux orientations proposées, revenons en premier lieu sur l'étude de la glorification dans son rapport au nom divin. La relation entre la gloire et le nom pose moins de questions que l'interprétation de la glorification elle-même. La glorification est ici comme souvent associée à la croix. Or il faut d'abord reconnaître, tant en Jean 12 qu'en Jean 13 et 17, la distinction entre deux temps de la glorification. L'un et l'autre sont valorisés *avant* la croix (Y. Simoens, *Évangile selon Jean* [Paris 2018] 337). Sauf pour l'évocation de la mort martyre de Pierre en Jn 21,19, le substantif «gloire» et le verbe «glorifier» sont absents des ch. 18 à 21. En fait, le premier temps de la glorification survient à la sortie de Judas de nuit en Jn 13,31-32, le deuxième en Jean 17. Jésus entre ainsi glorifié dans sa Passion, ce qui explique la théophanie, à trois reprises, du «Moi, je suis», en Jn 18,5-6.8. Les réminiscences d'Isaïe mériteraient à cet égard d'être complétées par le courant apocalyptique d'Ézéchiel et de Daniel. De plus, «le fils de la perdition» est la plupart du temps, comme dans cette étude, identifié par Judas qui serait dès lors «perdu» (80; 128). Mais si le salut de tous s'opère au détriment d'un seul, au nom en plus d'une interprétation de l'accomplissement de l'Écriture qui fonctionne dans le sens d'une prédestination à la perdition, le salut serait à recommencer. Le «Fils de la Perdition»

en Jn 17,12 est un synonyme du «Mauvais» (Jn 17,15) et du «diable» (Jn 13,2 qui nuance 6,70; cf. *Évangile de Nicodème* 20,3, dans *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* [Paris 2005] II, 292). Enfin, tous les chapitres soulignent le caractère eschatologique des termes, expressions et thèmes étudiés. Est-ce faire assez droit à la proto-logie dont le quatrième évangile se présente comme un champion dès le prologue hymnique et jusqu'en Jn 17,5,24 (voir Pr 8,22-31; Job 28; Sirac 24; Ba 3,9 – 4,4; Sagesse 6–9)? Ce qui s'accomplit à la fin prend forme dès le commencement. Le principe vaut de tous les éléments qui composent le *corpus* johannique et plus largement pour toute la Bible. Ce serait aussi une manière d'honorer le fait que le Deutéro-Isaïe est le lieu d'émergence dans l'Ancien Testament d'une théologie de la création qui se retrouve dans la strate sacerdotale du Pentateuque et chez Ézéchiël, où elle est associée à la Nouvelle Alliance (Éz 36,27; Jr 31,31-34; Is 54,5).

Ces remarques ont pour but d'exprimer la reconnaissance qui s'impose à l'égard d'une telle somme de travail au service, non seulement du « nom divin », mais de la Parole de Dieu.

Un Appendice : *The Divine Name in Later Texts and Traditions*, évoque en finale un riche *corpus* qui se prête à l'investigation dans la foulée de la thèse. Deux champs sont distingués: A. *Name Glorification and Revelation* passe en revue les papyri grecs magiques, le *Corpus Hermeticum*, L'évangile de vérité; B. *Kept in the Shared Name* honore les Odes de Salomon, les textes de Nag Hammadi et le *Memar Marqah*. Une bibliographie de seize pages, un index des auteurs modernes, un index des sujets et un index des sources anciennes permettent une consultation commode de cette étude stimulante.

35 bis, rue de Sèvres
F-75006 Paris
yves.simoens@jesuites.com

Yves SIMOENS

Stephen WESTERHOLM, *Law and Ethics in Early Judaism and the New Testament* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 383).
Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2017. x-371 p. 16 × 23.5. €169,00

This collection gathers twenty-two essays by Stephen Westerholm, professor emeritus at McMaster University. The author considers the ethical teaching of Jesus and Paul in relation to first-century Jewish understandings of the law of Moses. Many of the essays explore how the gospel message involved both a relationship of continuity and of discontinuity with the Torah as understood by Jews of the time. Other topics treated include the transmission of gospel tradition, the “new perspective on Paul”, recent debates on justification, and Paul's relationship with Judaism. Twenty of the studies were previously published, from 1982 to 2016, one essay (chapter 10) is an unpublished paper from 2006, and the introductory chapter is new.

The essays divide into three main categories: early Judaism (chapters 2–5), Gospels (chapters 6–10), and Paul (chapters 11–22). Each essay includes a bibliography, which W. has not attempted to update (19), though the bibliographies in the more recent essays meet this need in part. The first chapter provides an overview of the others; it is useful to re-read portions of it in conjunction with the other chapters, as it reflects W.'s current thinking.

Regarding the first category, W. highlights the pursuit of first-century Jews, regardless of their sect, “to conform their lives to Torah” (1). The Pharisees, for example, developed their halakhah to specify how in practice to comply with Torah’s statutes. Chapter 2 (from 2008) and chapter 3 (from 1986) consider the term Torah in early Judaism; it is mainly used for the sum of God’s commandments to Israel through Moses at Sinai, or for the Pentateuch where those laws are found (23, 44). As the law code of the Jewish people, the Torah was comparable to the law codes of other peoples. However, the Jewish people developed a reputation for their adherence to their laws. In chapter 5 (from 2004), W. considers *4 Maccabees* as a paraenetic appeal for Jewish readers to maintain this fidelity to their law, despite temptations to assimilate to Gentile ways. In chapter 4 (from 2006), W. discusses the anthropological corollary to Jewish views of the law, namely, that many early Jewish sources hold that righteous behavior in obedience to the law is possible. Following Timo Laato (51-53), W. explains that Paul in contrast has a more pessimistic anthropology (Rom 3,10.20.23; Gal 2,16), which derives from his christocentric soteriology. Paul thus reasons from solution (salvation in Christ) to plight (human enslavement to sin) (80, 347). An updated bibliography on this topic would include a monograph for which W. wrote the foreword: P.M. Sprinkle, *Paul and Judaism Revisited. A Study of Human and Divine Agency in Salvation* (Downers Grove, IL 2013) 125-144.

Moving to the second category, W. considers law in the New Testament in chapters 6 (from 2008) and 7 (from 2007). In contrast to the typical Jewish view toward the law, Jesus’ teaching (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount) focuses on obedience to *his* words and on the kingdom, whose ethical demands regarding righteous behavior surpass those of Torah (cf. Matt 5,20). Jesus does not abolish Torah but in various ways fulfills it (Matt 5,17), e.g., by prioritizing certain commands (love, mercy), intensifying others (prohibitions of killing and adultery), relativizing still others (tithing, ritual purity), and restoring God’s original intention where concessions had been made to human hardheartedness (marriage, divorce). (For a recent, similar treatment of Jesus’ ethical teaching in relation to Torah, see R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* [Waco, TX 2016] 120-128.) Thus, Jesus’ teaching, which emphasized the attitudes and actions that characterize those who seek to do God’s will as children of their heavenly Father, also differs from the Pharisees’ halakhah (which is the focus of chapter 8 [from 1982]): “true *goodness*, the goodness at home in God’s kingdom [...] is not the same thing as careful compliance with rules” (7). In chapter 7, W. compares the Matthean Jesus’ view toward the law with that of Paul. On the surface, they seem to be rather different, with the Matthean Jesus upholding the validity of the law, albeit relativizing it, and Paul maintaining that Christians are not under the law (140). In practice, however, “what Paul says about Christian moral behavior corresponds closely to Jesus’ insistence on observance of the weightier matters of the law” (142). W. offers here many rich insights, which should benefit not only other biblical professors but also scholars specializing in theological ethics.

Chapters 9 (from 2013) and 10 (from 2006) consider some fundamental issues regarding the Gospels. Chapter 9, which focuses on Matthew and Mark, discusses the nature of these Gospels and the authors’ intentions in writing. According to W., the purposes of Matthew and Mark were to provide authoritative accounts of the story of Jesus, not primarily “to address specific situations in particular communities” (169). Similarly, in chapter 10, W. argues that Jesus traditions were

preserved because of the intrinsic value accorded them rather than their pragmatic value to the communities (191). In these chapters, the influence of W.'s *Doktorvater*, Birger Gerhardsson, is evident (cf. 2, n. 6).

Turning to the third category, W. begins his treatment of Paul's letters with his long 2004 essay surveying the scholarly responses to the "new perspective" (chapter 11). As demonstrated principally in his monograph on the topic (*Perspectives Old and New on Paul*. The "Lutheran Paul" and His Critics [Grand Rapids, MI 2004]), W. has long distinguished himself as an able defender of the traditional "old perspective" and critic of the "new perspective." However, as he also explains in chapter 12 (a 2008 essay on Finnish contributions to these Pauline questions), W. agrees with the critique by Sanders of the traditional view, which tended to make a caricature of Judaism (231, 247). In W.'s view, the problem with Judaism, according to Paul, was not that it was legalistic, but that Jews, like other human beings, were unable to meet the condition of righteous behavior in obedience to the law (249).

In chapter 13 (from 2004) and again in chapter 18 (from 2013), W. takes up the alternative to the failed righteousness of the law, namely, the righteousness of faith. Here, W. reviews the terminology of righteousness (verb δικαίωω and cognates) and affirms that justification above all involves the vertical relationship with God — meeting the need of ungodly sinners (Rom 5,6,8) — rather than horizontal issues regarding Jews and Gentiles, as generally emphasized by "new perspective" proponents (on this topic, see also W.'s book, *Justification Reconsidered*. Rethinking a Pauline Theme [Grand Rapids, MI 2013]). Moreover, W. defends a forensic understanding of justification: e.g., the verb δικαίωω means declare (not make) righteous (254, n. 12, 256, n.13, 345). W. maintains such an interpretation even when discussing Rom 5,1,9,19 (261, 338-350), verses in which a good case can be made that justification involves not only declaring but also making a person righteous. For example, v. 19 refers to many who are "constituted as righteous" (δικαιοι κατασταθήσονται) (350), which W. himself earlier translates as "made righteous" (261; cf. 352). Similarly, it seems difficult to maintain a merely forensic interpretation of justification in 2 Cor 5,21, in which Paul explains that "God exchanged the sin of humans with the righteousness of Christ" (261). On this issue and these verses, see J.-N. Aletti, *Justification by Faith in the Letters of Saint Paul*. Keys to Interpretation (AnBib Studia 5; Roma 2015) 19-26, 35-36; and T.D. Stegman, «Paul's Use of *Dikaio*- Terminology. Moving beyond N.T. Wright's Forensic Interpretation», *TS* 72 (2011) 500-504, 518-519.

In many of the other essays in this section (chapters 14-17, 19, and 22), W. discusses Paul's understanding of Torah in relation to his teaching on Christian moral behavior. On this question, W. earlier explains how his view has developed from that expressed in his work, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*. Paul and His Recent Interpreters (Grand Rapids, MI 1988). Now as then, he believes "that Paul understood believers to be free from obligations to the Mosaic law in all its parts"; however, since that work, he has come to see that effectively "Paul did expect believers to observe the moral requirements of Mosaic law, though he expressed the matter differently" (231, n. 86). Namely, Paul identified the good demanded of all human beings with the moral part of the Torah (142, 257-259, 363, 389) (cf. Rom 2,13; 6,12-19; 8,4; 13,8-10; Gal 5,6). Christians are called to "fulfill" this law (which relates to love) (Gal 5,14), rather than "do" it (Lev 18,5) (280, 292-296, 399). They must serve "righteousness" and they can do so by the Spirit,

not the flesh or the letter (cf. Rom 2,28-29) (263, 285, 310, 323-335). These are helpful distinctions, well grounded in the text. On these issues, see also Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*. Keeping the Commandments of God (Downers Grove, IL 2013).

In chapters 20 (from 2012) and 21 (from 2013), as well as in chapter 1, W. treats Paul's relation to Judaism. W. acknowledges many points of continuity between the pre-Damascus and post-Damascus Paul. For example, Paul always valued his Israelite ancestry (Rom 11,1) and had great love for his Jewish kin (Rom 9,3) (8). He also kept reading the same Scriptures (though interpreted now with a new hermeneutical key), recognized God's ongoing fidelity to Israel (demonstrated by the "remnant" of Jews who believe in Christ), and believed that all Israel would eventually be saved (Rom 11,26) (382-395). However, these points involve discontinuity as well. Furthermore, W. notes that Paul could speak of his former way of life in Judaism (Gal 1,13) (9, 369-370). Normally, he did not continue to live like a Jew (1 Cor 9,20) (10-11, 376, n. 19). W.'s thinking on this issue is thus quite different from that of scholars in the "Paul within Judaism" perspective, such as Mark Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (14-16, 21).

In summary, W. offers the reader a fine collection of essays that thoroughly engage the biblical text and present well-argued positions on a host of important current issues in New Testament studies.

Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Avenue
South Orange, NJ 07079
pablo.gadenz@gmail.com

Pablo GADENZ

Peter J. LEITHART, *Revelation 1–11* (The International Theological Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments). London, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018. x-502 p. 15 × 22. £64.80

Peter J. LEITHART, *Revelation 12–22* (The International Theological Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments). London, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018. x-501 p. 15 × 22. £64.80

In 2018 Peter J. Leithart, president of the *Theopolis Institute for Biblical, Liturgical, & Cultural Studies* in Birmingham, Alabama, authored the two-volume commentary on the Apocalypse (1–11 and 12–22), published in the ITC series.

Judging from the perspective and style of the series, one would expect this imposing work (more than a thousand pages in all) to provide a scientific examination of the text; instead, it presents a more theological and pastoral approach, sometimes even confessional. The style and language are meant to be both captivating and accessible, even to those outside the academic world. For this reason, there are instances where the author writes more like a pastor, as in the beginning where he does not hesitate to quote, among the other literary, philosophical and cinematographic references with an apocalyptic bent, an episode of *The Simpsons* cartoons, *Gotham*, and Rudolph Valentino (1.1). The author is even more informal in the introduction to the second volume: "Welcome back. If you are not coming back after finishing volume 1, you are not welcome here. Read volume 1 first. That

is an order. As I was saying ...” (2.1). This quote is representative of the colloquial style with the use of the first-person singular throughout the two volumes. It is also telling that the author ends each chapter of both books with a prayer. The author’s explicit intention is to highlight the celebratory background of Revelation, according to the reiterated warning of the angel: “Worship God” (1.53).

This conversational approach is also reflected in Leithart’s methodology. He does not use footnotes but, instead, inserts directly into the text insights, clarifications, references to other authors, and relevant explanations. The references are often in parentheses: e.g. “(A hurried reader — that may be you! — can follow my overall interpretation of the book without a single small-print note)” (1.3).

In the Introduction (1.1-53), the author shows how the Apocalypse, as a “book of the Bible”, recapitulates themes from the OT and traces their fulfillment (1.4-20). Similarly, but to a lesser degree, the author considers how Revelation, as a “book of the New Testament”, consolidates material from other NT books (1.20-24). Perhaps he exaggerates this point, particularly when he says: “Revelation alludes to every book of the OT. It is the NT’s ‘OTest’ book” (1.4). Nevertheless, the tables comparing biblical passages are interesting. The OT-Revelation table is more convincing, although some of the allusions are questionable and, as the author confesses, it is a “*far*-from complete list” (1.5). The NT-Revelation tables (“again a very partial list”, 1.21) are even less conclusive, although they do make some attractive suggestions. The weakest entries are those that parallel John 1 with Revelation 21–22 (“the *inclusio*”, 1.22) and the “the Wedding in Cana” in John 2 with “the Wedding of the Lamb” in Revelation 17–19 (1.23). Despite these difficulties, his intention “to close the gap between John’s Gospel and Revelation” (1.51) makes good sense.

A more problematic issue in the Introduction is how the author, referring to Andrew Perriman, defines *oikoumene* (1.32-36). Leithart argues that “[w]hat comes from heaven is not Rome but new Jerusalem, a strong indication that the fallen city is old Jerusalem” (1.32). The inhabited world surrounding the new city would form the *oikoumene* (cf. Luke 2,1; Acts 11,28; 17,6; 24,5) a group of nations constituted by God in order to protect Jerusalem. In addition, there is the decision to translate γῆ as “land” instead of “earth”, except when γῆ is contrasted with οὐρανός (not οὐρανός, as appears twice in 1.55): “Babylon (Jerusalem) is not called (implausibly) queen of the ‘kings of the *earth*’, but naturally queen of ‘kings of the *land*’” (1.51). In keeping with this approach, the author, relying primarily on Daniel, associates the texts with the condition of Israel, which was subjugated in turn by Babylon, Persia, Greece, and finally Rome. For the author, these are the nations that, with their respective rulers, form the *oikoumene*, understood as “a world system that Yahweh establishes during Israel’s Babylonian exile, a world system that, for the Bible, centers in Jerusalem” (1.33). It follows that the fall of Babylon, described in Revelation 18, would correspond to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE. Two implications follow from this interpretation: firstly, “the fall of Jerusalem was the collapse of this entire world-system” (1.34); secondly, the destruction of Jerusalem would correspond to the “great tribulation” (1.34) which Jesus described in the “Olivet Discourse” of Matthew 24 (1.30-31). It marks the transition to a new order, inaugurated by Christ, brought to completion by the martyrs with their blood, and enduring as the kingdom of saints (millennialism).

The actual commentary begins in the second chapter of the first volume and continues until the end of the second volume. The author always offers his own translation (defined by himself as “eccentric”), but notably without providing a Greek text for reference. The author indicates that this was deliberate: “I have given very limited attention to textual issues, mainly taking Holmes’s text [*SBL Greek New Testament*] as my basis” (1.50). His interpretation and hermeneutic is motivated by a unique, historical perspective. Leithart dates Revelation to the 60s CE. This hypothesis, though discordant with most ancient testimonies (which are duly reported and analyzed), is not as surprising as one may think, given that it is in agreement with a marked tendency in contemporary scholarship; this date is also proposed in the recent commentary by Klaus Berger, *Die Apokalypse des Johannes* (Kommentar I-II; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 2017) (1.78-85). The most important implication of assigning an early date is that the content of the book must be rated as “a book of poetic prophecy” (2.440). From this perspective, the bulk of the book refers to events that will happen in the near future. Consequently, the book “must be read within the frame of first-century concerns” (1.51-52). Hence, in Rev 1,1, when we read that the revelation (*ἀποκάλυψις* is translated as “an unveiling”) was given by God “to show to his slaves things that must happen shortly” (1.67), the author intends exactly this. It follows that the message is addressed to the churches of Asia Minor (the seven churches of the Letters: Revelation 2–3) to foretell the fall of Babylon (as mentioned before, the earthly Jerusalem, with the power system connected to it) and the establishment of the new Jerusalem, identified with the kingdom of Christ and his saints (“it is the city that Christians now inhabit, the church of the millennial age”, 2.439). In the same way, Leithart understands Revelation 6–11 to be directed toward the events of the apostolic church, with the division among the people of Israel separating those who accept the Gospel from those who do not. For him, these chapters describe the persecution suffered by some synagogues, the victory of Christ, the transformation of martyrs into the “twenty-four elders”, and a focus on the figures of the “four horsemen” (as the author writes: “Historically, this portrays the dynamics of the early apostolic mission”, 1.296). Two sections, Revelation 4–5 and Revelation 21–22, are treated in isolation from the rest. Revelation 4–5 is described as the only part of the book which refers to the past, given John’s description of the ascension of Christ (1.209-269). Revelation 21–22 is understood as speaking of a more remote time which would include the manifestation and the establishment of the new Jerusalem, building on the historical features already outlined (2.357-409).

A legitimate question might be raised about those passages of Revelation which have a strong symbolic connotation but are difficult to connect to historical events. A striking example is chapter 8 where, on the occasion of the breaking of the seventh seal, we read that, in conjunction with the sound of the first trumpet, “hail and fire, mixed with blood, was cast upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned, a third of the trees burned, and every green grass burned” (v. 7). It does not appear that such events ever happened, let alone in the first century CE. The same is true in the following chapter, where, at the sound of the fifth trumpet, John says he sees a star falling from heaven on earth: “He was given the key to the pit of the Abyss; he opened the pit of the Abyss and from the well rose a smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and it darkened the sun and the atmosphere. From the smoke came grasshoppers, which spread out on the earth, and they were given a power equal to that of the scorpions on the earth” (9,1-3). Even in these cases,

the author maintains his determination to treat every passage as a reflection of “actual historical events and characters under the veil of symbols” (1.52). The implication is that, even with such a highly symbolic caricature, historical events are represented from the life of the church in a first-century context. In chapter 8, γῆ, as already indicated, is understood as a “land” in the sense of “nation” or “country”, and not as “earth”, and this paves the way for seeing the passage as a description of the violent persecution and martyrdom of the first Christians (1.361). This martyrdom motif is strongly emphasized throughout the course of the commentary. The martyrs see their suffering and cruel death united to those of Christ. They are the fulfillment of the mystery of salvation which Christ has accomplished, a historical realization of the kingdom he inaugurated. In this interpretation, the star of chapter 9 would represent the divine power of Jesus (from above) opening the door to the underworld (the pit of the Abyss), allowing the persecutors, animated by evil, to act freely, but only for a limited time (v. 5: “And they were allowed not to kill them, but to torment them for five months”).

The basic hermeneutical approach of the author is to ground the interpretation in history: “Revelation indicates that theology is a study of history and of God’s activity in history. Theology is not an investigation of ideas, though there are ideas aplenty in the Apocalypse” (2.440). This is what the author clearly reiterates in his final theological synthesis (“Theological Observations”, 2.439-447), once again introduced in his own eclectic way: “A stern warning (though not as stern as John’s): Do not read these concluding observations unless you have actually read the commentary!” (2.439).

The author certainly remains faithful to his original purpose, even when he deviates from the model of a scientific commentary. He is aware of his own historical context: “This is a woefully parochial commentary, taking sources and examples from my own American setting and my own little slice of the church and world” (1.51). It is admirable that he does not get bogged down in systematic categories nor entangled in biblical and canonical concerns. The fact is, however, that there is a lack of depth and rigour that an “International Theological Commentary” requires. The author is honest right from the beginning that he has undertaken a more modest kind of exegetical commentary based on a specific linguistic, critical, and historical investigation. There are, however, some limitations that are particularly lamentable. First of all, the author restricts his bibliography to English-language sources. Although the author makes extensive use of patristic sources and Christian antiquity, in the study of a text like Revelation one should not neglect Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions, particularly in terms of the extra-biblical apocalyptic literature. Leithart almost completely ignores this literature, except in some sporadic cases (1.56; 2.196, 223, 231). Given the author’s commitment to interpret everything from the perspective of historical events that marked the life of the Church in the first century, the symbolic language of Revelation becomes depleted, i.e. its value as a metaphorical, universal and transcendental vision is obscured. The eschatological vision, which constitutes the very soul of Revelation, is undermined. The author is aware that he has chosen “a strongly earth-oriented eschatology” (1.52). The same can be said about the author’s treatment and understanding of Trinitarian formulae in the text. He observes that “its Trinitarian formulae are richly suggestive” (1.52), and even though they “are not always explicit, [...] they are pervasive” (2.441). However, when he draws certain conclusions about the main effect of this Trinitarian presence in

the text (“grace and peace”, 1.84), he again limits this to a purely historical motif: “Filled out Trinitarianly, ‘grace and peace’ mean this: To establish peace on earth” (1.85).

In addition to the author’s passion and dedication that is palpable on every page, the reader will appreciate how the author attempts to present a unified theological vision in continuity with the theology of the NT. “[Apocalypse] presents a stunning *totus Christus* nuptial-political Christology-ecclesiology, in which the glorification of the Christ continues beyond his ascension and is fulfilled in the formation of a Bride who is the glory of the Last Adam” (1.52).

Pontificio Seminario Lombardo
Piazza S. Maria Maggiore, 5
I-00185 Roma
luca pedroli70@gmail.com

Luca PEDROLI

Varia

Ionuț Daniel BĂNCILĂ, *Die mandäische Religion und der aramäische Hintergrund des Manichäismus*. Forschungsgeschichte, Textvergleiche, historisch-geographische Verortung (Mandäistische Forschungen 6). Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018. x-301 p. 24.5 x 17.5. €76,10

The research Dr. Băncilă developed as a PhD dissertation in the Theological Faculty of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin during the Winter semester 2014-2015 represents an important step forward in the investigation of the profound connections between Mandaeism and Manichaeism, and further demonstrates the pertinence of the study of the religious background behind both traditions, which share many common roots. The volume is organized in three large chapters, after a preface and a helpful introduction. The first chapter mainly concerns the history of scholarship from the earliest investigations up to the present (“Das Verhältnis zwischen Manichäismus und Mandäismus: eine Forschungsgeschichte”, 24-82). The second chapter (“Literarisch Beziehungen zwischen Mandäismus und Manichäismus”, 83-157) is dedicated to the literary connections between these two religions, while the last chapter (“Mandäische und manichäische mythische und historische Geographie”, 158-233) offers an overview of mythical and historical geography in both traditions, focusing on the central role of Jerusalem. The volume concludes with a short final section and an extensive bibliography.

Starting with the *Einleitung*, the author frames the problems very carefully. Not only does he pay attention to the present social and psychological trauma of the Mandaean community, drawing on sources that are rarely quoted by other authors, but from the outset he also addresses the vexed question concerning the origins of the community. Băncilă observes that the Mandaean religion is not identifiable *per se* as a visible and united community in the 3rd or 4th century CE, nor do the references to it in the 5th century provide sufficient data for a satisfactory history.

It is only after the 7th century, with the rise of Islam, that the literature of the community provides a reliable portrait of its essential features.

This book employs a methodology which produces convincing and useful results. Following the available evidence, the author shows that a systematic comparison of Mandaean texts with the Manichaean sources is necessary. The analysis should focus on the very special features of the Gnostic *Kunstsprache* (83), which develop a number of formal themes and exhibit characteristic modes of expression. This is not a simple or straightforward task, as the author acknowledges (11-13), because the most important “Mani-Codex” is now considered to have been compiled much later than the 4th–5th century, and “diese Neudatierung mehr Probleme aufwirft, als sie lösen kann” (11). Even the Coptic texts leave many questions unanswered; the specialist of Mandaeanism must work with reference to an approximate “relative chronology” (15), which is given in an inverted order from the latest sources to the earliest ones (“von jüngeren zu älteren Gattungen”), and which is presented as follows: liturgical instructions (*šarh*), the esoteric ritual exegesis (pl. *razia*), the *Book of John*, the *Ginza*, the *Qolasta*, and magic literature.

Of course, all these serious difficulties cannot dissolve the witness of the Mandaean magic literature, which, in particular with its *Bleirollen*, was dated by Rudolph Macuch to the 3rd century CE. But this proposal does not persuade Băncilă to adopt the category of “Proto-Mandaeanism” as a comfortable way of escaping the main difficulties of tracing the relationship between the two traditions. For him, taking that approach would oversimplify the historical evolution of this community in the course of its long history.

From the historical and methodological point of view, the author recommends treating Mandaeanism as an institutional religion only after the coming of Islam, when proper Mandaean material was finally collected in texts like the *Ginza* or the *Book of John*, whose origin derives from a compilation of different earlier materials (6). For this reason, Băncilă suggests a strict use of “Mandaeanism” in quotation marks (9) to mean “Mandaean material” (10). He emphasizes the fittingness of the German expression *mandäische Gedankengut*. Attempting to trace the stratigraphy of Mandaean materials reveals complex patterns. Some textual material found in these sources might be better understood in the light of later Mandaean literature, which, in spite of its apparent age, contains older strata. Băncilă offers another significant *caveat* against treating the “Mandaean material” as “Aramaic”, arguing that this term has inappropriate connotations. Instead, he recommends exploring the evidence of the Mandaean tradition from a religious point of view, which seems to be a more promising perspective: “eine Erforschung der ostaramäischen Religiosität” could shed light on Manichaeism as well (20).

The first chapter concerning the history of scholarship is fascinating, because the author tells the story of a very complex and secular debate, drawing on an extensive bibliography which includes reviews that show how various theories gained or lost scholarly support over the years. Băncilă’s judgment on the history of scholarship is critical but not unreasonably so. He strives to provide a full portrait of the field and to avoid one-sided judgments. Inevitably, any bibliographic survey like this invites criticism, since scholars might easily object to the absence of one or another of his/her masters or otherwise favorite scholars who addressed the Manichaean and Mandaean problems in one way or another. For instance, the omission of the contributions by H.J. Polotsky, W.B. Henning and W. Sundermann

seems strange to me, as is also the case with the Italian scholars, Gh. Gnoli and G. Messina. Such choices are always highly debatable, but also understandable if we consider the time necessary to develop a full treatment of every figure in the field. It is in any case a pity that Băncilă did not decide to prepare at least a list of the authors whom he does mention, especially in the chapter concerning the *Forschungsgeschichte*, because this would make the book a more useful reference work. I hope that in the near future he might consider the possibility of developing this single chapter into an independent monograph, potentially with the cooperation of other scholars from different disciplines, because, as he himself remarked, the perception of the Manichaean-Mandaean problem radically changes according to the perspectives provided by each researcher's own discipline.

In the second chapter the author tries to reconstruct the foundational presence of a basic "*mandäisches Gedankengut*" in the literary and religious production of some ancient communities speaking Aramaic or other related languages and dialects in Mesopotamia, but without excluding the influences of other social and cultural groups, as previously stated in the *Einleitung*. Băncilă systematically analyses a number of literary and symbolic "Motifs", each of which constitutes an essentially Mandaean trait and whose presence in the Manichaean literature cannot be definitively attributed to Mani's *Lehrsystem*. These motifs are substantially four, although they appear in different ways: (I) the Gnosis as Water; (II) the Baptism in the Column of Light; (III) the dualistic representation of Water; and (IV) the theme of the "Black Water", as another dualistic representation of the world with close relation to the magic literature.

In particular, the author takes the view that the "dualistic formula" attested in three variants in the *Ginza* are probably a later text compared to the version in the "Mandaean Liturgies" (*Qolasta*) (142-143), which, in its turn, finds good parallels also in some magical Aramaic texts (146 ff.). In particular, the Mandaean liturgical version and the Aramaic magical one, taken together (7-8, 145, 150, 156), are considered to be the common basis for the Manichaean "confession", which survives in the Parthian fragment M 1971 and in the Greek text from Kellis (152-154). The author provides a large range of supportive arguments (226-227) for this hypothesis, positing that these (Mandaean) texts may well have been associated with a sort of ritual (*masiqta*) that the Manichaeans adopted (230). The reconstruction of such an early liturgy postulates a kind of ritual "standardization", which may be inferred from the contents of some (arguably later) Mandaean colophons (226-230). The resonances suggest to Băncilă that there probably were "textual communities" in South-Babylonia that could not yet be classified as "Mandaean" but which became "Mandeanized" in the end. In the framework of the 3rd chapter, the author wisely refrains from identifying these early communities with the "Baptists" from the *Codex Manichaeus Coloniensis* because of a lack of explicit evidence (223). Later this ritual became an integral part of the Mandaean religion, but it also transmitted to the Manicheans themselves (or simply shared with them, in my view) some texts or hymns (230, 231-232, and note 252, on *Thomaspsalmen*). This very fascinating topic has been discussed by T. Säve-Söderbergh (*Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book*. Prosody and Mandaean Parallels [Uppsala 1949] 60-61) and by C. Colpe ("Die Thomaspsalmen als chronologischer Fixpunkt in der Geschichte der orientalischen Gnosis", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 7 [1964] 77-93, esp. 70-71), and deserves a further, separate investigation.

The author argues that behind the development of Manichaeism there is an older tradition based on other strands of inspiration which almost certainly would also have had a direct influence on the Mandaean tradition. This investigation is particularly interesting in its treatment of the Iranian parallels.

The third chapter presents a very original and convincing approach to the mythological geography of Manichaeism and Mandaeanism, particularly the representation of Jerusalem, which partly reflects earlier literary traditions that made an impact on both religious traditions. The influence of this background material seems to be undeniable, and we are indebted to the author for gathering such a large volume of data for future scholars to explore. This volume demonstrates that the Mandaean tradition played a major role in the history of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the ancient and late antique Near East, and that the earliest form of Mandaeanism provided a literary and theological framework from which Mani himself may have taken some inspiration.

In conclusion, this book has many merits. Firstly, it gets out of a sometimes unproductive amphibolic game concerning the relative chronology between Manichaeism and Mandaeanism, in which usually Mandaeanism is perceived as receiving its essential qualities from Manichaeism. The systematic investigation of earlier patterns shows that this model cannot be followed blindly. Băncilă has reassessed the problem of “Dualism” in all these Gnostic traditions in order to discourage any simplistic qualification of the Dualistic elements in Mandaeanism as *naturally* “Manichaean” influences (133-134, and in general ch. I). Instead, he suggests taking the opposite approach, recognizing that the Mandaean material drawn from a “proto-Mandaean” tradition almost certainly influenced the worldview of Mani and his rituals. I think that the Aramaic magical heritage and the Mandaean and Manichaean materials (§ II.4) present us with a turbulent textual situation, in which the fresh approach brought by Băncilă opens new paths of investigation. His working hypothesis, which is not dogmatic, represents a sort of positive “Popperian” challenge to the traditional framework and deserves our thoughtful consideration. This approach may also provide a new perspective on the interaction of the Iranian background with the proto-Mandaean framework.

Department of Cultural Heritage
University of Bologna
Campus of Ravenna
Via degli Ariani 1
I-48121 Ravenna
antonio.panaino@unibo.it

Antonio PANAINO