

Myth: Prescriptive History as Culture

Table of Contents

[The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in The Book of Exodus by Jan Assmann, translated by Robert Savage \[Princeton University Press, 9780691157085\]](#)

[Through Hermopolitan Lenses: Studies on the So-called Book of Two Ways in Ancient Egypt by Wael Sherbiny \[Probleme Der Agyptologie, Brill, 9789004336711\]](#)

[Hittite Landscape and Geography edited by Mark Weeden and Lee Z. Ullmann with maps by Zenobia Homan \[Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 the Near and Middle East, Brill Academic, 9789004341746\]](#)

[The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic edited by Daniel S. Richter and William A. Johnson \[Oxford Handbooks, Oxford University Press, 9780199837472\]](#)

[Hadrian's Wall by Adrian Goldsworthy \[Basic Books, 9781541644427\]](#)

[New Perspectives on Late Antiquity edited by David Hernández de la Fuente \[Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 9781443827188\]](#)

[Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan edited by Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano \[Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Mohr Siebeck, 978316154531\]](#)

[The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary by Loren T. Stuckenbruck \[Texte Und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum, 978316146720\] \(English and Hebrew Edition\)](#)

[The Book of the Giants: The Manichean and The Dead Sea Scroll Apocryphal Versions by W. B.](#)

[Henning, Fabio R. Araujo \[International Alliance Pro-Publishing, 9781609420048\]](#)

[The Books of Enoch: The Angels, The Watchers and The Nephilim: With Extensive Commentary on the Three Books of Enoch, the Fallen Angels, the Calendar of Enoch, and Daniel's Prophecy by Joseph Lumpkin \[Fifth Estate, 9781936533664\]](#)

[Essay: Angels by Adam J. Johnson](#)

[Gospel of John by Edward W. Klink III \[Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Zondervan, 9780310243601\]](#)

[The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John by Edward W. Klink III \[Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, Cambridge University Press, 9780521130448\]](#)

[Commitments to Medieval Mysticism within Contemporary Contexts edited by Patrick Cooper, Satoshi Kikuchi \[Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, Peeters Publishers, 9789042934474\]](#)

[The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium edited by Anthony Kaldellis, Niketas Siniossoglou \[Cambridge University Press, 9781107041813\]](#)

[The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492 edited by Jonathan Shepard \[Cambridge University Press, 9780521832311\]](#)

[Byzantine Culture in Translation edited by Amelia Brown and Bronwen Neil \[Byzantina Australiensia, Brill, 9789004348868\]](#)

[Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase, Notes and Remarks on Education and Culture in Byzantium from Its Origins to the 10th Century by Paul Lemerle, translated from the French by Lindsay Helen & Ann Moffatt \[Byzantina Australiensia, Brill 9780959362633\]](#)

[Medieval Textual Cultures: Agents of Transmission, Translation and Transformation edited by Faith Wallis and Robert Wisnovsky \[Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Tension, Transmission, Transformation De Gruyter, 9783110465464\]](#)

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volumes 1 edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson,](#)

[Michael Fishbein \[Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 1, ISBN 9789004356191\]](#)

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volumes 2 edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein \[Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 2, ISBN 9789004356207\]](#)

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volume 3 edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein \[Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: Volume: 3, ISBN 9789004356214\]](#)

[Three Volume set:](#)

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation in Three Volumes edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein \[Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 1, ISBN 9789004356191; Volume: 2, ISBN 9789004356207; Volume: 3, ISBN 9789004356214; 3 Volume set: ISBN 9789004356085\]](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in The Book of Exodus](#) by Jan Assmann, translated by Robert Savage [Princeton University Press, 9780691157085]

A groundbreaking account of how the Book of Exodus shaped fundamental aspects of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

The Book of Exodus may be the most consequential story ever told. But its spectacular moments of heaven-sent plagues and parting seas overshadow its true significance, says Jan Assmann, a leading historian of ancient religion. The story of Moses guiding the enslaved children of Israel out of captivity to become God's chosen people is the foundation of an entirely new idea of religion, one that lives on today in many of the world's faiths.

[The Invention of Religion](#) sheds new light on ancient scriptures to show how Exodus has shaped

fundamental understandings of monotheistic practice and belief.

Assmann delves into the enduring mythic power of the Exodus narrative, examining the text's compositional history and calling attention to distinctive motifs and dichotomies: enslavement and redemption; belief and doubt; proper worship and idolatry; loyalty and betrayal. Revelation is a central theme--the revelation of God's power in miracles, of God's presence in the burning bush, and of God's chosen dwelling among the Israelites in the vision of the tabernacle. Above all, it is God's covenant with Israel--the binding obligation of the Israelites to acknowledge God as their redeemer and obey His law--that is Exodus's most encompassing and transformative idea, one that challenged basic assumptions about humankind's relationship to the divine in the ancient world.

[The Invention of Religion](#) is a powerful account of how ideas of faith, revelation, and covenant, first introduced in Exodus, shaped Judaism and were later adopted by Christianity and Islam to form the bedrock of the world's Abrahamic religions.

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Foreword

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE | GENERAL FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

Theme and Structure of the Book of Exodus
Exodus (Chapters 1-15)

God Reveals His Name—

God Reveals His Power

Sinai—Calling, Covenant, and

Law (Chapters 15-24)

The Way to Sinai—God

Reveals the Covenant

Divine Presence (Chapters 25-40)

God Reveals the

Tabernacle—Revelation of the Divine
Being:

Breach and Reconciliation—The

Tabernacle Is Built—The

Revelation Concludes:

God's Permanent Presence

CHAPTER TWO

The Historical Background: Event and
Remembrance

Memories

The Hyksos—Amarna—
Habiru/'apiru—Waves of Migration, Sea
Peoples—Theocracy
Experiences

Miraculous Redemption from
Mortal Danger—The "Secession of the
Northern Tribes": The First Occasion for
Remembering the Exodus?—Israel
Refounded: The Principal Occasion for
Remembering the Exodus
CHAPTER THREE

Textual History and the History of
Meaning

Redaction as "Cultivation
of Meaning": Textual Layering in the Bible
From Myth to Canon and
Back

The "Mosaic Distinctions"
and the Monotheism of Loyalty
PART TWO | THE EXODUS
CHAPTER FOUR

The Tribulations of the Israelites
and the Birth of the Savior
Bondage in Egypt
The Birth of the Child
Moses's Childhood and

Upbringing
CHAPTER FIVE

God Reveals His Name: Moses at
the Burning Bush

Moses Is Called
God Renews His Promise
Excursus I: The Burning
Bush in Schoenberg's Opera Moses und
Aron

I Am That I Am
CHAPTER SIX

Signs and Wonders: God Reveals
His Power

The Plagues of Egypt
The Egyptian-Hellenistic
Tradition

The Institution of the
Passover Feast and the Passover
Haggadah

Excursus II: Moses's Song
of Thanksgiving and Handel's Oratorio
Israel in Egypt

PART THREE | THE COVENANT
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Calling of the People
Holy People and
Portable Fatherland
The Torah as Memory

The Development of the
Covenant Idea: Bridal and Filial
Metaphors

CHAPTER EIGHT

Treaty and Law

The Deconstruction of
Kingship: Treaty and Law as the
Constitution of God's People

The Ten Commandments
The Covenant Code and
the Solemnization of the Covenant
Excursus III: "Excarnation" and
Theologization of the Law

Excursus IV: The Decalogue and
Egyptian Norms for Judging the Dead
CHAPTER NINE

Resistance: Moses and the Violent
Fate of the Prophets

Murmuring in the Desert
The Murder of Moses?
The Violent Fate of the

Prophets
CHAPTER TEN

The Institutionalization of Divine
Presence

YHWH Comes to Dwell
among His People

The Golden Calf: The
Original Sin against the Covenant
Excursus V: The Golden
Calf in Schoenberg's Opera Moses und
Aron

A "Book of the Temple"?
CONCLUSION

Narrative, Historical, and
Performative Truth
Revelation
Out of Egypt
Exodus as Political Myth
Exodus and Monotheism

Notes
Bibliography
Illustration Credits
Index

A number of years ago, Fred Appel gave me the
idea for a book on Exodus. My first thanks go to
him; without his initiative, this book would never
have been written. I declined his initial invitation by
pleading the many Old Testament scholars who, it
seemed to me, would be far better suited to the
task. By the time Fred renewed the invitation some
years later, I had come to the realization that the

Exodus theme had actually preoccupied me all my life.

What became clear to me was that the Book of Exodus is not just about the departure of the people of Israel from Egypt but also about the establishment of a completely new type of religion, or even "religion" as such. In the ancient world, this complex of election, covenant, and loyalty was something completely new; it by no means emerged from what came before it, despite incorporating many preexisting elements. From the internal viewpoint of the biblical texts, this innovation is experienced and presented as "revelation"; from the external perspective of historical analysis, it can be understood as "invention," albeit invention of a kind that has nothing to do with fiction. It is not the case that a lone genius called Moses was suddenly struck by inspiration. Rather, over many decades, perhaps even over many centuries, a collective experience attained a form of binding, ultimate truth that appears in Exodus as an act of otherworldly foundation. That is what we mean by the word "revelation," an idea that has no equivalent in the ancient languages. Yet no single word could do justice to this unprecedented new idea. It needed instead to be developed in a "Grand Narrative." Faith based on revelation, this complex of election and promise, covenant and loyalty—that is what we, the inheritors of this extraordinary invention, understand today by "religion." In the idea of incarnation, of (the word of) God entering the world in human form, and of a book sent into the world from heaven, Christianity and Islam adopted the motif of otherworldly foundation. Entering into this new religion required turning one's back on Egypt. That is the theme of the Book of Exodus, which does not—like the myth of old—end with the people's arrival in the Promised Land, but with the entry of God and his people into a joint foundation.

The world that the Israelites had to leave behind them in order to enter into the new kingdom of holiness was Egypt and not Assyria, Babylonia, the Kingdom of the Hittites, or some other ancient realm. Ancient Egypt therefore represents that world in exemplary, ideal-typical fashion. For this reason it is legitimate to view this new religion from

an Egyptian (i.e., Egyptological) point of view. From this vantage point, there are two quite different ways of looking at the Hebrew Bible. One sees Israel embedded in the cultures of the ancient world and primarily detects continuities and parallels: between Egyptian hymns and biblical psalms, between Egyptian love songs and the Song of Solomon, between Egyptian and biblical sacrificial rites, taboos, and ideas of purity, between Egyptian and biblical representations of (sacral) kingship, and much else besides. The other foregrounds the discontinuities, antitheses, and ruptures in the relationship. It sees in Israel a new force that pits itself against the old world order as something radically heterogeneous and, in so doing, lays the foundations of the world we know today. Whereas I used to read the Bible, during my first quarter century as an Egyptologist, entirely under the spell of the first approach, I have since become far more attuned to the other, discontinuous, antagonistic, revolutionary aspect of ancient Israelite and above all early Jewish religion, and hence also to the symbolic meaning of the departure from Egypt.

This book aims at neither a retelling nor a commentary, although it naturally cannot avoid traveling some way down these two well-trodden paths to the biblical Exodus tradition. Above all, what I am aiming at here is a "resonant reading," a necessarily subjective interpretation of the biblical texts that reflects—to as great an extent as possible—my own Egyptological and general cultural interests and historical experiences. More than twenty-five years ago, as a visiting Egyptologist, I was invited by the Stroumsa family to a Seder in Jerusalem. My friends thought it would be meaningful, from a professional point of view, to commemorate the suffering endured by the children of Israel in their Egyptian house of bondage. That unforgettable evening of endless storytelling and song gave me heart as I embarked on this project.

I frequently walk past a sign that reads: "Use only under supervision and with expert guidance." The sign stands in front of a high ropes course at the local sports center. I was often reminded of such a high ropes course when coming to grips with the Old Testament. Fortunately, supervision and expert

guidance were never wanting. Michaela Bauks, Ronald Hendel, Bernd Janowski, Othmar Keel, Daniel Krochmalnik, Bernhard Lang, and Konrad Schmid all read the first draft of the manuscript and offered numerous corrections, changes, and references; where their suggestions have been taken on board, they have been individually acknowledged in the notes. I extend my thanks, too, to the Berlin theologian, Rolf Schieder, as well as Thierry Chervel, editor of the online magazine *Der Perlentaucher*, and his assistant, David Assmann. In his book *Are Religions Dangerous?* (2008), Rolf Schieder produced what is probably the most searching critique to which Moses the Egyptian has so far been subjected. He was kind enough to join me and a panel of invited speakers in an extremely productive debate that subsequently found a forum in *Der Perlentaucher*. In the course of the debate I learned a great deal that allowed me to refine and hone my arguments.¹ In this context, I am particularly grateful to the Viennese theologian Jan-Heiner Tück, who twice invited me to Vienna to discuss my ideas with a wider audience.

Excerpt:

The Exodus from Egypt remains our starting point. — Sigmund Freud

In the beginning was belief: belief in one God. — Heinrich August Winkler

The big bang of modernization occurred with the [...] exodus from the world of polytheistic cultures. —Aleida Assmann

The Book of Exodus contains what may well be considered the most grandiose and influential story ever told. Its theme is a watershed in the history of the human race, comparable only to such momentous milestones on the road to modernity as the invention of writing and the emergence of states: the shift from polytheism to monotheism. This was an evolutionary caesura of the first importance, at least for the Judeo-Christian-Islamic world. Even if it would take the Christianization and Islamization of the ancient world to reveal the full extent of its revolutionary impact, the story told in the Book of Exodus represents its founding myth. Exodus is thus not just the founding myth of Israel but that of monotheism as such, a key constituent of the modern world. The historian Gottfried Schramm,

for one, sees in the departure from Egypt the first of "five crossroads in world history."

To write the reception history of the Book of Exodus is therefore an impossible undertaking: its influence has been immeasurably vast, its impact all but ubiquitous. I propose instead to consider the source of that unique impact and lay bare the mythic core from which it draws its appeal. Myths lend themselves to countless retellings and revisions. They have the power to reveal new dimensions of life, to reorient human existence or even set it on a new footing, shedding light on situations and experiences that they invest with meaning. Myths are narrative elements that, configured and reconfigured in various ways, allow societies, groups, and individuals to create an identity for themselves—that is, to know who they are and where they belong—and to navigate complex predicaments and existential crises. With the help of the Osiris myth, for example, the Egyptians worked through the problem of death in their culture, while Sigmund Freud understood and treated his patients' neuroses in light of the Oedipus myth.

The Book of Exodus is devoted to the two most important questions on which human minds have dwelled since time immemorial: the question of the role played by the divine in our lives and the question of who "we" are. Both questions take on a specific form in the light of the Exodus myth and they are inextricably intertwined, since who "we" are is determined largely by what God has in mind for "us." The Egyptians appear never to have asked themselves such questions. They considered themselves not as "Egyptians" but simply as human beings, having emerged from God together with every other living thing (including deities) at the origin of the cosmos. God, for his part, has no special plan or destiny in mind for us; his sole purpose is to keep the universe on track, a task in which we humans can support him by performing religious rites. History did not appear to the Egyptians as a project structured around promises and their fulfillment, but rather as an ongoing process that had to be kept in harmony with primordial mythic patterns through cultural practice and so preserved from change. The Exodus myth, by contrast, relates how God freed the children of

Israel from Egyptian bondage, singling them out from all the other peoples in order that they might jointly realize the project of a just society. A greater difference can hardly be imagined. Whereas the Egyptian myth tells a story about how the universe was created, the biblical myth of Exodus recounts how something wholly new came to be established within a world that had been created long ago. As presented in the myth, this groundbreaking new order arose in two ways: through revolution and revelation. In order to free the children of Israel, God first had to break the power of their oppressors; and in order to make them his chosen people and covenant partners in a new religion, he first had to reveal himself to them and proclaim his will.

A clear distinction needs to be made between the Exodus story and the Book of Exodus. The Exodus story goes far beyond what is dealt with in the Book of Exodus, for without the motif of the Promised Land that story cannot yield its full meaning. The escape from Egypt can be narrated only retrospectively, from the place foreseen at the time of departure as the ultimate destination. This is a story told by those who have arrived, not by those still wandering in the wilderness; by those who have been confirmed in their possession of the new, not by those who have only been emancipated from the old. The motifs of departure and Promised Land thus already belong together in the original myth before being subjected to literary development in the second to fifth books of Moses, as well as in the Book of Joshua. In the Torah, which prefaces this "Ur-Pentateuch" with the Book of Genesis and leaves out the Book of Joshua with the advent in the Promised Land, the Exodus story was confined to the biography of Moses, whose death marks its endpoint. The Exodus story centers on the three primal motifs of departure, covenant, and Promised Land. Those are the mythic kernels from which the account of Israel's departure from Egypt draws its transformative power across all its countless retellings. The Book of Exodus, by contrast, is restricted to the motifs of departure and covenant. It ends not with the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land but with God's entry into a form of symbiosis with his chosen people.

Accordingly, the Book of Exodus is split into three parts. The first part, chapters 1-15, tells the story of liberation from Egyptian captivity. The second, chapters 16-24, concerns the binding of the Israelites to the new covenant offered them by God. Interestingly, their oppression in Egypt and the religion that liberates them from it are both given the same Hebrew word here: *`ābōdā* or "service." Human service signifies oppression, divine service denotes freedom. Revelation is the overall theme that shapes both parts, however. The third part, which follows in chapters 25-40, stands in for the Promised Land, understood as the goal that inspired the children of Israel to set out from Egypt. This concluding part of the book is also the longest, although it has enjoyed nothing like the historical influence of the other two. It describes how the Temple (or Tabernacle), priesthood, and cult were set up. In other words, it concerns the institutionalization of the covenant in the form of a new religion. It is now widely accepted that this third part was added by the Priestly Source, which collated the Books of Genesis and Exodus into a comprehensive historical narrative toward the end of the sixth century BCE.

The Exodus story is also referred to outside the Book of Exodus in surprisingly few biblical texts. Apart from passing allusions in some of the prophets, there are a handful of psalms indicating that tales of God's saving deeds had a fixed place in the liturgy of the postexilic cult of the Second Temple. Here, two points become quite clear: these tales are commemorative acts, intended to preserve past events from oblivion by handing them down to future generations; and, in addition to the three core mythic motifs of departure, covenant, and Promised Land mentioned above, we find here a fourth: the sins of the fathers, which the chosen people had to expiate by wandering in the wilderness for forty years after making the covenant at Sinai until their descendants finally reached the Promised Land. The histories of salvation and damnation go hand in hand, the former brought to mind amid the pangs of the latter. The great liturgy recited in the interconnected Psalms 105-7 begins by recapitulating the tale of the forefathers and Joseph, invoking God's promise "to give the land of Canaan" to Abraham and his seed (105:7-24),

before recalling the exodus and the plagues of Egypt. Psalm 106 continues with the parting of the Red Sea and the various pitfalls into which the ill-tempered Israelites stumbled during their years in the wilderness, culminating in the gravest sin of all: the adoption of Canaanite customs in the Promised Land, upon which God drove them out and scattered them among the peoples. Psalm 107 is then the hymn of thanksgiving offered by those whom God brought back from "out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south" (107:3).

The Exodus story thus singles out the chosen people in three ways. It distinguishes them from Egypt as the epitome of the old system, which they are enjoined to abandon definitively and unconditionally; from their Canaanite neighbors in the Promised Land, who represent a false, blasphemous religion; and from the "fathers," who remind the Israelites of their own sinful past. It is this final motif, with its dual injunction to both repudiate the "sins of the fathers" and assume collective responsibility for them, that has come to seem uniquely significant in Germany today.

Although the Exodus myth had been told considerably earlier—as allusions in Hosea, Amos, and Micah, dating from the eighth century BCE, make abundantly clear—the era of its literary elaboration and cultic institutionalization only dawned in the sixth century BCE, the period of Babylonian captivity. In particular, its great moment came with the return from exile, when "Israel" had to be reinvented as an ethnic and religious identity and established on the basis of a political, social, and religious constitution. With the help of the Exodus story, those faced with this task succeeded in creating a memory that defined them as a group, anchoring them in the depths of time while also committing them to a common future. What they were doing was more than just history-writing; they were declaring their allegiance to an identity, fashioning a collectively binding self-definition in the medium of narrative and memory. In the two forms of storytelling and lawgiving, the narrative and the normative, the Book of Exodus codifies the one all-transforming, truly epochal revelation in which God emerged from his inscrutable concealment—for the Jews, once and for all; for

Christians and Muslims, for the first time—to manifest his will to his people, so establishing a completely new relationship to the world, to time, and to the divine.

The revelation on Sinai provides the model for all later revelations, the foundation for a new form of religion that rests on the twin pillars of revelation and covenant and can therefore be termed a "religion of revelation," in sharp contrast to the "natural" religions that have flourished since time immemorial without reference to any such foundational event. Michael Walzer has read the Exodus tradition in its political dimension as the matrix of all revolutions; analogously, I would like to interpret it in this book as the matrix of all revelations.

"Exodus" is not just the name given to a book in the Bible, however. It is also a symbol that can stand for any radical departure, any decampment for something entirely new and different. When Augustine, in his commentary to Psalm 64, remarks, *incipit exire qui incipit amare* ("the one who begins to love begins to leave"), he has in mind leaving behind the *civitas terrena*, the realm of worldly affairs and preoccupations, to enter the *civitas Dei*, the kingdom of God. This is not a physical movement from one place to another but rather an internal, spiritual exodus: *exeuntium pedes sunt cordis affectus* ("the feet of those leaving are the affections of the heart"). Accordingly, "Egypt" refers to the mundane world where the pious dwell as strangers and suffer persecution for their faith, as recalled in the aria of a Bach cantata, sung on the second Sunday of Advent to words by Salomon Franck, that looks forward to Christ's second coming: "When will the day come when we leave the Egypt of this world?" When Kant famously declares enlightenment to be "man's exit from his self-incurred immaturity," he is likewise drawing on the symbolism of Exodus.

When talking about a turning point in the history of the entire human race, the idea of an "Axial Age" immediately springs to mind. The philosopher Karl Jaspers used this idea to encapsulate reflections that go back to the late-eighteenth-century Iranologist Anquetil-Duperron, the discoverer of the Zend-Avesta. Anquetil-Duperron, recognizing that a number of movements like Zoroastrianism had

arisen at roughly the same time in different parts of the ancient world, from China to Greece, spoke of a "great revolution of the human race." From the outset, the biblical shift to monotheism was also placed in this context. Indeed this shift, extending from the appearance of the early prophets in the eighth century (Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah) to the completion of the Torah some four to five centuries later, falls neatly within the time frame of 500 BCE +/- 300 years identified by Jaspers as the Axial Age. In brief, the Axial Age is marked by the discovery of transcendence. Around this time, a series of charismatic figures—Confucius, Laozi, Mencius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Isaiah and the other prophets, Parmenides, Xenophanes, Anaximander, and others—subjected traditional institutions and concepts to a radical critique on the basis of newly discovered absolute truths, which they had arrived at either through revelation or through methodical reflection. The shift described in the Exodus story would thus present only one of many symptoms of a contemporary global development that saw humankind as a whole making a giant leap forward, as Jaspers asserts.

I take Jaspers's Axial Age theory to be one of the great scientific myths of the twentieth century, comparable to Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex. Like Freud's doctrine, it has the virtue of uncovering overarching patterns that had previously gone unnoticed; but it can also—and this is the other side of the coin—go too far in its tendency to lump together disparate phenomena under a catch-all category, overlooking important differences in the process.' The concept of the Axial Age refers to cultures and worldviews that distinguish between immanence (the this-worldly realm, home to the conditional and contingent) and transcendence (the other-worldly realm, home to the unconditional and absolute). On that basis, they tend to take a critical stance toward the world as it actually exists. Yet this is a question less of an "age" than of the presence of certain media conditions for recording intellectual breakthroughs and making them accessible to later generations. These include writing, of course, but also processes of canonization and commentary that endeavor to stabilize textual meaning. Once secured in this way, ideas can be disseminated in space as well as in time. It seems clear to me that, during the Persian

period, Zoroastrianism and the pre-Socratic philosophers influenced the universalistic monotheism that was being developed in Jerusalem in the wake of the great prophets of exile, Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel. Yet the Exodus story, with its "monotheism of loyalty," must be regarded as a phenomenon sui generis. As such, it needs to be appreciated in its specificity and not prematurely filed under the all-encompassing rubric of a global "Axial Age." What is incontestable, at any rate, is that this story laid the foundations for a decisive shift that is entirely typical of the Axial Age. That shift is fully accomplished when the meaning of the divine covenant is expanded to cover the "kingdom of God" and the exodus from Egypt becomes the cipher for the soul's exodus from "this world," the civitas terrena, into the City of God. <>

[Through Hermopolitan Lenses: Studies on the So-called Book of Two Ways in Ancient Egypt](#) by Wael Sherbiny [Probleme Der Agyptologie, Brill, 9789004336711]

Wael Sherbiny presents a pioneering study and detailed analysis of the so-called Book of Two Ways based on all the original and hitherto unpublished sources of this pictorial-textual composition from ancient Egypt.

Excerpt: More than a century has elapsed since Schack-Schackenburg introduced the expression Book of Two Ways in the Egyptological literature. This title concerns a pictorial-textual composition attested on a large number of Middle Kingdom coffins from Deir El Barsha. Although most of his conclusions are now outdated, the expression he coined has never lost its appeal. It is true that several scholars have expressed reservations against using this appellation with reference to the entire composition, but they agree on applying it to at least one segment of it, which contains two large superimposed registers, and which we will call the "map" section.

This title consists of three components: a) book, b) two, and c) ways. Despite the popularity of the term, a glance at each of these three soon reveals the inadequacy of the expression "Book of Two Ways".

The reason why the word “book” is used is not that the composition always presents its various elements in a rather fixed sequence. Nor is it used as a conventional expression, as is also the case in Egyptological ‘inventions’ like the “Book of the Dead” of the New Kingdom, the “Book of the Field of Offerings” (CT 464–468), or the “Book of Shu” (designating the Shu spells CT 75–83), etc. Although such considerations are not completely absent, it is not the main argument that is usually presented.

The name “Book of Two Ways” is based on: a) the phrase “what is at the end of the document (mḏ3t)” which is attested only in one source (B3C), and b) the use of a colophon at the end of CT 1130 in three sources.

Although the word mḏ3t can have the meaning of ‘book’, a close scrutiny of the evidence proves that mḏ3t in CT 1031 is unlikely to refer to the text itself, but rather to the Textträger, i.e. the coffin bottom in this case. It is in fact not unusual to consider the inscribed object as a mḏ3t regardless of its nature (be it a tomb, a chamber in a tomb, a tomb wall, a coffin, a coffin side ... etc.).

This holds true for our case too, since it can be shown that the word mḏ3t appears in B3C for practical reasons. It specifies that CT 1031, which was written in a space that had at first been left unscribed, is in fact the continuation of CT 1130 at the end of the coffin bottom (= pḥwḯ mḏ3t). The scribe did not even find a space to complete the word mdw in CT VII 470d [1130] at the bottom of the line 585 in the lower register of the coffin floorboard. He had to continue the text in empty text columns planned between CT 1030 and the rectangle containing CT 1033. He even started this continuation of CT 1130 right after CT 1030 which ends in the upper part of line 307. Here, and before re-writing the beginning of the sentence that was cut halfway at the end of the line 585 (nḯ mdw.n.sn), the scribe introduced the practical remark ḥrt pḥwḯ nt mḏ3t “what is at the end (i.e. the leftmost side of the lower register) of the document (i.e. the coffin bottom)”. This remark does not occur in any of the variants, for there was no need whatsoever to use it since there was sufficient space to write CT 1130 in the same register and

not continue it at a distant place on the coffin bottom. By consequence, understanding mḏ3t here as a reference to the composition as a whole is not necessarily correct as has been always assumed.

The second argument is not decisive either, as the use of a colophon is not restricted to the end of CT 1130 in this composition. CT 1117, which stands somewhere halfway through, also ends with a colophon in three sources. To adopt the line of reasoning of the advocates of using the word “book” here, we would then have to accept the existence of two books, not just one. Therefore, the assumption that our composition is a single “book” remains to be demonstrated.

The use of the word “two” is even more problematic. Not a single text in the composition refers to ‘Two Ways’ (w3tḯ). References to a group (i.e. plural, not dual) of terrestrial and water ways of Rosetau occur only before and after the “map” section. But no text in the “map” section contains an unambiguous reference to “two ways of Rosetau”. The only representation that accompanies a label that clearly refers to these roads (CT 1072) shows intersecting blue bands designated by the plural w3wt (‘ways’). It cannot be easily assumed that we have here “two” intersecting bands either. But, considering that the pertinent section occurs outside the “map” section, it cannot be taken for granted that it refers to it.

Moreover, the terrestrial and watery roads referred to in the CT mentioned above denote two kinds of roads, and not the number of ways involved. There is not a single indication in the entire composition to support that the roads themselves are being counted. This fact has recently given rise to re-baptizing the composition as “The Book of the Ways of Rosetau”.¹⁸ But the area inscribed with the name of these roads and Rosetau is the section containing CT 1072–1082. There is no obvious reason why this should refer to the entire composition.

The third element is “ways”. Although roads are referred to repeatedly in the composition, various other types of geographical and other entities are as well. There is no clear reason why the road-element should be singled out. A great number of religious texts and texts applied in mortuary

contexts in ancient Egypt constantly refer to several ways in the Hereafter, not only this composition.

The presumption that there are ‘two ways’, and taking this as a point of departure for further research of the composition, has in fact caused much confusion. It was probably motivated by some factors. Firstly, the layout of the “map” section is unique. It has two superimposed registers each containing a serpentine band, the upper one being blue, while the lower one is black. Secondly, the group of spells situated outside the “map” section (CT 1035, 1072–1082) sometimes refer to water and land ways in Rosetau, and these have been identified with the blue and black serpentine bands in the “map” section. In fact, the blue color probably indicates water in some of the drawings of the composition, e.g. the drawing accompanying CT 1118–1124. In a few sources, the beginning of the blue band is referred to as a road, but there are also references to other roads in the same register. Even if we accept that the blue serpentine band represents a waterway, this does not necessarily mean that the black serpentine band in the lower register depicts a terrestrial path. None of the textual elements in this register state that the winding black band represents a “road”. Moreover, if we accept that the two serpentine bands depict the land and water ways of Rosetau, it will be surprising that the top register of the “map” section only once makes passing reference to Rosetau together with another locality in the same spell (Buto), while it does not occur at all in the lower segment.

Ultimately, it must have been the unusual iconography of the “map” section that opened the door to the speculation first voiced by Schack-Schackenburg, that the composition concerns two roads. To the present author it seems clear that this unwarranted impression has from the outset imposed a conceptual framework that seriously misrepresented the content of the work.

Before presenting the main lines of previous research of the so-called Book of Two Ways, it is probably beneficial to provide a sketch of the modern history of the material which has formed the basis of the scientific research so far. Since this composition forms part of the “Coffin Texts” (CT),

we will have to deal with how they were introduced into the Egyptological literature.

The publication of the Coffin Texts

The first Coffin Texts spells were published in the second half of the nineteenth century in Lepsius’ famous *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (1849–1859). Although the texts themselves were not studied, drawings of the insides of some coffins were published for the first time. In 1867 the same author published a coffin from the Berlin Museum, and in a pioneering way adding a translation and philological commentary. In the period between 1867 and 1903, MK coffins inscribed with CT from recent excavations or in museum collections found their way to the Egyptological literature. Of special interest here is the publication of some CT from the nomarchal cemetery of Deir El Barsha in 1895. Here, for the first time, small fragments of the “Book of Two Ways” saw the light of day, although they were not yet identified as such.

The large number of Middle Kingdom coffins unearthed in this period were spread all over the world, but most were kept in the Cairo Museum. Although the French scholar Pierre Lacau instantly recognized the “Book of Two Ways” attested on coffins from Deir El Barsha as a special composition, no attention was paid to it in print until 1903, when Schack-Schackenburg published the coffin bottom of a certain Sn in the Berlin Museum.

Count Hans Schack was aware of the occurrence of this composition in some coffins kept in the Cairo Museum. It was Lacau who had informed him about these parallels, and he was ready to provide him with all the material needed for Schack-Schackenburg’s projected second volume on the “Book of Two Ways”. Schack-Schackenburg mentions seven examples in the Cairo Museum. Unfortunately, Schack-Schackenburg passed away in 1905 before publishing his second volume.

In 1900, one year after his arrival in Egypt in 1899, Lacau became a member of the international editorial committee of the *Catalogue Général du Musée du Caire*. Being entrusted with the catalogue volumes on *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire*, Lacau soon developed into one of the most influential figures in the field of Coffin Texts studies. The catalogue, published between

1904 and 1906, dealt with 126 coffins, the great majority of which date to the MK. A third volume was planned but was never written. In the first volume of his book, Lacau published part of the CT and the plans of three coffin bottoms. These three plans together with Schack-Schackenburg's publication formed the basis of all studies on the "Book of Two Ways" until 1961.

In the previous chapters we have been studying one of the most notorious religious compositions that have come down to us from ancient Egypt. Although it has been the focus of a few monographs and articles, many parts of it still resist comprehension. A load of difficulties concerning documentation, language, and art render this composition almost impenetrable. Since it is very complex and extensive, and inasmuch as the iconographic elements had been largely ignored, the study had to start almost from scratch.

The following remarks will first summarize the main conclusions of our study of the early sources, leading to brief interpretative remarks about the entire composition.

The typology of the design

The fact that the layout of the composition proves to be subject to modification and/or variety—probably in response to intellectual tendencies and/or artistic fashion—has not yet been sufficiently taken into account. Our study of both iconography and texts of all the published and part of the unpublished sources allowed us to be far more specific in this regard. Analyzing this variability against the background of recent studies on dating the Middle Kingdom coffins, it became clear that some characteristics are specific to certain periods. The resulting typology of our composition has added fresh dating criteria to those already known.

That different patterns exist is in itself not a novelty. De Buck already divided his sources into two layout patterns, designated by him with the numbers I and II.

Later on, Lesko categorized the sources differently. He based himself exclusively on the texts as published by de Buck, completely ignoring the iconography of the sources. He thus recognized the textually defined groups A, B, A–B and C. We

adopted de Buck's system with a few modifications in order to define a more representative set of types and subtypes. Instead of de Buck's two groups (I and II) and Lesko's four (A, B, A–B, and C), our study operates on the basis of three types (I, II, and I–II) with further subtypes, mainly refining de Buck's categorization.

Type I contains five subtypes (Ia–e). Type I–II is a hybrid type with features of both types I and II. It is hitherto attested only on one source (B4L) that combines part of subtypes Ib and II. Hence it is referred to as Ib-II. Although it is the only surviving example of such combinatory designs, it cannot be ruled out that other combinations were in circulation. These designs may form then other subtypes of I–II.

"Long" versus "short" versions?

In the literature one occasionally comes across the point of view that our composition appears in "short" and "long" versions. In principle, this distinction can be understood in two ways.

The first is that the "short" version is an abridged version of the long one. In this case the "long" version is considered to be the original from which the "short" version was derived. This may indicate that the creation of the "long" version preceded chronologically the short one, although this is not necessary. This "short" version is not expected to offer new material that is absent from the long one, but rather consists of abbreviations and probably some deliberate adaptations on the level of form and content. These adaptations help to produce a concise version that contains the most important elements of the "long" version, and dispenses with the less important ones without altering the original meaning.

The second possibility is that the "short" version is the original one and that it forms the basis, from which the "long" version was developed. In this case, the "short" version is likely to have been older than the long one. Again this diachronic element should not be overemphasized here as we will see in a moment.

In order to produce a "long" version, completely new material can be added to the original one. Moreover, modifications and/or omissions of some of the original material of the "short" version can

be expected in order to enable fitting in new elements. The newly created version should not lack the essentials of the short one, but elaborate on some themes in ways that serve the message of the original “short” version.

In both cases, it cannot be ruled out that the production of one version followed immediately the other. In other words, the two versions may well have been simultaneously conceptualized. At any rate, it is not easy to determine unequivocally which version preceded or developed from the other.

A good comparative example is the case of the Amduat, which survived in both a short and a long version. Both are attested from the early time of the redaction. The “short” version indeed offers an abridged form of the long one and summarizes its most essential elements. The “short” version is purely textual, while the long one contains both texts and images. Regardless of the time frame of the production of these versions, comparison shows that they are two versions of one and the same composition, and not two different compositions.

As was stated in the introduction, the composition of the “Book of Two Ways” is often compared with the Netherworld books of the New Kingdom such as the Amduat and the Book of Gates. Moreover, the “Book of Two Ways” has even been regarded as the source from which the New Kingdom netherworld guides developed. This has probably induced previous researchers to apply confidently the terms “long” version and “short” version to the pictorial-textual compositions of the floorboards of Deir El Barsha coffins that contain CT 1029–1130 and CT 1131–1185 respectively.

According to this understanding, there is one composition that was transmitted in two versions. If we presume that the “short” version was the original one, from which the longer one was derived (i.e. the second possibility presented above), this might then be taken to imply that the sections lacking in the “short” version and present in the “long version” are just later additions to the original. By the same token, the missing sections of the “long version” that already exist in the “short” version would be explained as simple omissions that deviated from the original. Some scholars, such as Lesko and Hermesen, went further by presenting

the sections of the composition in their publications in a sequence that never appeared in any surviving document (i.e. the sequential presentation of Lesko’s sections I–IX). Lesko stated that: “these two versions (i.e. the long and short [W.S.]) have sections III–V in common but differ entirely in the rest. They did not come from a single archetype which would have included all the material from both, since it will be seen that each version is a unit in itself with separate introductions and different orientations throughout. At least two sources of the work existed, but these utilized some of the same material”. Lesko concluded his study by stating that the “short” version antedated the long one.

A major problem with Lesko’s point of view is that the part that is lacking from the “long version”, i.e. Lesko’s sections I–II, represents half of the decoration of the coffin bottom. This cannot be considered as a slight modification of the original. Nor can it be easily accepted that the first half of the composition in the “short” version (i.e. sections I–II) is just an introduction to its second half, as proposed by Lesko. On the other hand, the sections that occur in the “long version” and not in the “short” one constitute more than 60 % of the composition of the “long version”. Even in the sections that are attested in both versions, the dissimilarities between the two versions are markedly distinguishable on both the textual and the iconographical levels. Therefore the requirements that can justify the second possibility, that was set forth above, of having two versions of one composition, are not adequately met.

The same problem militates against the first possibility, according to which the “short” version of the composition provides a summary of the long one. For half of the so-called short version is completely new to the supposedly original long one. Moreover, this “short” version is not really an abridged one of the long one, since it also occupies the entire space of the coffin bottoms, and adds fresh material that is not found in the long one. One will then have to wonder about the reliability of this abridged version, since half of its material was taken up by new stuff, while more than 60% of the original version was simply crossed out.

For all these considerations the suggestion that we have two versions of the same composition fails to

convince. Rather we have two different compositions altogether. The misconception that all sources render versions of one “Book of Two Ways” may have been originally motivated by the pre-occupation of Egyptologists with the “map” section and Schack-Schackenburg’s hypothesis about the “two ways”. It stands to reason that the sections that occur in both compositions represent two different versions (i.e. Lesko’s sections III–V). Neither of which can show to have shorter or longer versions. The pictorial-textual elements in both compositions, moreover, show a considerable degree of dissimilarity. Recent scholarship has shown that the so-called short version is only attested on a few documents that date to the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty. This stands in contrast to the “long” version which occurs frequently from the Eleventh Dynasty until the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty. This suggests that the so-called short version is most likely a new composition which was created later in the Twelfth Dynasty. Nevertheless, we should always exercise a high degree of caution when trying to draw conclusions concerning the history of the mortuary texts and pictorial-textual compositions. We will return to this issue later. The common parts of the two compositions suggest that this so-called short version has benefited from the material of the “long” version, but this common material was used in a new form and in a new composition. It is interesting that some of the material of the sections that represent the common denominator of these two, found its way to the Book of the Dead. The material of the so-called short version of the “Book of Two Ways” is even closer to the Book of the Dead variants than their counterparts in the “long” version. This finding may support a late date of this so-called short version.

Although these two compositions have much in common in terms of content, the same applies to a considerable number of pictorial-textual elements of the interior decorations of coffins in general. As stated in the introduction, one of the main problems in dealing with the decoration of Middle Kingdom coffins is to determine to what extent different elements can be said to be related (or not) to others. Recent studies show that the decoration program of Middle Kingdom coffins was much more

coherent and meaningfully arranged than was previously thought.

Is there a best representative example?
Our research suggests that none of the sources of the “Book of Two Ways” can be qualified as “the best” example or having “the best version”. The practice of referring to one or a few sources as the best representative(s) of the composition was first introduced by Lesko in 1971. This selective approach has characterized all the studies dealing with the composition of the “Book of Two Ways” until this moment.

Notwithstanding the formal similarities between most of the sources, each has to be studied carefully in order to understand the mechanism and logic behind the arrangement of its material. A close inspection of the six early sources of this composition was instructive. No two sources are fully identical on the level of text and iconography. Each of the three Boston sources (B1B0, B2B0, and B4B0) offers a unique arrangement. Both B1B0 and B4B0 are only arranged in the form of text columns. B1B0 does not have most of the textual material that usually appears in the pictorial-textual sources. The decorator of the coffin chose only a number of utterances, but the sequence in which he did so was not arbitrary. Selecting the textual material was carefully done, as much of the labels to iconographic elements is absent from B1B0. B4B0, however, retains most of the textual elements that normally accompany the images, but this involved a conscious process of adaptation of these textual elements. B2B0 is only partly iconographic, but mainly consists of texts written in columns. None of these three sources has the same textual content found on the other early sources that are arranged in the form of a plan (B6C, B3C, and B4C).

The earliest known completely pictorial-textual source of the composition, B6C, was executed on a wooden surface that was apparently unsuitable for chiseling. This forced the decorator of the coffin to 1) write signs in large size, and 2) to leave much space between the individual signs. As a consequence, a good number of the spells were not fully copied, since a full text would not fit within the available space for the text around and/or between the drawings.

B3C is often considered to be the “best” representative of the composition. In fact it is the best preserved source among all the sources of the “Book of Two Ways” in both its textual and pictorial material. De Buck usually chose the text of B3C to be in the first column of his CT edition. The good preservation of this source does not, however, imply it has “the best text” or “the best design”. Studying the details of this source showed that its decorator made grave mistakes concerning the layout. This obliged him to write parts of the texts on the edges, since there was not enough space in the area originally assigned to them. The clearest example is his miscalculation of the number of columns needed for the first utterance of the composition, CT 1029–1030. Here more columns than required were mistakenly assigned for the text, and therefore the scribe had to leave some empty. When he reached the end of the composition in the left side of the lower register, there was not enough space to copy CT 1130. Luckily, the scribe used the few empty columns after CT 1030 in the beginning of the upper register for this purpose. Before continuing copying the text of CT 1130, he added a remark explaining the unusual position of the text. In other cases, the text was simply not continued.

Parts of the planks of the floorboard of B4C are now lost. Contrary to B3C, the scribe of this source had too much space for the layout; therefore the drawings were made at a larger scale than usual. This resulted in several empty or half empty columns.

Clearly, only study of the peculiarities of each source can bring us closer to the model(s) which the scribes of these sources were supposed to follow. The procedure also sheds light on how the ancient scribes solved the practical problems that arose when they were decorating the coffin.

The history of the composition

It should be emphasized that the available evidence does not allow us to draw a coherent picture of the history of the composition of the so-called Book of Two Ways. We have referred repeatedly to the imbalanced situation of the surviving sources from Deir El Barsha. One or more versions of a coffin-bottom composition roughly covering CT 1029–1130 were undoubtedly known

to the theologians and coffin decorators in the Hare nome since the earliest attestations of coffins with Coffin Texts. We have seen that the earliest attestation of the “entire” composition is on the floorboard of the coffin B6C. Although this coffin was reused twice, all the Coffin Texts of the bottom were originally inscribed for a certain Aha-nakht. Recent studies indicate that this coffin is probably contemporary to the Boston coffins of Djehuty-nakht or even slightly earlier. This means that both the iconographical and the textual material of the “entire” composition were applied on the coffins at least since the last decades of the Eleventh Dynasty. This does not necessarily give us an idea about the date of the composition. It only indicates that this composition was already in circulation at that early date in coffin workshops in the Hermopolitan nome. This is mainly due to the fact that only few sources that can be dated to the late Eleventh and/or early Twelfth Dynasties from the site have survived. It is interesting to note that the two coffin-bottom compositions (i.e. the so-called long and short versions of the “Book of Two Ways”) were in circulation during the entire period of applying Coffin Texts on the coffins of this site. Obviously, the redaction of the composition in the form that appears in B6C (i.e. CT 1029–1130), which is one of the very earliest coffins with Coffin Texts in the site, antedates its application on the coffins.

Second, the composition, with the order of its pictorial-textual segments as evidenced in Deir El Barsha coffins (CT 1029–1130), has not yet been discovered elsewhere. Nor do we have any indication that it was applied on any archaeological object before the Middle Kingdom at Deir El Barsha. This is not to say that all the constituent elements of the composition were completely invented by the theologians of the Hare nome. Most of the main themes of this Hermopolitan composition are comparable to other Coffin Texts that appeared both in Deir El Barsha coffins and elsewhere. A case in point is the ferry crossing of the Winding Canal and the ferryman texts. Although the ferryman spells were common in most parts of Egypt and mainly in the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty, they never were very prominent in the Coffin Texts program at the Hare nome. Nevertheless, this theme is alluded to several times

in the coffin-bottom composition of Deir El Barsha, without apparent conceptual differences with the content of ferryman spells from other parts of Egypt. What counts here is, however, that the way these ideas were formulated was rather specific to Deir El Barsha.

Some of the pictorial-textual segments of the “Book of Two Ways” are attested outside Deir El Barsha during the Middle Kingdom. The famous segment of the Passage of Gates is a case in point. Textual versions, occasionally with simple iconographic additions, are found in the sources from Kom El Hisn and Beni Hasan, but a very elaborately illustrated with high quality drawings, that may even excel the famous B1C, are found in recently reconstructed parts of the Cairo leather roll.

Although neither the date nor the provenance of this document are known, it maybe of an early date, such as the early Eleventh Dynasty or sometime in the First Intermediate Period. It was completely written from the perspective of an anonymous first person singular speaker as is the case with Gardiner papyri. The latter is usually given an early date in the Middle Kingdom, sometimes in the First Intermediate Period, or even in the late Old Kingdom. Be that as it may, it is tempting to say that all the elements of this composition did not appear out of the blue, but that some of them at least were already known long time before the Middle Kingdom. Hence the coffin-bottom composition of Deir El Barsha was consciously designed and arranged out of older material that was already available around the time of its redaction.

The variant of CT 1040 on the head board of a MK coffin from Lisht (L1NY) is of interest here. The appearance of this spell in a context related to the old offering ritual texts known from the Pyramid Text point to a very old date of the text.

Some of the textual material seems to be already known during the Old Kingdom. A good example is CT 1030 which was until recently only known from our composition. The precursor of this text occurs in the Pyramid Texts on the northern wall of the subterranean antechamber of the pyramid of Merenre.

Some scholars consider an Old Kingdom date of some other textual elements of the composition as well. The tiny PT fragments help in ascertaining that at least some texts go back to the early Sixth Dynasty. Moreover, our intensive investigation of the texts of this composition made clear that some spells go certainly back to the Old Kingdom. We will address the issue of the “originality” below. To judge from the available evidence, however, the full composition of the so-called Book of Two Ways seems to be conceptually and pictorially rooted in the Hare nome as their characteristic coffin floorboard decoration. Some of its threads were certainly woven from material known from earlier periods in the same nome and elsewhere. It should be noted that the application of images and fantastic drawings within the Coffin Texts was widespread in Deir El Barsha sources. It is enough to refer here to the “Field of Offerings” composition, and the intriguing drawing accompanying CT 758–760.²⁹ This quality of drawing is unmatched outside the Hare nome, except for the parallel segment in the Cairo leather roll. Therefore, Rößler-Köhler’s designation of our composition as ‘the Barsha-complex’ stands to reason. The only reservation against this appellation is that it is not very precise. The so-called Book of Two Ways is not the only composition that is solely known from the Hare nome. The “Field of Offerings” composition for instance may be well designated a ‘Barsha complex’ as well (although variants of some of its textual material surfaced elsewhere in Egypt). It only reached a wider dissemination when it re-emerged in the New Kingdom as Chapter 110 in the Book of the Dead.

Although these compositions appeared in Deir El Barsha for the first time, the themes they revolve around were not new, some going back demonstrably to as early as the Pyramid Texts, and even much earlier. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the meaning, context, and function remained unchanged over the years and from one place to another. The predilection of the Hermopolitan scribes to include pictorial-textual compositions in the decoration program of their high-class coffins has fortunately saved this interesting material from being completely lost.

The above remarks show that the composition of the “Book of Two Ways”, as it appears on coffins from Deir El Barsha, is not attested in any other part of Egypt. Nor is it hitherto known from earlier or later periods. Nevertheless, the recent discovery of possible precursors of parts of it in the Pyramid Texts and on a MK coffin from Lisht among spells known from the Pyramid Texts on the one hand, and the reuse of old spells with the composition on the other, indicate that the Hare nome theologians were developing the composition, at least partially, on the basis of older material.

Origin and originality

Egyptological research on ancient Egyptian texts and religion has always been preoccupied with the search for the origin of concepts and/or the reconstruction of lost originals of texts. We will not trace here the history of this focus, but some remarks are relevant for our study. First, there is the issue of textual criticism and its application to mortuary texts, a method recently applied to the composition of the so-called Book of Two Ways. Second, there is the question of the origin of mortuary texts. Both scientific topics have their ideological background.

Although the history of texts and the issue of textual transmission already attracted the interest of Egyptologists long time ago, the application of the text critical method to ancient Egyptian texts received its greatest impetus in the 1970s.

It all started in Göttingen in the framework of the research project “Synkretismus”. The textual criticism was used then mainly not to reconstruct an archetype, but to provide an overall representation of the commonalities and differences between the different text versions.

It was later in Tübingen that German scholars showed great enthusiasm towards deploying text critical methods to ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.

The method of stemmatics or stemmatology was developed by Karl Lachmann in the first half of the nineteenth century in dealing mainly with Greek Biblical texts. This method received more refinement and “canonization” at the hands of other classicists like Maas and West who dealt with classical texts.

The method, which is common among theologians and classical philologists, aims at studying the surviving witnesses of a certain text. The relation between the various manuscripts is then explained in the form of a family tree. A very important premise of the method is that a commonality of error indicates a commonality of origin. The textual critic attempts to eliminate the errors in order to eventually be able to reconstruct the “pure” and “error-free” original text. The goal of the critique is to approach as closely as possible the “original” text and hence to get access to the “original intentions” of its “author”. Without going into the details of this method, which have been elucidated eloquently by several scholars, we are interested here in the foundations upon which it is built.

Interestingly, none of the textual critics in Egyptology refers to the criticism directed against the stemmatic method outside Egyptology. It is only recently that reservations concerning too strict a use of this method began to be expressed in the Egyptological literature. Moreover, Quirke recently launched an elaborate critique of the text critical method in Egyptology as such. He paraphrased, drew, and elaborated on the important work of Cerquiglini whose focus was on French medieval texts.

The list of problems inherent in the textual criticism method and its premises is long. Most fundamentally, the assumption that there was originally an Urtext, that was free from error, i.e. an ideal text, is an unwarranted axiom which came out of the womb of the epistemological currents of the nineteenth century. The stemmatic method takes for granted that every extant manuscript ultimately derived from one source, no matter how it was distanced from it in time. Even if we accept that there was an original author, textual critics do not consider that the author might have revised his work few times. Consequently, several original versions could have existed in different times. One may refer here to the different versions of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, or the different editions of the works of Victor Hugo who evidently changed their orthography twice and sometimes even thrice in their life time.

The principle of commonality of error as an indicator of the commonality of origin is another

unwarranted guess. Contrary to the assumption of textual critics, several copyists can independently commit the same errors in the same passage. This does not necessarily imply that the two were using a common source. Moreover, the critic is supposed then to be able to distinguish a correct reading from an erroneous one, or eventually modify the reading entirely assuming that he is “correcting” it.

On the other hand, the idea of the author was itself mainly a product of the ideological climate of Romanticism with its genius individual. All these reservations are well known to philologists outside the realm of Egyptology. Has Egyptology developed its own theoretical framework to justify deploying the methods of textual criticism to ancient Egyptian texts?

Within a decade after adopting and adapting stemmatics to ancient Egyptian texts in the 1970s, Jan Assmann provided Egyptological textual critics with a theory which is still influential. He recognized two types of transmission of Egyptian texts: a productive and a reproductive one. Religious texts generally fall under the category of reproductive transmission in Assmann’s view, while the New Kingdom solar hymns are grouped under the productive one. Furthermore, he argues that religious texts witnessed two phases; an earlier one characterized by productive transmission, and a later one which was reproductive. In order to trace the historical dimension of the text in question, a reconstruction of the productive phase is necessary. At this juncture, Assmann presents the basis of his theory. “Religiöse Überlieferung tendiert von der Natur der Sache her zur Reproduktivität, d.h. zu Kanonisierungsprozessen, die die “Heiligkeit” des Gegenstandes auf den im Umgang mit ihm erwachsenen Diskurs übertragen”.

Assmann hypothesizes that there were “holy texts” in ancient Egypt that contained esoteric knowledge. Accessibility to knowledge about these texts was restricted to a selected few, the clergy. Assmann compares this situation with the Brahmins in Hinduism and the Rabbis in Judaism, and discerns three processes at work: “Die Kanonisierung des religiösen Diskurses, die Etablierung eines exklusiven Priester-standes und die Ausdifferenzierung eines religiösen Wissens aus dem Gesamtsystem der Kultur”. But is this

productive-versus-reproductive polarity necessarily correct?

Ancient Egypt did not have a holy book. Nor can we easily recognize a group of priests in early times who can be legitimately called “genius authors”. These priests, according to Assmann’s view, are the only ones who had access to esoteric knowledge, and it was them who were the original authors of religious texts. After this early phase of creativity, the texts together with the thoughts they carried were mechanically reproduced by later generations. In the process of canonization, these texts reached (in principle) an immutable form, even though understanding them became increasingly difficult for later copyists. Since changes in grammar and in the denotative range of words was not reflected in the text as it was transmitted, it eventually evolved into a relic of the past embedded in a new reality, to which it was either completely alien or only remotely related.

We believe this reasoning is both too rigid and too speculative. Kemp has correctly pointed out the problems inherent in such trends in modern scholarship: “From the range of evidence available it is all too apparent that intellectual intervention shaped Egyptian religion over a long period, stirring the cauldron of tradition and adding new ingredients. The problem for modern scholarship is too ready an acceptance of this, namely a powerful dynamic and creative element in ancient religion, is that it undermines the principal method of research: that of carefully following the sources backwards in time from the better understood later ones to the more fragmentary and elusive earlier ones, and assuming that the meaning always remained the same. We tend to work by trying to identify fossils of early beliefs embedded within later sources. Yet if we take this easy course we run the risk of substituting for ancient language-game a modern scholarly game.”

It is interesting to note that Assmann refers mainly to the Book of the Dead with respect to canonized religious texts. After all, Assmann’s study which expressed the views summarized above, was concerned with intellectual currents in the New Kingdom. On a side note, however, he also referred to the “Book of Two Ways”.

He rightly states with regard to the comparison of the so-called Book of Two Ways with the Netherworld guides of the NK: "In der Tat ist der Abstand zum Zweibegebuch als dem vermeintlichen Vorgänger in derselben Gattung so gross, dass man eine Epoche zwischen beide Texte legen möchte. Ich weise die beiden Texte verschiedenen Gattungen zu, halte das Zweibegebuch für einen Totentext, das Amduat aber für eine Kosmographie aus dem heliopolitanischen Sonnenkult".⁶⁵ We agree that our MK composition was not a precursor of the NK netherworld guides, but the matter does not end here. The main issue lies in fossilizing ancient Egyptian thought in the realm of religious texts, and mainly in mortuary texts. This is also the problem of Lachmann's method of textual criticism. It does not content itself with trying to trace the history of a text through different phases of transmission; its main goal is to reconstruct a hypothetical, ideal archetype which then forms the only basis for interpreting the text. Accordingly, textual critics are not interested in the extant texts as documented in the archaeological sources and manuscripts, but in the so-called original. As a consequence, the deliberate intellectual process of interacting with texts and meanings (e.g. active reworking, editing, creating, adapting, et cetera) of a certain "text" through the ages is marginalized and considered of secondary, if any, importance. Changes of thought and contextuality are without value for the textual critic who restricts these dynamics to the very early phase of producing a "text", which developed henceforth along the lines of a clear family-tree. Ascribing such strong genealogical characteristics to the process of thought is a risky and very questionable procedure. What holds for biology and genetics is not necessarily applicable to the processes of thought.

Beside the reservations set forth above concerning Assmann's theory, it should be stressed that his representative examples of the reproductive transmission of mortuary texts are all from the NK (mainly the so-called Book of the Dead). Although his view is of a clearly generalizing tone, he avoided referring specifically to the mortuary texts of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. This was the task of the later textual critics, such as Jürgens, Zeidler, Gestermann, Kahl, and recently Backes.

According to Assmann's theory, the productive tradition is characterized by freshness and vitality and mirrors the cultural climate in which a text is produced. In this phase, the themes receive constantly new formulations. But finally, the text acquires a canonized status and assumes a relatively immutable form. Text critics attempt to disclose textual developments in these canonic texts by tracing how errors led to reformulations. Implicitly, textual critics working with the Coffin Texts therefore seem to assume that the transmission of these texts was merely reproductive. In reality, nothing can be farther from the truth.

Our coffin-bottom composition of the Hare nome can serve as a good example for this. It has been suggested that it was a purely Hermopolitan product and that it was completely composed by the priests of the Thoth temple in Hermopolis, where it was kept in the library. While applying the text critical method, Backes leaned heavily on the earliest extant documents on the premise that they belong to members of the nomarchal family. Hence their Vorlagen would have been of high quality and closer to the (hypothetical) Urtext. This argument is problematic. Both the identification of similar textual material in the Pyramid Texts of Merenre and the occurrence of the passage-of-gates segment on contemporary sources outside Deir El Barsha (as in Beni Hasan, Kom El Hisn, and the Cairo leather roll of unknown provenance) militate against the assumption that all elements of the composition were completely a product of the theologians of Thoth's temple in Hermopolis. Here one is reminded of Cerquiglini's questioning the textual critics' assumption of an "auteur transcendant ... [qui] tranche absolument, par l'unicité de sa conception, l'opacité de son oeuvre (argument de la lectio difficilior), la qualité de sa langue, avec la diversité scribale, ignorante et sans dessein, qui pluralise l'oeuvre, en banalise l'expression, appauvrit la langue". He argues that stemmatic editing results in an illusory reconstruction of the work, and emphasizes the role of the scribe's conscious intervention as an essential factor of the textual transmission. Therefore, it is anachronistic to consider the texts as the intellectual property of a single author, textually fixed at the "moment unique où la voix de l'auteur, que l'on suppose, se noua à la main du premier scribe, dictant la version

authentique, première et originelle”. Rather we are probably facing an originality of design in Deir El Barsha that was the outcome of conscious and generative processes of thought, art, and writing. Dealing with an existing theme or concept was not reduced to mere copying or mechanical imitation. A vitality and originality of thought were not completely absent. We believe it is not justifiable to apply the theory of productive-versus-reproductive textual transmission to the religious texts of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. In these periods, the production of texts and the dynamism of thought they reflected are better described as generative.

Another interesting example is the mortuary liturgy CT 30–41. The method of textual criticism was applied to most of the spells in this group culminating in a reconstruction of a hypothetical Urtext. Nevertheless, a recent study focusing only on the occurrence of these texts within a small number of sources yielded not only different readings from the imaginary Urtext, but even semantically more intriguing and sensible ones. Consequently, the social and ritual context of the liturgy could be reconstructed on the basis of the texts of these few sources. Such results cast doubt on the textual critic’s vigorous quest for the “originality” and the “origin” of the “holiness” of the extant manuscripts.

About two decades after the introduction of textual criticism into Egyptology, Quack faced considerable problems when trying to apply stemmatics to the extant manuscripts of the Instructions of Ani. After exhausting all the possible solutions that Lachmannian textual criticism could offer, the method proved futile. According to Quack an alternative and better approach was offered by the concept of ‘mouvance’. This concept had been formulated by Zumthor in his study of French medieval poetry in 1972,79 i.e. just before stemmatics began to be used in Egyptology. The term describes the textual mobility induced by authorial anonymity and the high level of textual variation. Zumthor argued that anonymity and textual variation were related phenomena. Medieval vernacular works were for a long time considered the intellectual property of a single, named author. But they might be indefinitely

reworked by others, passing through a series of different “états du texte”. The textual critics’ focus on the ‘textual authenticity’, by trying to reconstruct the author’s original as the only authentic version of the text, totally ignores the “mobilité essentielle” of the text.

Quack adopts this concept, choosing a new term for it, namely “offene Überlieferung”. Unfortunately this term, or even the reference to Zumthor’s concept, was not received with much acclaim in Egyptological philology. For instance, Jürgens prefers to stick to Assmann’s terminology and describes the variations in some CT spells in the course of their textual transmission as occasional “produktive Eingriffen” and relegates them to the apparatus criticus. This is exactly the process which Cerquiglini criticized. Just as Zumthor coined the term “mouvance”, Cerquiglini introduced the concept of variance. He opines that stemmatic editing marginalizes (both figuratively and literally) a text’s real variance, relegating it to the apparatus criticus in the lower margin of the page.

Willems suggests that “the tradition of the CT was a case of ‘open transmission’”, since they “were not transmitted in a canonic form, but were continually being adapted in the course of their transmission”. The textual critics of Egyptology will not agree with this view, since they consider the volkssprachliche Texte (e.g. the Instruction of Ani and Plinsiger) as the only representatives of the ‘open transmission’. We have strong doubts that this is a realistic approach.

The second domain, in which the obsession with origins is crucial, is the question concerning the origin of mortuary texts. In keeping with Assmann’s theory referred to above, it is often stated that the origin of religious thought should be found in priestly circles that were centered in temples. The gist of this view is that mortuary texts underwent a process of adaptation of formulations, ideas, and practices that were rooted in the divine temple cult. This means that the mortuary texts in the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms were only a secondary form that was adapted for the purposes of the mortuary context. Thus, the mortuary cult and its theological framework were shaped along the lines of the liturgical currents in the temples. In other words, the texts were originally used in this world

and then were adapted for mortuary purposes in the other world.

There is indeed a ritual background to a large number of the mortuary texts as documented in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts. Yet the process of adapting temple texts to the requirements of the mortuary cult could have led to creative additions. Contrary to what Assmann's approach implies, it cannot therefore be ruled out that the religious thoughts expressed in the mortuary texts (whether intended to provide knowledge solely or to have a liturgical function in this world) were in many cases productive. In downplaying this possibility, Assmann marginalizes also the role that social and cultural factors may play in this process. These can also show varying degrees of regional differentiation, even within the very same region. Diachronic considerations may come into play as well, just like the creativity and productivity of those who were involved in the creation of religious texts.

One recalls here Barguet's speculative attempt to interpret the "Book of Two Ways" in the light of post-MK temple architecture. Although his treatise is interesting because of the ritual background it ascribes to the main events encountered in the MK composition, we do not have enough archaeological evidence from the MK itself to support his hypothesis. The same criticism can be leveled against Hermesen's view that parts of the "Book of Two Ways", such as those mentioning the Lake of Fire, are to be compared to elements in the Temple of Thoth in Hermopolis. This is even more speculative than Barguet's attempt. Drawing such comparisons between a pictorial element on the Deir El Barsha coffins and an architectural element that existed in reality requires knowledge of both the artistic conventions behind the depiction, and the real temple architecture. In fact, the former has not received serious study by scholars interested in Egyptian visual representations, and the latter did not survive to a sufficient degree to allow for a comparison. Hence the relation between the two objects of comparison can hardly be assessed.

Even in the case of texts that were not originally or exclusively "funerary" and that may have originated in temples, the "new" funerary elements should not be marginalized and considered as secondary additions to an Urtext. Whatever the

origin might have been, what counts are the new context, function, and underlying ideology which may or may not be in agreement with current temple theology. The matter cannot be confined to one origin. Thought and function change over time and from one context to another. Mortuary texts are likely to reflect not only concepts rooted in temple theology, but also a variety of domains of a specifically funerary nature. The relation between the living and their dead relatives is one interesting arena that undoubtedly had its impact on this process, just like the relatives' visits to the cemetery on certain occasions. Analogously, the concept of 'the heir' in the Coffin Texts, which were intended for the elite of Egyptian provinces, may reflect ideas about the continuity of the family line and the persistence of social status.

In his review of Backes' monograph about the "Book of Two Ways", Quack drew a comparison between Book of the Dead chapters 144/145 and 147 and similar segments in the "Book of Two Ways". He suggests that BD 144/145 is likely to have been originally a text used by a living ritualist in the temple doing service for Osiris, and also for a deceased person different from the actual speaker, as evidenced by the postscript of BD 144. He further presumes a similar use for the so-called Book of Two Ways.

This conclusion, though from a different starting point, was arrived at by Barguet more than forty years ago.⁹² Again the preoccupation with the origin here may sometimes marginalize the vitality of thought and reduces the mortuary text to a mere adaptation of an original temple text. Similarity in form and/or use between elements from the Book of the Dead and the Coffin Texts should not necessarily indicate an identity of function, nor legitimize a total transposition of context. What may be realistic for a certain BD spell (such as BD 144 and 147) should not be automatically the same for its CT precursor. Although such similarities can sometimes be helpful in clarifying some aspects, one should be aware of the limitations and take heed of oversimplifications.

Having said that one may prefer a more balanced treatment of the material, where both the primary use of the texts in the cult as practiced by the living ritualist and the dynamics of adapting these texts

for a deceased person are taken into consideration. Admittedly, limiting the perspective and focussing only on either of these uses, may lead to obscuring necessary contextual points and eventually hampering an exhaustive evaluation of the material.

The meaning of the composition: Difficulties and challenges

The traditional focus of early Egyptologists on texts, and religious texts in particular, has overshadowed the study of the mortuary culture of ancient Egypt. This is at its clearest in the case of the study of Middle Kingdom coffin decoration. Only recently scholars have begun to redress the imbalance by paying attention to the general context of the coffins and the interrelationship between the various elements of their decoration. But this kind of study is still in its infancy.

Thus, the lion's share of the Deir El Barsha coffins decorated with the so-called Book of Two Ways is still unpublished. A number of these were given a kind of preliminary presentation in Lacau's two volumes in the series of the *Catalogue Général*,⁹⁴ but this publication is not up to modern standards. Although most of the textual material of these coffins was published in the framework of the Chicago Coffin Texts enterprise, the rest of decoration was never made accessible to scholars. We have referred in the introduction to some of the main problems that surround the publication of the decoration of the Middle Kingdom coffins. Even on the purely textual level, not all evidence preserved on those coffins, which have most of their Coffin Texts published, was included in the final publication. Some texts were not even copied by the Coffin Texts editors and hence have escaped notice until this moment.

Moreover, the form in which these texts were published is not without its problems. The original text sequences had to be broken up in order to arrange the texts synoptically in 'spells'. Although Lesko's Index of the Coffin Texts on the Middle Kingdom Coffins and Related Documents has filled the gap to some extent, it is not enough to reconstruct the material as it occurs on the coffins. One problem is that it is arranged according to the line numbers assigned to the texts by the CT editors. Unfortunately, the methods of numbering

were inconsistent from the beginning. At any rate, the line numbers do not indicate how the textual elements are actually disposed on the documents, and Lesko's Index does not offer any help in this respect.

Apart from this, our Hermopolitan composition offers some particular challenges. This composition is not only a text, but also a pictorial-textual composition. The pictorial material accompanies the texts, and sometimes replaces or complements the surrounding textual elements. Thus, there is often an organic integrity of texts and drawings. Analyzing solely the texts in such cases cannot be considered a sound method. The application of pictorial elements within the Coffin Texts proper on Middle Kingdom coffins has, however, never been the focus of study before. The problem is acute in the case of the so-called Book of Two Ways, where many of the drawings are unique, although they only rarely carry unequivocal descriptive labels.

Taken in isolation, the textual material of the composition is not of great help either. The composition is full of names of beings that are not attested anywhere else. The meaning of several words is still unknown as well.

The disposition of the textual elements on the drawings cannot be easily understood from the inaccurate plans of de Buck. In the course of our study several discrepancies between his plans and the original sources were noticed. A corollary of the difficulties posed by the intertwining of pictorial and textual elements was the challenge of arranging the material in sequence. De Buck arranged the elements on the basis of some of the (partly) unillustrated Boston sources, which merely present the textual elements in consecutive text columns. The sequence was mainly taken from B1B0 and B4B0, and partly from B2B0. It is important to note, however, that these coffins are not in mutual agreement as regards the sequence of the texts. We have learnt that these sources, which all came from the same tomb, are each peculiar in their decoration program. De Buck obviously had to make a choice between the different versions, but it is clear that his choices need not be identical with the ancient Egyptian scribe's intentions. In fact, he offered a presentation of the textual material that does not exist in any known source.

Besides, the three sources from Boston do not have all the textual material attested on other coffins that have the composition arranged in the form of a plan (such as the rest of the early sources B6C, B3C, and B4C). For instance, none of the textual elements of the Parts 14–19 (= CT 1115–1129) is attested in any of the Boston sources, as indicated in the following figure.

Consequently, the order of the textual elements of these segments as established by de Buck is almost entirely arbitrary. It should be again stated that although the image-free sources cannot be taken as representatives of the sources with iconography, the sequence of their texts is meaningful. This contradicts Lesko's view that the "original composition" from which all the sources were copied was in the form of a plan. This cannot be ascertained, and B1B0 is a case in point as we will see below.

Although the so-called *Zweiwegebuch* has been intensively studied, most studies are characterized by a major methodological problem. In the introduction we described the way Schack-Schackenburg dealt with it soon after its discovery in the early twentieth century. At that time, three corpora of religious texts were widely known to Egyptologists, namely the Netherworld Books attested in the royal tombs of the New Kingdom, the Book of the Dead, and the Pyramid Texts. The Coffin Texts were initially even identified as spells from Book of the Dead. In the case of the "Book of Two Ways", which was soon interpreted as an early guide to the netherworld, the interpretative framework was very clearly set by much later compositions like the *Amduat*, the Book of Gates, or certain parts of the Book of the Dead. Although the Coffin Texts were published almost half a century ago, this practice still prevails. Particularly the ideas of early scholars such as Kees and Grapow have exercised a great influence on the studies that appeared after the publication of the seventh volume of *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*.

The most important post-CT VII study on the composition was Lesko's. Like others before him he was struck by the similarity between several texts from the later Book of the Dead and certain spells from the "Book of Two Ways". He further speculated that the similar spells in both text

corpora were copied from a common source. On this basis, he divided the MK composition into sections and dealt with them purely in the light of the later NK BD spells. The inherent problems of this method need no further discussion here. Lesko was of the opinion that strictly two "opposing"

poles were presented in the "Book of Two Ways", namely an Osirian and a solar one. He found that they juxtapose each other in the so-called long version, although this has a stronger solar focus, while the "short" version is mainly Osirian in orientation. Also, the composition would have been a kind of a compilation of different traditions. On a more speculative note, he envisioned the relation of the Osirian and solar traditions in competitive terms between the clergy of Osiris and the sun god.

As noted before, it is widely assumed that the so-called Book of Two Ways is a precursor of the Netherworld books of the New Kingdom. This view has gained a new impetus by recent studies arguing that the New Kingdom book of *Amduat* originated in the Middle Kingdom and in a relation to the so-called Book of Two Ways. Only very recently, the traditional classification of the "Book of Two Ways" as a guide to the Hereafter has been strongly and rightly rejected.

Towards an interpretation

One of the prevalent approaches in dealing with our composition was to attempt to disclose a narrative behind the arrangement of its various segments. This may in part have been inspired by comparison with the New Kingdom Netherworld books, although some scholars have also claimed that this composition is not as scientifically systematic as the new Kingdom ones. These attempts to trace a nightly journey of the sun through areas of the Otherworld, as in the New Kingdom *Amduat* and the Book of Gates, force an anachronistic mould upon our composition. This has hampered a serious assessment of the conceptual background of the so-called Book of Two Ways. This composition is not a Netherworld Guide.

Our reading of the evidence suggests that the complex of mythological themes addressed here is not presented in a linear narrative with a beginning, development and end. Recent studies on the nature of Egyptian myths show that we should

not expect them to be written down in the form of narratives characterized by Aristotelian parameters. Most of the ancient Egyptian religious texts, including the mortuary texts, were not meant to narrate stories in the strict sense of the word. Our Hermopolitan composition is a lengthy and complex one where several mythical themes are intertwined, repeated, or juxtaposed in order to serve a certain function.

Our composition was frequently understood to describe journeys of the deceased in the Hereafter. While spatial displacements are continually being hinted at, it is not the most fundamental feature; moreover, the same applies to a large number of other Coffin Texts spells. There is no reason for singling out this composition as representative of such journeys and excluding the other mortuary texts.

The mythical episodes

The texts include several allusions to mythical episodes. Notwithstanding the ambiguity of the texts, some prominent mythical patterns are found scattered throughout the composition as documented in the early sources.

The Osirian myth

There is a considerable number of references to Osiris in this composition.

We gather from the texts that Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth at some time in the past. The body of Osiris (or rather part thereof) was kept in Rosetau in a building forefended by a group of strong and armed guards appointed by his father Geb. The reason for these strict measures was to protect Osiris' body against a second attack by Seth.

The texts mention that Seth's murder of Osiris left Horus, the son of Osiris, orphaned. He started a fight with Seth. We do hear that the fight ended, but no particulars are given.

We are also told that there was a tribunal of Osiris, in which Thoth played a role, undoubtedly as a judge. There is mention in the texts of Osiris being an akh. This suggests that some transfiguration liturgies (s#/w) had been carried out resulting in Osiris becoming an akh, perhaps at

the end of a mummification ritual. But who carried out these acts?

At this stage the deceased as a ritualist appears on the scene. He assumes a variety of ritualistic roles and divine identities. Thus, he is said to have the status of Shu while he proceeds to the abode of Osiris; to be among those who prepare food provisions for Osiris; to be an akh; and to be equipped with magical powers. He is also among the followers of Osiris, enjoying a life of plenty.

We learn that he is on his way to carry out the mummificatory treatment of the body of Osiris. This necessitated more than one visit to the dead god. One passage makes clear that the deceased has already "seen" the body of Osiris sometime in the past, but about this first visit few details are given. It is not even certain how often the deceased had visited Osiris. Perhaps, it had to do with a preliminary phase of the mummification, such as a ritual washing/bathing of the divine body. This ritualistic role is not only beneficial for Osiris, but also for the deceased himself, for the visit is said to grant eternal life. This reciprocity is stressed in our composition. The deceased playing the role of the son, as Horus and as Shu, provides Osiris with the necessities of life, i.e. air and food in addition to taking care of the dead body. The latter includes making sure that the corpse stays in a good shape, treating the wounds caused by Seth, the removal of body liquids and their storage in a sealed container. Then the deceased presents an offering to Osiris in the form of the Sound Eye of Horus. The deceased is also said to assume the role of Thoth in mummifying Osiris.

Moreover, the deceased plays the role of the assistant of Thoth, and many times the role of Thoth himself. Thus he is said to be in charge of the Eye of Horus, which has to do with both offerings and the torch held by the ritualist during a nocturnal ritual approaching the well-guarded abode of Osiris. Thus the deceased assumes the role of a ritualist responsible for the offerings related to Osiris. Thoth as a judge is another attribute the deceased requires in the texts. In this case the allusion is to his role in judging between the two rivals Seth and Horus.

This identification of the deceased with Thoth brings us to two central themes, namely the position of Thoth in both lunar and solar mythical accounts.

Thoth and the moon

As the healer of the Eye of Horus, Thoth appears as the protector of the moon. The healing process is related to the waxing of the moon. The deceased is repeatedly placed in a web of lunar associations in the texts. Needless to say, the time frame of all these accounts is the night. Thus, the deceased, identified with the lunar Eye of Horus, crosses the sky by night with his dazzling light. This could well be an allusion to the rite of lighting the torch by the ritualist in his approach the god's sanctuary as practiced in temple cult. Therefore, we might have here an early indication to this rite that is explicitly attested in BD 137A.

In addition to portraying the text protagonist as the savior and healer of the moon, he also deals with the Sound Eye (also as the Eye of Hours), which is related to the treated solar eye (CT 1094). The deceased brings the solar eye as the Sound Eye of Horus which he has healed to a place called the 'Mansion of the Moon'. He approaches Thoth in this building, being accepted in the entourage of the moon god (CT 1094). 'Bringing the Sound Eye of Horus' is a common expression for bringing offering, as we have noted above. The same idea is expressed when the deceased is said to be bringing and presenting Maat (CT 1094). Doing so leads to the deceased being admitted among the followers of Thoth who are concerned with presenting the offerings (CT 1094). But as a bringer of offerings, i.e. of the lunar Eye of Horus and the physical torch, the deceased is also identified with the visible moon which shines by night. This act pleases Osiris towards whom the deceased is heading in the role of Horus. It is enough for the deceased to be with Thoth and among those who are in charge of the food offerings for Osiris to secure for himself a life of plenty. This brings us back to the reciprocal relationship between the performer and the beneficiary of the ritual act. The former is the deceased in the role of the son, and the latter is the father.

The Winding Waterway

The ferry crossing of the Winding Waterway is referred to in our texts on several occasions. The event takes place during the night and evolves in three phases situated before, during, and after the ferry crossing. The outline of the story is that the deceased will: 1) board the ferry where a group of gods are already present, 2) cross over to the other bank together with the crew of the bark, 3) find himself in a fertile area on the other side, and 4) hollow out another bark in which he will ascend together with the sun god to the sky. The lion's share of the references in our composition concerns the first phase.

The general scheme of events can be filled in mythologically in different ways. The crossing of the Winding Canal is sometimes said to be carried out in the Night-bark of the sun god. But it is also said to concern the moon traversing the night sky, or the bark of the creator god crossing the primeval waters. These concepts are apparently not contradictory, but complementary ways of saying more or less the same thing.

The deceased is hoped to play a role among the crew of the solar bark, to be its pilot, or at least to have a very prominent role on board. Before the deceased can board the solar bark and enter the cabin of the sun god, he has to pass by a group of protective beings constituting a kind of tribunal. When the deceased approaches the bark, Thoth is already inside the cabin on the deck of the bark, carrying out purificatory rites for the dead god inside. Once aboard, the deceased will also perform ritual acts for the god inside the shrine. Among the other beings on the scene, Isis is present, to whom the deceased stands in a filial relationship. She will provide him with protective and royal insignia on his head, which are also privileges for the sun god.

During the nocturnal journey of the bark, Apopis constitutes a great danger. The deceased's ability to defend the bark from Apopis is therefore repeatedly emphasized. This role is also played by the Eldest Magician (Hk3-smw) who overthrows Apopis by commands he gives to a group of bowmen and spearmen. Besides, Seth is also aboard the solar bark and has a protective role.

It can be gathered from the texts that, on a previous occasion, the sun god had already been wounded and is now inside a shrine on the deck of the bark. The deceased in his ritualistic role as a healer is approaching him. He is also profiled as the son of the solar god and his legitimate heir and successor.

This state of affairs is somehow comparable to the situation in the Osirian mythical accounts referred to above. In both cases, prior to the appearance of the deceased on the scene, his father has been exposed to a physical assault by an enemy. The deceased, assuming the role of the son, is said to be on his way to treat his father.

This filial relationship also finds expression in the constellation of Nun as the father and the deceased as his son Atum in the pre-creational context. Hence the deceased crossing the primeval waters is identified with the creator god.

Judging from the texts, the solar bark has a considerable number of beings on board besides the sun god in his shrine and the sun-folk who drag the solar bark on a huge sledge on the shore of the Winding Waterway.

- The general pattern underlying the accounts related to the bark can be summarized as follows:
- The ritualist approaching the bark aboard the bark and gaining access to the cabin
- Passage of protective beings and becoming one of them getting
- Navigation together with all who are on board.

The Field of Offerings is not the destination

It is generally assumed that the goal of the journey of the protagonist in the “Book of Two Ways” is the Field of Offerings (šḫ.t ḥtp). The importance of offerings, both for the gods and for the deceased himself, is in fact repeatedly emphasized. The offerings are usually designated by the general terms ḥtp/ ḥtp.t. In other instances, they are said to be Maat or the Eye of Horus. They are twice specified as consisting of a certain kind of bread (ḥnmt-bread). The deceased is profiled not only as a person provided with offerings, but also to be

among those in charge of them. Again, we notice the reciprocity between the deceased as a presenter of offerings and as the divine receiver of offerings.

Yet this alone does not suffice to show that the Field of Offerings was the destination. Lesko already showed some reservations against this idea, pointing out that the position of a drawing supposedly representing the Field of Offerings, which sometimes carries CT 1046, does not justify this view.²⁰⁸ It can be added that the texts do not mention the Field of Offerings as the final destination. The expression is even completely absent from the early sources.

Contrary to the long-held opinion that the abode of Osiris is located in the area depicted by the stylized drawing of CT 1046,²⁰⁹ this text in no way states that the abode of Osiris is located there. It merely mentions a place where a certain kind of food offerings for Osiris is being produced.

Rosetau in the composition

As we have explained above, the Egyptological term “Book of Two ways” was based on an unfortunate association between the two bands in the “map” section and the water-course and land paths of Rosetau encountered in texts elsewhere in the composition. Since this toponym figures prominently, it is useful to summarize what our composition has to tell us about its geographical features. The following tabulation presents the topographic characteristics of Rosetau and the events associated with it. References to the pertinent CT spell are given between brackets.

Toponym Geographical characteristics: Associated events Rosetau

- Desert-like and sandy area (CT 1080)
- Accessible by or containing a number of land roads and watercourses (CT 1034, 1072, 1074, 1078)
- The roads cross and overlap against each other (CT 1072)
- It contains mounds in/on which groups of gods reside (CT 1040)
- The land and water ways here are difficult to follow; guidance (CT 1034) and knowledge (CT 1072) are required so as not to get lost there. The roads are

guarded by protective deities (CT 1073–1079)

- the efflux of Osiris is located there in a container kept inside a building protected by fire and protective deities functioning as gatekeepers (CT 1079, 1080–1081).
- A birth place of the ritualist (CT 1040)
- The ritualist leads the gods on their mounds there (CT 1040)
- The ritualist receives respect from gods on their mounds (CT 1040)
- The ritualist opens it in order to embalm Osiris (CT 1079)

The name of Rosetau is not mentioned after CT 1082, and therefore it cannot be confirmed whether or not any segment beyond this point is related to it. Nor is it certain that the “map” section belongs to this area. Rosetau is only mentioned twice there, in CT 1040, where there is also mention of Buto. The only argument that may favor identifying some elements of the “map” section with features in Rosetau is found at the end of CT 1040. This text is the first utterance in the upper register of the “map” section. There is mention of gods on mounds in Rosetau, who are said to pay respect to the deceased, who functions as their only guide. Guidance is also mentioned in CT 1034, in connection with the land-and waterways of Rosetau. Each locality mentioned in the upper register of the “map” section contains names of gods and is referred to by the feminine 3rd person singular pronoun. Arguably, these localities with gods are the mounds of Rosetau referred to in CT 1040, but this is far from certain. The segments that contain CT 1072–1082 are the only parts that explicitly refer to Rosetau and its terrestrial and watery paths. None of the textual elements in the lower register of the “map” section refers to Rosetau, pleading against the possibility that this register belongs to Rosetau. We have learnt that both registers include references to watercourses and land areas. For these reasons, it is possible, though not certain, that the “map” section represents an area belonging to Rosetau.

The area containing CT 1072–1082 is the main source of information about Rosetau in the composition. The importance of Rosetau seems to derive from its connection with Osiris, whose body efflux is kept there in a sealed container and protected by fire. Earlier, the deceased’s intention

to embalm the body of Osiris had already been expressed (CT 1036–1037). To reach Osiris’ body in Rosetau, the deceased has to make a journey. This requires the knowledge and power to overcome hindrances in the form of a labyrinth-like region inhabited by dangerous beings. It is not clear whether Rose-tau contains both the body of Osiris (in the form of a relic?) and his efflux, or only the latter. Nevertheless, the analysis of the iconography and texts such as CT 1073 and 1079 suggest that the place had an embalming workshop where the corpse of Osiris was kept, guarded by a group of dangerous beings. They function as guards of separate chambers with gates (‘rrw.t). These architectural elements form part of a larger building. Having several gates, that building cannot have been small. Its complex nature unfortunately cannot be inferred from the accompanying drawing, since this is too stylized to permit recognition of architectural characteristics.

In view of the emphasis that scholars customarily lay on the land ways and waterways of Rosetau, it is remarkable that the decorators of B1 Bo, a real decorative master-piece, took a different stance. In the twenty-seven spells of the so-called Book of Two Ways it bears, there is no single mention of the ways of Rosetau except two in CT 1040.219 CT 1072, and 1074–1082 were omitted in B1 Bo. While it is clearly stated in CT 1036–1037 that the deceased is heading to the abode of Osiris, the two segments which are explicitly linked to Osiris in other sources (CT 1082 and CT 1118–1124) do not occur in B1 Bo. This apparently conscious avoidance of mentioning the paths of Rosetau and the segments that are generally associated with Osiris may indicate a different purpose.

The composition and initiation

The idea that the so-called Book of Two Ways has an initiatory character is not new. Barguet was the first to characterize it as ‘un texte d’initiation’ in 1969. Although the comparisons he draws between the plan of the “Book of Two Ways” and the architectural design of later temples is highly speculative, the idea of initiating the text protagonist in a ritual framework is prominent in the text.

We have referred earlier to the texts that customarily occupy the lid (CT 335) and the bottom

(e.g. CT 397) of coffins outside the Hare nome, and to their interconnectedness. It has been suggested recently that these very texts have an initiatory character since they focus on a kind of transition and passage that necessitates a certain type of knowledge. This is achieved by testing the knowledge of the person who is to be initiated. The procedure takes the form of an interrogation of the prospective initiate in both the ferryman spells and in the glosses of the long version of CT 335.

While the early coffins from Deir El Barsha of course did not have these texts in the position they preferentially had in the rest of the country in the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty, it may nevertheless be interesting to see if they share a similar background.

It is possible that the temple ritual formed the prototype for the initiation process that is adapted later for the dead in the Hereafter. Besides, the theme of initiation equipping a dead person with the knowledge needed for the passage through dangerous gates and areas in addition to the performance of ritual acts are relevant to our composition.

As stated above, the knowledge is frequently emphasized in our composition. But contrary to the ferryman spells and CT 335, the interrogation in the so-called Book of Two Ways does not play a role in testing the knowledge of the protagonist. The whole concept of such an examination seems to be absent here. Rather the deceased is provided with the necessary knowledge and magical utterances that allow him to overcome obstacles and fulfill ritual roles.

Most parts of our composition concern the theme of passage. This can be passing by gatekeepers or within buildings with restricted access, guards and beings with immense powers, or certain regions. Passing through these areas and the notion of the spatial transition conform to the initiatory procedures referred to above without subjecting the ritualist to any kind of interrogatory test.

The complementarity of word and image
In the course of this study, it turned out that the pictorial elements in the so-called Book of Two Ways are complex, and that there is a higher degree of complementarity between text and

image than was previously appreciated. Recently reservations were expressed against the frequent use of the word “vignette” to describe the drawings in BD documents. This can only be subscribed to as regards the drawings in the composition, which are certainly not solely depictions of the content of the accompanying texts. This is true for some drawings, such as a representation of the bark mn-‘nh, which is accompanied by a label referring to the same ship informing us about its name. However, other drawings are just stylized forms that express elements of an idea brought forward in the text they accompany; for instance, the rectangle surrounding the text columns of CT 1033 which indicates the group of beings (the ‘Entourage of Fire’) carrying torches around the cabin on the deck of the solar bark. Here a rectangular frame around the text indicates the position of the torch-carriers, but not these beings themselves. Without the captions of CT 1032 written on the rectangle itself, we would not be able to understand what this geometric shape represents. Yet another category of drawings dispense with texts. This holds true for the falcon on the stand that appears in B3C before CT 1098, which carries a semantic value of its own that adds to the texts around it. Conversely, other textual elements serve as indicators, i.e. in the function of labels, to images that were not depicted. For instance none of the fourteen (groups of) beings indicated by the texts in the labels of CT 1126 and CT 1128 is depicted in our early sources.

The most intriguing drawings are those that are accompanied by text, and nevertheless do not depict what the text refers to. This is at its clearest in the drawing accompanying CT 1080. The text concerns a sealed container that carries the efflux of Osiris. Instead of depicting such a container, the drawing shows a stylized form of a funerary bed and what seems to be a shrine on top of it. We have concluded that the container of Osiris’ efflux is most probably inside the shrine. Hence the text refers to what is not seen in the picture, while the picture depicts what the text does not mention. In this case, text and picture complement each other in conveying the meaning. This kind of complementarity has not yet been noticed for such religious compositions before the New Kingdom.

This conclusion implies that working with the pictures of this composition can only help understanding the content of the texts when we can decode them. But their stylized and almost abstract nature for the most part leaves us solely with the texts. This organic complementarity and integral relationship between images and texts makes it exceedingly difficult to grasp the meaning when either the text or the drawing is ambiguous for us. This is one of the major challenges facing any student of the so-called Book of Two Ways.

Through Hermopolitan lenses

The dominance of themes related to barks and navigation of watercourses in the composition is obvious at first glance. Given the importance of the ferryman spells on coffin bottoms in other parts of Egypt since the mid-Twelfth Dynasty, this is not at all surprising.

It has also transpired from the previous discussions that several texts used in this composition are of ritual background derived from divine cult. Most of the utterances represent what a ritualist had to say while moving in certain ritual contexts. Hence, the *Sitz im Leben* of most of these utterances are not intrinsically linked to funerary or otherworldly background. The adaptation of these utterances in the earlier group of sources for the sake of the coffin owners led to substituting the ritualist speeches voiced in the first person singular with the name of the deceased. This latter assumes the ritualist's roles and is profiled mainly in the third person singular. The speaking act is carried out by an anonymous speaker who describes the deceased and recites the utterances.

The composition opens with a text in the style of the glorification spells (CT 1029) addressed to the golden image of the sun god inside the cabin of his bark. Some references in the text indicate that this is taking place in the vicinity of Heliopolis before sunrise. Later, the ritualist is introduced (CT 1030). He is said to travel with a group of gods towards an area near the eastern Akhet and then to hollow out a bark with which he will ascend to the sky with the sun god, acting as its pilot (CT 1030).

This opening text, which was split into two spells in later sources, immediately brings us to the focal concern which we have met throughout the

composition, namely the approach to the solar bark and gaining access to cabin of the sun god. The overall impression one may get here could be related to preparatory phase of a cultic procession of the sun god in his bark at a certain festival.

It is important to state that all the events described in the composition are temporally situated in the night and before sunrise. The main type of event is the ritualist's passage through gateways, certain regions, passing by beings carrying torches (as the *Entourage of Fire*).

CT 1033 serves to allow the ritualist to pass by the *Entourage of Fire* to get aboard the *Day-bark*, of which the main occupant is said to be Horakhti. This again situates the events before the sunrise, since the navigation of the solar bark has not yet started. This state of affairs finds similarities in the *Shu* spells, which also describe events presumed to take place before sunrise.

After Part 1, which is mostly derived from the solar cult, comes a long sequence which starts in Part 2 and ends in Part 7. The sequence appears in another edition on some later Hermopolitan coffins.

Part 2 states a well-defined goal of the ritualist: he is heading towards the abode of Osiris to carry out ritual acts on the divine body (1036–1037). This is not only true for Osiris, but also for the sun god whose shrine (as a cabin aboard a solar bark) the ritualist hopes to enter in order to treat his wounds. The two perspectives are closely comparable, and in some places both deities appear in the same spell (e.g. CT 1073, 1098, 1130). Apparently a strict differentiation between both was not intended. This is clear from CT 1117. It follows after a series of spells that are solar-oriented, pointing out the benefits of knowing the preceding magical spells that allow one to pass tribunals and gateways. Again Osiris is mentioned. After this, we are left with an Osirian segment (i.e. Part 17) where Osiris is inside a shrine on a bark. Although the texts nowhere mention that Osiris is already on a bark, his sudden appearance in CT 1098, which is concerned with the sun of the night, i.e. the moon, does not surprise. A similar parallelism between Re and Osiris is found elsewhere, in glorification spells which were attested mainly in the *Hare nome* (e.g. CT 18–19). This recalls the famous Mendes doctrine

in CT 335, which—i.e. CT 335—was not common in the Hare nome. The appearance of both solar and Osirian elements in a single and parallel ritual contexts is not also alien to events related to Heracleopolis.

CT 1117 is in reality a postscript of the preceding series of spells addressed to gatekeepers (i.e. utterances of Passage). The main outcome is related to enabling the mobility in different context, for both the living and the dead as well. It has also a bearing on certain purity requirements needed for performing the ritual. Both physical purification and juridical vindication play significant role here. These magical utterances seem to provide the ritualist with the necessities allowing him to overcome the several sorts of hindrances in his passage to a new plane of existence within the cultic realm.

Moreover, Part 17 refers purely to ritual actions in relation to Osiris. Interestingly, the texts mention clearly a form of Osiris that was made from the earth. This image of Osiris is said to be resuscitated after being dismembered. This probably involved a ritual act imitating Seth's assault on Osiris body. The ritualist, who is placed here in the role of Horus, the son of this image of Osiris, appears to provide the dead father with revitalizing elements such as air and offerings. It is not improbable that these are rituals that belong to a certain festival similar to the famous Khoiak festival. In this group of texts (CT 1118–1124), the reciprocal relationship between the ritualist and the image of Osiris is emphasized.

The text protagonist is not only said to be an akh, but also to be equipped with royal prerogatives. The rubric of CT 1130257 sums up the main goals we encounter throughout the so-called Book of Two Ways. It focuses on the themes of passage and having the destiny of both Re and Osiris. We also gather that the protagonist is identified with (or at least impersonating) the creator god (CT 1130), permitting him again a safe passage through the world of the divine and its powerful authority. However, this famous text has an aretalogical character and was most probably recited in certain events in the solar cult.

During the analysis of the several parts of this complex composition, it turned out that several of its constituents are based on earlier texts that go back to the Old Kingdom. The composition gathers a number of texts derived from several rituals. Some certain segments, such as the famous 'gates section', were already known outside Hermopolis and from much older date. One may also consider the possibility that a number of unique texts that appeared here might have been derived from a certain archive with original material of Memphite origin. A candidate could be Heracleopolis, where its kings in the FIP inherited and continued the royal tradition of the Old Kingdom of having ritual and religious texts. One recalls here the famous case of the texts on the H and F of B16C, where the name of a certain Heracleopolitan king was mistakenly left without being substituted with the deceased's name in the religious texts. We have already noticed some similarities between some accounts in CT 335 and some texts in Part 2. The Heracleopolitan influence on this famous text has been already suggested long time ago by Heerma van Voss.

Moreover, the mention of "Heracleopolis" in the entire Coffin Texts that reached us thus far, occurs in 11 spells. Apart from the famous CT 335, all the other ten attestations of the toponym are exclusively found on coffins from Hermopolis. This may suggest that sizable amount of manuscripts from Heracleopolis found their way to the metropolis of the Hare nome sometime in the FIP.

Although the evidence here is at best circumstantial, it further consolidates the conclusion that several parts of the so-called Book of Two Ways composition were not originally created in Hermopolis. However, the arrangement of this material in certain fixed sequential order, the adoption of an elaborate iconographic scheme, and applying the entire complex on the coffin floorboards are certainly characteristics of Hermopolitan tradition par excellence. The attempts to edit and/or re-edit old textual elements on the level of grammar and lexicography indicate a dynamic intervention on the part of the Hermopolitan scribes.

These remarks generally concern the history of the text. But on the level of the iconography and the

design of the several parts of the composition as a coffin floorboard decoration are to large extent Hermopolitan. This element is usually marginalized in the studies of this composition. Therefore, our study tried somehow to redress the balance by integrating both the textual and the iconographical aspects in the analysis.

The final product was a Hermopolitan combination of several sub-compositions in a certain canonized form. These sub-compositions (or booklets) had probably their independent life cycles during their transmission history as shorter compositions in their own right. It is, however, not clear to which extent at least some of the contents of this composition reflect or was influenced by Hermopolitan theology.

As already announced in the introduction, the study of the so-called Book of Two Ways composition has revealed that it was not a completely separate entity within the body of the Coffin Texts, as some have assumed. In view of the sheer amount of texts needed to understand the context within which it was intended to function, this study does not pretend to have exhausted all the potential for study. However, by having demonstrated that many widely accepted ideas concerning our composition need reconsideration, we hope to have cleared the ground for a better understanding of this fascinating material viewed through Hermopolitan lenses. <>

[Hittite Landscape and Geography](#) edited by Mark Weeden and Lee Z. Ullmann with maps by Zenobia Homan [Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 the Near and Middle East, Brill Academic, 9789004341746]

[Hittite Landscape and Geography](#) provides a holistic geographical perspective on the study of the Late Bronze Age Hittite Civilization from Anatolia (Turkey) both as it is represented in Hittite texts and modern archaeology.

Excerpt: The past 30 years have seen a surge of interest in what is commonly referred to as landscape archaeology. This is a field of investigation which seeks to understand the place of human beings within the physical landscape, to illuminate how they interacted with their concrete, physical environment and to reconstruct what that

might have looked like. Landscape archaeology has profoundly influenced the way any archaeology is done, being partly a result of the movement towards attempting to reconstruct ancient mentalities that is sometimes referred to as postprocessual archaeology, and partly rooted in the marriage of archaeological method with natural science approaches from disciplines such as geology, human anthropology, climate studies and botany. This book does not attempt to provide a landscape archaeology of ancient Anatolia in the manner that T. J. Wilkinson's book did for Mesopotamia and Syria, although that is a promising line of future research.' Rather the inclusion of landscape in the title of this work pays tribute to the fact that landscape studies cannot be ignored in the study of historical geography.

In fact, in the case of Hittite historical geography it is quite clear that study of the landscape has been a constant factor since the very beginning. For us, as for the ancients, the imposing landscape of central Anatolia is impossible to ignore. Far from being an inert background against which historical events are played, the landscape is itself an actor in the drama, attracting and transforming varieties of meanings that have been projected by different human interlocutors through time. The landscape is historically determined through human interaction in terms of deforestation and soil erosion, for example, but it is also historically determining, in that its natural features, from mountainous massifs to volcanic peaks and from alluvial plains to lakes, pools, rivers and springs, invite human settlement and engagement of particular kinds. Economic factors doubtless played a role in the choice of Hattusa as main city, with its position in the centre of Anatolia, right in the middle of what had previously been the Anatolian trade circuit covered by Assyrian merchants. But its difficult, rocky and craggy situation, in a place where no other pre-modern civilisations have built a centralised state, is a recurring theme of many of the contributions to this book, and may well have had other motivations. The study of the landscape thus becomes an integral part of understanding the kind of political formation that underlay the Hittite state.

The Historical Geography of Anatolia as a topic of investigation begins with European visitors to the

area in the 19th century. These men were usually trying to reconstruct or re-trace the footsteps of the classical authors that formed the bedrock of European education at the time, albeit mostly only for the privileged few. Such endeavours did not always have solely antiquarian interests in view. Thus W. M. Ramsay saw himself as charting the history of roads and routes in the direct shadow of the various railway projects that were advancing into the Middle East in the late 19th century. It is clear that these visits were integrally related to the inter-imperial conflicts that eventually resulted in World War I, the pursuit of knowledge in itself subordinated to the political interests of the day.

The discovery of the Hittites through a series of lucky guesses by W. Wright in 1874 and then A. H. Sayce in 1876, who both connected the Hittites of the Bible with the hieroglyphic inscriptions of northern Syria, made this "lost civilisation, a phrase still echoed by N. Roberts in chapter 2 of this book, the subject of academic research for the first time.⁴ This meant that the study of the distribution of "Hittite remains" could begin in earnest, which initially entailed identifying a combination of "Hittite" hieroglyphic inscriptions, sculptural artefacts in the style of the reliefs at Gavur Kalesi and later the characteristic redslip ware found at Bogazköy (nowadays Bogazkale), which was excavated in earnest from 1906 (see Schachner this volume, chapter 4). Bogazköy itself was variously identified as Roman Tavium or Median Pteria prior to excavation. The decisive development in identifying it as Hattusa, the capital of an Empire which was conspicuously absent from the classical sources used by Europeans for orientation in the Middle East, came with the discovery of large amounts of cuneiform tablets at the site, including international treaties and diplomatic correspondence between the land of Hatti (Hattusa) and the other great powers of the time. Besides the name of Hattusa, the documents brought to light at the city also contain thousands of other place-names that fell within the Hittite sphere of influence. This added an entirely new dimension to the historical geography of Anatolia and northern Syria, by encouraging scholars to try to match the names in the documents with physical places.

Hittite Historical Geography

The first comprehensive work on this topic was that of A. Goetze in 1924. E. Forrer began with his works attempting to identify the western lands mentioned in Hittite texts with those known from classical texts, particularly Arzawa, Wilusa, Lukka, Ahhiyawa, Millawanda, all of which led to controversies which are partially not resolved to this day. See Max Gander, chapter 20 in this volume. After this he turned his attention to central Anatolia and undertook an extensive journey in 1926 visiting sites. In the same year H. H. von der Osten also undertook a journey in Anatolia for the University of Chicago and visited some of the same sites as well as spending time in Forrer's company. Some of the early identifications included such as Ankara with Ankuwa, both on the basis of similarity of names and locations on Roman or Byzantine roads.⁵ In this particular case von der Osten's excavations at Alisarhöyük, which produced Old Assyrian tablets containing the name Ankuwa beside that of Kanesh, were the catalyst for shifting Ankuwa to this locality, although the debate is in no way closed either on the name of Alisarhöyük or the location of Ankuwa. The thesis that it was anywhere near Ankara is no longer defended. See Sir Gavaz in this volume.

Another early identification was that of the mound of Kültepe near Kayseri with ancient Kaneš on the basis of Old Assyrian tablets belonging to traders who lived there that had been recovered firstly in illicit excavations at the site, then in Czech excavations in 1925, and afterwards in regular Turkish excavations from 1948 to the present day. For half a century Hattusa (= Bogazköy) and Kanesh (Hittite Nesa, = Kültepe) remained the only fixed points on the map of Hittite historical geography in the central area, and these on the basis of incontrovertible evidence gained from extensive excavation. The Kaneš (= Kültepe) fixed point allowed the identification of the Kizilirmak, classical Halys, as the Hittite river Marassanta due to the Kaska enemy having had to cross it in order to attack Kaneš as narrated in the Apology of Hattusili III. Other proposals for locations had to proceed through a careful weighing of the evidence provided by (groups of) toponyms preserved in classical or even modern sources, as against the evidence provided by a source-critical

reading of the Hittite texts themselves, in particular campaign reports, oracles for future campaigns, cult journeys and letters, consideration of pre-modern roads and networks, all combined with an evaluation of what could be possibly achieved on the basis of the real topography. With each of these fields of evidence there are serious issues regarding their trustworthiness.

The same name might move over the millennia, or be replicated somewhere else. Names also change their sound and may end up sounding completely different from how they started out. This is not to mention the very real possibility that different localities had the same name in the Hittite period, although this assumption is to be excluded on methodological grounds until all other avenues of explanation have been exhausted.

The Hittite texts tend to present the evidence in a telescoped fashion that suits narrative purpose or genre convention. The reasons for listing cities in particular orders may have been anything other than geographical. As pointed out in a recent book, it is quite likely that texts name places on itineraries only when they are deviating from a norm that would otherwise be assumed and therefore not mentioned. A source-critical analysis of a text's function and genre must be performed before its contribution to a geographical discussion can be evaluated, and the particular dimensional phrases in which a place-name occurs have to be considered in the context of other occurrences of the same phrases elsewhere in the corpus of Hittite texts. In many cases our texts are too fragmentary even to perform these tasks satisfactorily.

The basic topography might not change too much, unless in the case of some river-courses, but the landscape certainly does, whether that has to do with anthropogenic or taphonomic processes such as deforestation, erosion and alluviation or to do with the social and cultural construction that people attach to the landscape. The people who chose to set up their capital precisely in the difficult area of Hattusa—Bogazköy may not have always chosen the most usual, simple and easy routes to travel or to establish settlements. Religious associations or others born of cultural memory may also have played an important role."

One of the major early developments in the historical geography of the Hittite Empire used a judicious combination of all of these methods. Goetze's work *Kizzuwatna* moved the eponymous country attested in Hittite texts from the north where it had been placed due to an association with Comana Pontica down to where it is nowadays located in the plain of Adana, classical Cilicia. Key here was the find of the sealing of Isputahsu, a treaty-partner of the Hittite king Telipinu. However, this re-location is one of the few achieved without direct evidence from excavated tablets that receives universal recognition today, although many of the details remain to be worked out. See Novák and Rutishauser (chapter 11) and Hawkins and Weeden (chapter 21) in this volume.

The 1950s saw the publication of two synthetic studies of Hittite historical geography. The first took the form of two articles by F. Cornelius which argued mainly using the evidence of various lists in cuneiform documents, which he and others assumed to be organised in geographical order: the prayer of Muwatalli II to the Storm-god of lightning, the offering list, the oracle-text, the Annals of Mursili II, as well as the tablet, which detailed the so-called concentric invasions in the reign of Tudhaliya II (otherwise known as Tudhaliya III). The second was the book by J. Garstang and O. R. Gurney, which appeared only the year after Cornelius' synthetic articles and presented a quite different view of Hittite geography based largely on similar evidence. It is superfluous to list the specific differences in localisations here, although they can be illustrated by reference to the map 1 from Garstang and Gurney's work, in comparison to the maps in Cornelius' *Geschichte der Hethiter* from 1973. Yet another view of the geographical arrangement of the central Hittite area, with a significant movement of many of the main locations to the north of Hattusa, was presented in H. G. Güterbock's published reaction to Garstang and Gurney's *Geography*, which appeared in 1961 and has also proven influential.

Although much more clarity has been gained in the time since these works were published, the differing results based on much the same evidence give an idea of the limits of the exploitation of the philological material. Garstang had an excellent

knowledge of the Anatolian landscape, and Cornelius also made voyages to see it in person, but no matter how well one knows the area, a name in a text simply cannot be attached to a physical place with any degree of certainty without special circumstances, or unequivocal testimony from texts excavated on site. The seven springs at Tatarh Höyük in the Adana region can be compared with the seven pure springs of Lawazantiya known from tablets excavated at Bogazköy, when considered along with all the other corroborating evidence. This might qualify as a good example of an identification made likely by a comparison of place with text, although it is not absolutely certain, but such are extremely rare. Even when cuneiform tablets are excavated at a site and they mention a particular name, one needs to be careful. It is sometimes more likely that the isolated mention of a name at a site will be referring to somewhere else, as there is no need to refer to the place where one is or where one's correspondent in a letter knows that one is. The occurrence of a toponym in a cuneiform document found at a site can only be considered as one element of proof along with others, one that is to be regarded critically.

Another major development in the philological investigation of Hittite historical geography was the publication in 1978 of the sixth volume of the *Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes* by G. del Monte and J. Tischler. This volume and the successor volume published by del Monte in 1992, form the basis of philological research, collecting all attestations of Hittite place-names in texts published until 1992, with an overview of the relevant theories to date concerning localisations. In the late 1970s one also begins to see contributions appearing in widely disparate publication venues by M. Forlanini, of whose works some forty-four are cited in this volume. Forlanini tended to espouse a substantially different view of Hittite geography to that represented by either Garstang and Gurney or Cornelius, using a detailed appreciation of the most up-to-date textual information combined with an unparalleled knowledge of classical and late antique place-names throughout Turkey. The contributions in this volume demonstrate the influence of his analyses among Hittitologists.

In 1986 M. Forlanini and M. Marazzi presented Fascicle 4.3 of the *Atlante Storico del Vicino Oriente Antico, Anatolia: L'impero Hittita*. This useful publication contained a map of archaeological sites known to have been occupied between 1700 and 1200 BC, mostly concentrating on the Anatolian Plateau, with further maps elucidating issues such as the presence of the king, Mycenaean presence, plans of excavated buildings, landscape monuments and surveys conducted in Anatolia. A further series of maps detailed the distribution of Hittite place-names through the successive centuries from the formation of the Hittite state to the 13th century BCE. A useful list of equivalences gives Forlanini's thinking at the time on the location of 187 Hittite place-names along with possible classical or other cognates.

A collection of essays dedicated to the LBA historical geography of Hittite Anatolia was published by K. Strobel in 2008, which gives a useful update on research into a number of geographical areas from an assortment of archaeological and philological perspectives. The most recent larger work dedicated to Hittite historical geography is that of Adam Kryszén. This book deals with the central area of Hittite occupation, the so-called "Hittite Heartland", which essentially means all locations mentioned in Hittite texts that are supposed to be reachable within three days from the capital. One major methodological principle lying behind his research is that Hittite texts, especially the cult journeys, will not as a rule mention place-names in the natural or usual order that they might occur in if one were to travel to them by the most direct route. This, so Kryszén's intriguing hypothesis, is because the normal route would have been taken for granted. Only exceptional routes are supposed to be mentioned explicitly, noting deviations from the route one would usually take. This is certainly a perspective that should attract more attention than it has previously.

Furthermore, Kryszén argues that research on Hittite historical geography is not well enough developed to be able to posit direct identifications with parts of the physical landscape in the vast majority of cases. This means that he proposes only a topological reconstruction of geographical

relations, largely ignoring the concrete topographical features on the ground. Kryszén's careful sifting of the evidence for clusters of toponyms on both the immediately local and wider regional levels leads him to propose a shift of the localisations that some have made to the south of Bogazköy/Hattusa, such as Zippalanda, Ankuwa and Tawiniya, into the area to its north. He thus presents a very different view of the geography of the central Hittite area to that presented in this volume (chapter 14, Sir Gavaz). Kryszén's method is meticulous, its application largely consistent, and his perspective self-aware of its own limitations. His work thus represents an important contribution to the discussion, whether it is ultimately convincing to conduct geographical investigation on the basis of texts alone or not. It is hoped that some of the archaeological contributions in this volume in particular will provide the framework for a perspective beyond topology, although it has not proven possible to provide detailed archaeological coverage of the area immediately to the south of the capital.

From the 1970s the decipherment of the Anatolian hieroglyphic script had also been gaining momentum, which renewed emphasis on the role that could be played by the Hittite landscape monuments with hieroglyphic inscriptions in determining historical geography. The publication of newly discovered Empire period inscriptions contributed not only new attestations of names but in some cases new sites to the discussion, with a concrete physical position in the geographical landscape. A large boost to the discussion of the geography of western Anatolia was made by the further decipherment by J. D. Hawkins of the Karabel inscriptions, one of the earliest recognised Hittite relief monuments, which seemed to indicate a border between the land of Mira and the Seha river land, and had consequences for the location of the land of Wilusa. However, this example illustrates very well the way in which the function and situation of the landscape monuments as part of the Hittite interaction with their physical environment, whether as an emblem of their political structure, of their cultural memory or of their landscape planning and route management, need to be taken into account when evaluating their significance for historical geography. It is not

agreed by all that the monument at Karabel serves as a boundary marker, for example. See Gander in this volume. Similar discussions on the function of these monuments, which may be different in each case, need to accompany any reading or geographical interpretation.

Progress on the Basis of Tablet Finds

From the 1980s and 90s many new archaeological projects began which were to add a new dimension to the historical geographical project. Especially those which produced clay tablets in large numbers have secured identifications. The excavations at Ortaköy-Sapinuwa, then Kusaklı-Sarissa and now Kayalıpınar-Samuha, possibly Oymağaç-Nerik as well, have all contributed more or less fixed points to the map which can be used to hypothesise further locations.

Hittite cuneiform tablets have now been found at a number of sites apart from Bogazköy-Hattusa, where some 30,000 tablets and fragments have been retrieved mostly in temple, palace and other official contexts. First and foremost is Ortaköy-Sapinuwa, where some 4,000 tablets and fragments have been found since 1991 in an administrative building, especially belonging to ritual genres including Hurrian and Hattic, but also many royal letters and state correspondence. Again mainly ritual in nature are the tablets found at Kussakh-Sarissa, near Sivas, dating from the Middle Hittite period to the 13th century. The presence of two fragments of tablets of a festival of Sarissa, the frequent mention of Sarissa in cult inventories found there and a sealing with the name Sarissa managed to establish the identification of the site. The small archive from Masathöyük, most likely ancient Tapikka, contains state letters and economic documents dealing with distribution of rations from the early 14th century BC. More recently, undisclosed numbers of tablets have been found at Kayalıpınar-Samuha, mostly cult inventories from the 13th century BC, one of which appears to give convincing evidence for the identification of this mound on the Kızırmak near Sivas with ancient Samuha (see Müller-Karpe, this volume). The site of Oymağaç near the Black Sea coast has also delivered significant tablet finds dating to later, middle and earlier Hittite periods, which mention the city of Nerik, plausibly identified

with Oymaagaç even before its excavation. See Corti and Glatz in this volume.

Fragments were found prior to excavation, and have continued to be found since the beginning of work at the site of Kussakh/Usakh near Yozgat, which has been identified by some with the holy city of Zippalanda. Small numbers of tablets have also been found at Alacahöyük, which has been associated with Arinna, although the debate is not closed. A fragment has also been retrieved at Yassihöyük, also in the Yozgat region. On all three of these see Sir Gavaz in this volume. The most westerly find of any cuneiform tablets in Anatolia are thus far the three fragments retrieved at Büklükale on the Kizihrmak (see Weeden and Matsumura, this volume).

Outside of Anatolia proper in southeastern Turkey—northern Syria, specifically Hittite tablets (i.e. Hittite language, Hittite style of cuneiform script) have been found at Alalakh on the Orontes (one omen text and a fragment of a letter), in Ugarit (one trilingual literary text, beside numerous Akkadian diplomatic texts which seem to be written in a more local style of cuneiform), Emar (two Hittite letters), Tell Afis (two Hittite letters) and Oylumhöyük (one fragment of a Hittite treaty). Letters and other documents involving Hittites may well be found at other sites, such as Qatna, but appear to be written in a more local style, like the ones from Ugarit. Two Hittite-language documents were also retrieved from Amarna in Egypt, the famous Arzawa-letters.

The further textual source for evidence about Hittite geography comes from the c. 23,000 tablets associated with the Old Assyrian trading network with its base at Kültepe-Kanes. This is of relevance to Hittite Geography as a number of the place-names which are attested in the Assyrian trade documents are also attested in Hittite texts. There is also a significant overlap between these places and those that were of significance for the beginning of the Hittite kingdom. Assyrian itineraries provide some indication of the relative order in which towns might be encountered on a journey, although these are difficult texts to use and interpretation of individual itineraries has varied considerably.

A recent book has tried to apply a modified statistical gravity method to the occurrences of place-names in Old Assyrian texts, combined with consideration of factors that might distort such a model. G. Barjamovic sets at the basis of his method the collection of co-occurring place-names. Sites are excluded which might be transit stations as these might be mentioned next to other sites more frequently irrespective of geographical proximity. Such co-occurrences are built up into clusters which can be transferred onto a map taking into account the topography and even geology of the area in which the clusters of toponyms are thought to occur. One of the very different results coming from the use of this method is that the town of Salatuwar (Hittite Salatiwara) is pushed much further north and east, while Purushattum (Hittite Parsuhanda), the position of which is dependent on that of Salatuwar according to the results of the statistical method, is pulled into the region of Bolvadin.

Barjamovic also saw Old Assyrian Durhumit needing to be pulled back to the position in the northeast where Garstang and Gurney and Cornelius had located it, due to its association with the "narrow track" which passed east of Kaneş taking its starting point from Luhuzattiya and Hurama (fairly securely located in the region of Elbistan). This conflicts with the more westerly location given it by many Hittitologists, mainly following Forlanini's later thoughts on the issue. This dispute is alive in this volume. See Barjamovic (chapter 23) for further developments on this theme, as well as de Martino (chapter 19), Forlanini (chapter 18), and with a slightly modified view Corti (chapter 17).

Such statistical models for placing geographical names have not been applied to the Hittite texts, and it is unclear to what extent they would work. In a case where trade is the underlying reason for mentioning places in communication a much stricter mathematical or economic model can be applied to statistical co-occurrence, as opposed to the Hittite situation, where the motivation behind the co-occurrence of names is frequently not known and is demonstrably multi-faceted: religion and cult, military engagement, diplomacy to mention but a few. Barjamovic's book remains, however, whether

one agrees with his conclusions or not, a solid sourcebook on the Middle Bronze Age geography of Anatolia and is indispensable for anyone studying Hittite historical geography.

Archaeological Developments

Thus it seems that the only secure advances in putting names on the map have come from the discovery of inscriptional evidence, usually in large quantities. All else remains hypothetical, and even when cuneiform tablets are found, there is much that remains hypothetical too, or rather new problems may be created. However, putting names on the map is not the only goal of historical geography. Not all digs produce cuneiform tablets, and indeed we would not expect them to. According to one hypothesis, Hittite cuneiform is restricted to those sites where a royal presence can otherwise be attested, e.g. in the form of royal seals or sealings. The vast majority of sites will never deliver evidence as to their nominal identity. This does not mean that they were not important for social, political and religious life in the Late Bronze Age, and not part of the same world as the Hittites.

In fact it is the archaeological picture that has really changed since Garstang and Gurney wrote their *Geography of the Hittite Empire*. Text interpretations may change in details, especially when new textual discoveries are available, but this is nothing compared to the extraordinary increase in archaeological material available over the last 30 years. There have been more excavations, but more crucially a dramatic rise in the number of surveys undertaken which are allowing us an ever clearer view of settlement distribution in different archaeological periods. Both excavations and surveys are available in the annual publications of the *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* and *Arastırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* that are produced by the Turkish Ministry for Culture and Tourism. With some significant exceptions, in the west for example, there are now very few areas of Turkey that have not had at least some survey work conducted. The distribution of surveyed areas are uneven, however, with the central area within the arc of the Kizilirmak clearly having had more surveys performed than elsewhere.

The research goals of survey-work are manifold and not every survey can be exploited for the same kind of data as any other. Sometimes they are pursued with a view to starting an excavation, sometimes with survey as a primary goal, and sometimes with goals that change and adapt during the survey process. The latter seems to have been the case, for example, during the field-work that led to the excavation of the large site at Ortaköy (Süel and Süel, chapter 3). In this case the conditions for survey-work were so attractive that more than one archaeological team was in the field in the same place at the same time, apparently both eventually pursuing the goal of excavation.

The quality of the information can be uneven in survey reports, frequently due to circumstances beyond the archaeologist's control, or to the methods of survey employed. However, despite the varied and uneven conditions under which survey work is conducted and distributed, a more extensive picture is beginning to emerge of Hittite settlement in Anatolia, but there is still much to be done. There may be many limits to the kind of information that can be gleaned from survey, but it remains the most effective tool we have for gaining a wider overview.

On occasion in this book archaeologists have good cause to doubt results achieved on the basis of surface survey through collecting pottery sherds. Andreas Schachner (chapter 4) mentions the case of Çamhbel Tarlası, where Hittite pottery was picked up on the surface, but no Late Bronze Age occupation found on excavation. Many large mounds, once excavated, reveal only limited occupation from periods that might appear well represented in the surface pottery. Mound size is frequently not a reliable guide to a site's importance at any particular time. It should thus be remembered that the activity of survey itself is complex and multilayered, with insights to be gained from site morphology, remote sensing techniques, geological and botanical investigations besides the traditional collection of pottery. Only in the rarest of cases is it possible to combine insights from all these perspectives. Repeated trips to the same sites over many years also increase the reliability of the evidence, as does the comparison of results gained by different investigators. This

model of repeat visits and continual re-evaluation is a hallmark of the Central Anatolia Survey Project carried out since 1984 by the Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology, to name a particularly egregious example. Abstractions made on the basis of survey results are always temporary and provisional.

The Project Paphlagonia Survey led by Roger Matthews and Claudia Glatz with its recognition that there is very little built settlement north of the Ilgaz mountains, has laid out a concrete framework for our conception of Hittite relations with the north. See Glatz, Chapter 7 in this volume. The review of R. M. Czichon's survey work carried out in the immediate vicinity of Bogazköy that is presented by Andreas Schachner (chapter 4) leads him to the conclusion that the Hittite settlement pattern indicates an urban outlook largely based on much smaller distances between places than we have been accustomed to think about, which fits with the contraction of the Hittite world towards the north that we see in chapter 7 (Glatz). The surveys conducted especially by the Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology in the area of the southwestern Kizihrmak show according to the interpretive scheme offered in chapter 9 (Matsumura and Weeden) that LBA Hittite settlement was thin in some parts, i.e. to the direct north of the Kizihrmak, despite there being numerous sites, but in others, south of the Kizihrmak and to the northwest of the Tuz Gölü, sites with larger quantities of LBA pottery appear to have been available. A different pattern of site distribution also appears to be given for these neighbouring areas.

The reasons for these distributions, which sometimes appear to be planned to an extent, are difficult to fit with the historical record. A population decrease going into the Late Bronze Age is occasionally observed in this volume (Matsumura and Weeden, chapter 9), although it is currently difficult to quantify this. Such a decrease in settlement density might be associated with the growth of a transregional political entity for which particular areas had less economic relevance and thus less appeal as habitations, or it may even yet have something to do with the need to feed imperial expansion, although parts of northern Syria also

seem to suffer population decline, here possibly due to urbanisation (Casana, this volume).

In the south-central area (Matessi and Tomassini-Pieri, chapter 8) an increase in settlement numbers alongside a decrease in settlement size is observed from the Middle to the Late Bronze Ages, corresponding in their view to the development of a more evenly organised large polity from the nucleated city-states of the preceding period. Contrast also the LBA increase in population noted by Novák and Rutishauser in Kizzuwatna/Plain Cilicia (chapter 11). In the East, however, a repeated pattern of settlement hierarchy and urban landscape planning appears to be established, with a firm Hittite imprint (Müller-Karpe, chapter 6). At this stage of the process of research it is difficult to tell whether these are actual differences on the ground or differences in perspective rooted in archaeological method.

The image of the Hittite Empire that is thus starting to emerge from the archaeological evidence is a variegated one. The picture sometimes transmitted by the texts might give the impression of a fully functioning bureaucratic imperial machine with blanket totalitarian coverage of its diverse areas, whereas what we see on the ground is typical of differential and inconsistent structures of control. In some parts settlements are strategically placed or preserved, in others they inherit the settlement structure of previous eras. Interesting here is the difficulty that archaeology has had trying to identify Hittite roads, even in those areas where urban planning is at its most organised (Müller-Karpe, chapter 6). A functioning road system with provision for its maintenance is a pre-requisite for a strong and coherent state system. The texts tell us that such existed, but archaeology has not managed to provide clear evidence. On the other hand archaeological excavation reveals an organised economy with extensive grain storage and water management capacities. The juxtaposition of clearly well organised aspects of archaeologically attested infrastructure and what appears to be a more haphazard organisational model sits rather uncomfortably at the moment and signals future potential for research.

A further archaeological field that has seen an immense surge over the last decades is that

involving the archaeological sciences: geological, palaeobotanical, osteoarchaeological, zooarchaeological and palaeoclimatic studies are contributing new and important dimensions to the way we conceive of the ancient landscape and the lives of the people who lived in and with it. Most excavations now include archaeological scientists within their staff and interesting and surprising collaborations are developing everywhere. This is a relatively new trend for archaeology in Turkey, as elsewhere, and results are reflected in many of the archaeological chapters of this book. An introductory overview of the contribution that can be made by the archaeological sciences to questions relating to the palaeo-environment is given by Neil Roberts in chapter 2.

This Volume

We have organised this book into two major sections. One presents perspectives on Hittite geography using primarily archaeological evidence, the other uses primarily philological evidence. None of the chapters uses solely either archaeological or philological evidence, and the distinction is to an extent artificial. Both archaeologists and philologists are after all talking about the same subject-matter. However, there is little doubt that specialists in archaeology and specialists in texts have different methodologies that they bring to the material, and even those rare individuals who excel in both fields would not apply the methods of one discipline to the analysis of the other. This is simply as basic as the fact that no amount of grammatical training will help one date a Late Helladic IIIb vase, different techniques are learned to do different things. In the best scenario we wish to be able to apply an archaeological method to the archaeological evidence, a philological method to the textual evidence, and then compare the results reached by the two. For a successful combination of archaeological and philological evidence in the planning and execution of a survey project which led to a significant excavation, see chapter 3 (Süel and Süel).

As such the volume does not provide a ready answer to the questions of Hittite historical geography, but only a series of views based on sections of the evidence signalling the state of

research and the areas where disagreement persists and some agreement can be reached. Naturally, in having the different areas written by specialists there has been a restriction of focus which will have led to some sites or place-names falling through the cracks in the interstices between one chapter and another. Furthermore, the discussion of Hittite place-names attested in texts and the conduct of surveys and excavations do not always produce isometric content. A name may need to be discussed with another one because they occur in the same text, the archaeological investigation of an area may be inspired by the desire to understand one part of it the better rather than another. Many surveys start from excavations, for example, just as they may be conducted in order to find prospective excavation-sites. In some areas there is a dearth of proposals for localisations, which makes the philological discussion less relevant. It has thus not always been possible to fit the archaeological and philological chapters as neatly as one might have wanted in this volume. Lack of symmetry between the two is apparent especially in the central areas as well as in the Levant and northern Syria. We feel that a good coverage has been achieved between both archaeological and philological chapters, while respecting the judgement of the specialist authors to define their own areas.

There is still plenty of space for synthetic monographs presenting particular views of Hittite Geography, whether from archaeological, philological or combined perspectives. This volume can also not pretend to give a blanket overview of all Hittite period sites in Turkey, this must be the job of another work, quite possibly of one with an internet base, such as the important TAY-project, or the Istanbul-based Hittite Historical Atlas project. Such projects with an extendable database have to be key to the progress of the research. Most importantly more work, particularly archaeological research, needs to be done before any more clarity can be achieved. This book should provide an in-depth and authoritative entry to and reference work for the field at this stage in its development. There is still a long way to go.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Sigla and Abbreviations
Textual and Bibliographical Abbreviations

1 Introduction

Mark Weeden and Lee Z. Ullmann

PART 1

Perspectives based Primarily on

Archaeological Evidence

2 The Land of the Hittites: Airs,
Waters and Places by Neil Roberts

3 The Discovery of a Hittite City
Developments in Hittite Geography based
on the Identification of Ortaköy-Sapinuwa
by Aygüel Süel and Mustafa Süel

4 Hattusa and its Environs:
Archaeology by Andreas Schachner

5 Central East: Archaeology.
Alacahöyük, Eskişehir, Ortaköy,
Masathöyük by Mustafa Süel, Aygüel Süel,
Tunç Sipahi and Mark Weeden

6 The East: Archaeology. The Upper
Land, Azzi-Hayasa, Isuwa 58 Andreas
Müller-Karpe

7 The North: Archaeology by
Claudia Glatz

8 South-Central: Archaeology by
Alvise Matessi and Bianca Maria Tomassini
Pieri

9 Central West: Archaeology by
Kimiyo Matsumura and Mark Weeden

10 The West: Archaeology by Sevinç
Günel

11 Kizzuwatna: Archaeology by
Mirko Novák and Susanne Rutishauser

12 The Euphrates States and Elbistan:
Archaeology by Michael Brown and Tony
J. Wilkinson

13 The Northern Levant: Archaeology
by Jesse Casana

Color Plates

PART 2

Perspectives based Primarily on

Philological Evidence

14 Hattusa and Environs: Philology
by Özlem Sir Gavaz

15 Central East: Philology by Aygüel
Süel and Mark Weeden

16 The East: Upper Land, Isuwa-
Malitiya, Azzi-Hayasa Philology by Metin
Alparslan

17 The North: Hanhana, Hattena,
Istahara, Hakpis, Nerik, Zalpuwa,
Tummana, Pala and the Hulana River Land
by Carlo Corti

18 South Central: The Lower Land
and Tarhuntassa 239 Massimo Forlanini

19 Central West: Philology by
Stefano de Martino

20 The West: Philology by Max
Gander

21 Kizzuwatna and the Euphrates
States: Kummaha, Elbistan, Malatya:
Philology by J David Hawkins and Mark
Weeden

22 The Historical Geography of
Hittite Syria: Philology by Yoram Cohen

23 A Commercial Geography of
Anatolia: Integrating Hittite and Assyrian
Texts, Archaeology and Topography by
Gojko Barjamovic

24 Moving through the Landscape in
Hittite Texts by Jürgen Lorenz

Bibliography

Index <>

[The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic](#)

edited by Daniel S. Richter and William A. Johnson
[Oxford Handbooks, Oxford University Press,
9780199837472]

Focusing on the period known as the Second Sophistic (an era roughly co-extensive with the second century AD), this Handbook serves the need for a broad and accessible overview. The study of the Second Sophistic is a relative new-comer to the Anglophone field of classics and much of what characterizes it temporally and culturally remains a matter of legitimate contestation. The present handbook offers a diversity of scholarly voices that attempt to define, as much as is possible in a single volume, the state of this rapidly developing field. Included are chapters that offer practical guidance on the wide range of valuable textual materials that survive, many of which are useful or even core to inquiries of particularly current interest (e.g. gender studies, cultural history of the body, sociology of literary culture, history of education and intellectualism, history of religion, political theory, history of medicine, cultural linguistics, intersection of the Classical traditions and early Christianity). The Handbook also contains essays devoted to the work of the most significant intellectuals of the period such as Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, Apuleius, the novelists, the Philostrati and Aelius Aristides. In addition to

content and bibliographical guidance, however, this volume is designed to help to situate the textual remains within the period and its society, to describe and circumscribe not simply the literary matter but the literary culture and societal context. For that reason, the Handbook devotes considerable space at the front to various contextual essays, and throughout tries to keep the contextual demands in mind. In its scope and in its pluralism of voices this Handbook thus represents a new approach to the Second Sophistic, one that attempts to integrate Greek literature of the Roman period into the wider world of early imperial Greek, Latin, Jewish, and Christian cultural production, and one that keeps a sharp focus on situating these texts within their socio-cultural context.

Excerpt:

Periodicity

Periodization has come under sharp scrutiny in recent years. There are good reasons for that. The stipulated boundaries of a period can lead to a blinkered approach, by which continuities are missed or minimized; similarly, disruptions and disconnections within the period can be facily smoothed over. Descriptions of the movement from one period to the next too readily take on a devolutionary character, such that the transition from classical to Hellenistic or Augustan to imperial becomes a narrative not simply of change but of change and decline, with substantial ideological implications (further, Whitmarsh, chapter 2). Implicit in the marking of boundaries with dates like 480 BCE or 323 BCE or 31 BCE is an undertheorized hypothesis that cataclysmic military-political events and changes in art and literary culture can or even should align. Most critical, however, are the ways that examining literature, art, or culture as artifacts of a period affect analysis and understanding. The preconceived idea of a period becomes normative, leading to sometimes bizarre results. Distortions can be not just deep-seated but determinative. Herodotus's style is "archaic" in opposition to Thucydides, though he is writing in the 440s and 430s at the height of the Classical Period; Sophocles (497/ 6-406/5 BCE) is "classical," Euripides (480s-406 BCE) not so much; Ovid is a transitional figure to the Silver Age, not entirely

"Augustan," though Ovid lived from 43 BCE to 17 CE and Augustus ruled from 31/27 BCE to 14 CE; Callimachus is somehow "more Hellenistic" than his contemporary Apollonius.

Within the constellation of ancient periods, as commonly defined, none is quite so vexed as the Second Sophistic. As is well known, Philostratus introduces the term to denote a species of epideictic oratory rather than an historical period (VS i pref.481; see Whitmarsh, chapter 2). As well, the idea of a second sophistic allows Philostratus to establish a classical pedigree for the oratory of his time. In Philostratus's account, the late classical orator Aeschines is the founding figure, though his biographical history, *Lives of the Sophists*, skips most of the early period to focus on orators from the

Neronian era up to his own (ca. 230 CE). In modern times, scholars have taken over the term to designate the period of the late first to early third centuries, as it is seen from a Greek view and with focus on the sophistical oratory of the time. Quite a few, however, as we do in this Handbook, turn the screw further, appropriating the term for a more general designation, to signal an era centered on the second century with defining characteristics (see below) that go well beyond Greek sophists or even Greek literature.

The term itself thus brings with it some considerable fogginess. The extent to which this era, grounded firmly in the second century, projects into the first or third centuries is inconsistently determined (we are hardly consistent here). How much, or even whether, writers in Latin can be said to be part of the Second Sophistic is variously answered (again, that ambivalence is in evidence in this volume as well). How properly or, better, how usefully the idea of "sophism" can be extended metaphorically to capture phenomena that are far afield from oratorical display also receives a range of answers. Some therefore would like to avoid the designation altogether. Indeed both of the authors of this chapter chose to avoid the term in their books on the era (Johnson: *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities*; Richter, *Cosmopolis: Imagining Community in Late Classical Athens and the Early Roman Empire*).

Part of the challenge of this volume is, then, the exploration of whether the broader notion of an era known, for better or worse, as the Second Sophistic is good to "think with." Is the assumption of an "era" simply distorting, as it must be, cramming all sorts of apples and oranges into the same fruit basket willy-nilly, or does it also help bring into view certain shared characteristics and viewpoints that might develop our understanding?

A typical laundry list of Second Sophistic characteristics includes various points of focus: nostalgia for an idealized (Athenian) classical past; archaism and purity of language; sophistic performance and contest and display; *paideia* and erudition; anxieties over (Hellenic) self-definition and identity. Used in the manner of checking off boxes, such lists would be crude instruments for analysis; but recent scholarship, including the essays here, have deployed and explored these points of focus in ways far more interesting.

So, for example, the distinctive way that many of the texts from the period seem to look past contemporary affairs toward an idealized past has typically been part of a triumphalist narrative of Hellenic revivalism or seen as a strategy of resistance to Roman domination, variously spun. Here, such tendencies are treated differently. Kim (chapter 4) locates in the era not a simple celebration of the past but a deep ambivalence about old and new: "it is this combination of both a deep appreciation for the language and culture of the classical past and an enthusiasm for more flamboyant, artificial, and anticlassical literary and oratorical styles that makes the period so interesting." Writing in a similar vein about Antonine Latin literature, Bloomer observes. "The Roman author must search the ancient literature rather like a cook looking for a sparkling ingredient, but only the old cookbooks will do and one must not follow a recipe. The composition must be new and tasty—the Antonine author wants to read Cato, select from Cato, and have his reader know that his diction is the result of long scholarship and selective taste, but he does not want to ape Cato." There could also be a collision of idealized past with present, with complex and varying results. Mattern (chapter 24) describes Galen as a doctor who lived long in Rome but who "in some ways

avoided engagement with Roman culture. He did not use his Roman name. Although he is interested in Latin words, he does not cite Latin authors. His Rome is, in the anecdotes to which it forms a shadowy background, indistinguishable from a Greek city. In its tense and awkward combination of aloofness and superiority with dependency and even servility, Galen's attitude is typical of the cultural environment: Oudot (chapter 17), by contrast, shows how for Aelius Aristides, the "real empire" created by Athens was cultural, "presenting the city as an incarnation of refinement and civilization, untouched by the vagaries of history"; for that reason, she writes, in Aristides's view, "Rome simply took up where Greece left off," destined to use Greek values and concepts so as "to historicize the perfection of Greece." Quite differently, Aaron Johnson (chapter 40) sees "culture wars" of "imperial Hellenism" in Plutarch and Lucian that empowered early Christian intellectuals to have the confidence to "speak to power" in their writings. These are but a few of many examples, but the pluralism with which the subject is approached does suggest that this core characteristic of the Second Sophistic can indeed be good to "think with."

A central association with the Second Sophistic is performance and contest and self-conscious display, in the first instance with reference to the educational training and public performances of the sophists (Webb, chapter 9; Schmitz, chapter 11; Thomas, chapter 12; cf. Koenig, chapter 10), but by metaphorical extension to many other realms. Our authors speak in a wide variety of contexts to the acute awareness of persona that comes from institutionalized role-playing and self-fashioning, an awareness that shows up on stage but also in society and in the act of writing. Jackson, for example, finds in Dio (chapter 14) that contrasting categories like past/present, Greek/Roman, philosophical sincerity/sophistic flippancy, far from being fixed allegiances, can be used as "fluid models for self-posturing" and serve well his "manipulation of rhetorical personas," showing thereby his "awareness of the constructed, complex, and multifaceted nature of Second Sophistic identity positioning." A playful seriousness (or just plain playfulness: see Holford-Strevens, chapter 15, on Favorinus) is found in many authors,

as varied as Philostratus (Miles, chapter 18), Alciphron (Hodkinson, chapter 32), and Lucian (Richter, chapter 21), and often linked, as Miles puts it, to "the consistent avoidance of allowing a final authority: Several of our contributors take this a step further, seeing in writers of the era a sophisticated self-awareness of their works as fiction (e.g., Zeitlin, chapter 26) and a similarly self-conscious experimentation with matters of genre (Hodkinson, chapter 32; Oikonomopoulou, chapter 28). Not all writers of the period display such tendencies, but where they do not they still seem aware of this sort of "sophistication" as a norm to set themselves against (see especially Selden on the antisophistic novel, chapter 27; also Hutton on Pausanias, chapter 23). The serious playfulness of the sophists had a didactic element as well, and this aspect is put in productive dialogue with Christian texts of the era by Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (chapter 43), who points out that, like the sophists, the storytelling in Christian apocrypha is "never merely entertainment."

Another feature identified as central for the Second Sophistic is *paideia*, a concept that served, as Morgan puts it (chapter 25), as "the crucial differentiator between elite and nonelite. The investment of large resources of time and money in nonpractical education, so as to master archaic but culturally endorsed linguistic modes and to deploy the whole intertextual arsenal of the classical canon was a signifier of wealth and status so powerful that the education itself came to be seen as the necessary qualification for membership of the elite." *Paideia* was, however, not simply to be had, but to be performed. The very public agon of early imperial intellectual life, with its scrupulously policed codes of deportment and persistent evaluation of cultural competencies, was, in an important sense, a zero-sum game: one *pepaideumenos*'s loss of cultural capital signaled the gain of another. Thus, the period is replete with texts that show intense interest in virtuoso display of learnedness, especially as it regards language (e.g., the Latin writer Gellius and the Greek Athenaeus: Oikonomopoulou, chapter 28), myth (Trzaskoma, chapter 29; cf. Horster, chapter 38), and philosophical thought (e.g., Brenk, chapter 19), but also showcasing polymathic command of intertextuality, and specific trained rhetorical

elements like *ekphrasis* (showing up in works as different as Apuleius and the Greek novels, Pausanias, and the *Posthomerica*: chapters 22, 23, 31). All this speaks to the bookish, lamplight culture that predominated even as live performance remained central in the *mentalité*. Philosophy, for example, has now become primarily an exercise in textual interpretation (see Baltussen, chapter 37).

Finally, we come to the theme of self-definition and identity. Here the contributors follow recent scholarly trends in leaving to one side the well-worn discussion of the ways that Greeks could retain and promote their cultural identity within the context of Roman rule. Instead, there is interesting analysis of the hybrid and ambivalent self-positioning we find in an Aelian or Favorinus (Oikonomopoulou, chapter 28; Dench, chapter 7; cf. Asirvatham, chapter 30, on Cassius Dio), or the sorts of multiple identities, with an ability to self-reinvent, that are found in Apuleius or Julius Africanus (Harrison, chapter 22; Adler chapter 42). Jewishness is found to retain its core identity even while making informed use of the "modalities of Hellenism" (Gruen, chapter 41), and Syrian Christians are likewise found to participate in a Hellenized Roman East in ways that are textually, as well as socially, interesting and important (Adler, chapter 42). The broad spectrum of literature and culture included in this volume (see below) should allow the reader a strong sense of the vibrant, multicultural environments from which these texts emanated, and the surprisingly cosmopolitan views that form a core feature of the era (Richter, chapter 6).

The characteristics traditionally identified with the Second Sophistic are, on close and nuanced inspection, indeed good to think with.

Purpose and Scope

As will already be clear from the discussion above, our purview for the Second Sophistic is unusually broad-reaching (if, however, not as broad-reaching as it might be). Both in its scope and in its pluralism of voices the Handbook represents a somewhat new approach to the Second Sophistic, one that attempts to integrate Greek literature of the Roman period into the wider world of early imperial Greek, Latin, Jewish, and Christian cultural production, and one that keeps a sharp focus on

situating these texts within their socio-cultural context.

Scholarly interest in the literature and society of the second century has grown rapidly in the last generation, but there remains an inadequate supply of foundational instruction and instructional materials. This is the gap we hope to help fill. The student or teacher of Classics who comes to the literature of this era seldom has had a course of study that includes the likes of major figures such as Gellius, Galen, Aristides, Fronto; even Plutarch and Lucian are usually no more than a small and quickly passed over part of the graduate curriculum. Standard resources like the *Cambridge History of Greek Literature*, *Cambridge History of Latin Literature* (1985), or Conte's *Latin Literature: A History* fall off quickly in detail of treatment for authors after Pliny and Tacitus. Symptomatic is the history of Latin Silver Age literature by J. W. Duff (1931), which ends with Suetonius and treats the second century in an appendix of under ten pages; similarly, Lesky's *History of Greek Literature* (1957, 1963, trans. 1966) takes only ninety of its 900 pages for materials following the Hellenistic era. Duff and Lesky are, to be sure, now much out of date, but these two books were standard resources up through the 1980s, and bear witness to a long-held and still-influential view that "classical" Latin and Greek literature effectively ends with Pliny, Tacitus, and Plutarch. Albrecht Dihle's *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* is more even in coverage, but by its nature exceedingly summary (under 100 pages for the entirety of the second century). B. Reardon's magisterial *Courants littéraires grecs des I^{er} et III^{es} siècles après J.-C.*, which was never translated, is limited to Greek and strictly literary in its viewpoint, and is thereby not only out of date but also lacking much of the basic matter that today's student will need. T. Whitmarsh's excellent survey *The Second Sophistic* is in many respects the best summary overview for the student who lacks grounding in the era, but at eighty-nine pages it is necessarily limited in concept and scope.

The Handbook, then, attempts to serve a real need. For the student curious about the literary remains of the second century, and how those remains maybe relevant for his or her research, there is call for a

much more comprehensive and accessible overview of the principal texts from the period. The second century boasts an extremely valuable set of materials for all sorts of inquiries, many of particularly current interest (e.g., gender studies, cultural history of the body, sociology of literary culture, history of education and intellectualism, history of medicine, cultural linguistics), and yet most teachers as well as students of the Classics have only a dim idea of what these materials entail or how best to go about accessing them. Many of the authors from this period have large or very large corpora (e.g., Galen, Lucian, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Aristides, Cassius Dio, Appian) and practical guidance within those corpora would be a useful tool for the student new to this era. But in addition to content and bibliographical guidance, there is a strong need for a volume that helps to situate the textual remains within the period and its society, to describe and circumscribe not simply the literary matter but the literary culture and societal context. Thus we devote considerable space at the front to various contextual essays, and we have tasked all our authors with keeping the contextual demands in mind.

The creation of the volume has involved hard choices, and some are more strategic and practical than philosophical. Authors well treated in other handbook accounts are generally underplayed, or even omitted. It might have been, for instance, interesting to consider how Second Sophistic culture finds analogs within the work of authors like Martial and Juvenal (who do, however, get some attention in Richlin, chapter 8), or, differently, Tacitus. Despite the many hundreds of pages here, there remain authors who deserve treatment (Pseudo-Longinus and Julius Pollux are two obvious examples); the many technical treatises (Ptolemy and Aristides Quintilianus, for example) need situating within the era; an exploration of how the narratives here might intersect with the art and material culture of the age seems in order. With that said, our aim has been to offer a rich and varied exploration of social, literary, and intellectual history from the period, with emphasis on the core authors and movements usually associated with the era but with a broader range, as stated earlier. We make no claim for completeness. The Handbook is too hefty to serve

as a literal vade mecum, but we hope nonetheless that it will offer helpful guidance to that fascinating cultural era known as the Second Sophistic.

Why a Handbook to The Second Sophistic?

"To place men such as Favorinus and Aristides ... next to Protagoras, Hippias, Gorgias and Prodicus as their heirs is near to blasphemy:' Erwin Rohde's (1886) assessment of the sophists now smacks of racially tinged connoisseurship—a judgment rooted in an aesthetic conditioned to privilege the purity of the original model beside the derivative, belated copy. It is, as well, a limiting and distorting perspective, one that reduces the literary and cultural production of the early imperial period to a single manifestation and elides the diversity of early imperial intellectuals. The view of the Second Sophistic that animates this volume is more holistic and ecumenical than that of Philostratus and his successors. This Handbook assembles essays from a range of scholars whose competencies, we hope, to some extent reflect the variety of early imperial cultural production. Finally, in light of the recent surge of interest in the Second Sophistic, it is worth remembering how young the field is. In an important sense, Bowersock and Bowie inaugurated the serious study of the Second Sophistic only a generation ago and the contours of the field—our fundamental questions—are still very much contested. It is our hope that this volume of essays will enable another generation of scholars to see early imperial Greek and Latin cultural production in a way that allows for its complexity, heterogeneity, and ambiguity. <>

[Hadrian's Wall](#) by Adrian Goldsworthy [Basic Books, 9781541644427]

From an award-winning historian of ancient Rome, a definitive history of Hadrian's Wall. Stretching eighty miles from coast to coast across northern England, Hadrian's Wall is the largest Roman artifact known today. It is commonly viewed as a defiant barrier, the end of the empire, a place where civilization stopped and barbarism began. In fact, the massive structure remains shrouded in mystery. Was the wall intended to keep out the Picts, who inhabited the North? Or was it merely a symbol of Roman power and

wealth? What was life like for soldiers stationed along its expanse? How was the extraordinary structure built—with what technology, skills, and materials?

In [Hadrian's Wall](#), Adrian Goldsworthy embarks on a historical and archaeological investigation, sifting fact from legend while simultaneously situating the wall in the wider scene of Roman Britain. The result is a concise and enthralling history of a great architectural marvel of the ancient world.

CONTENTS
 CHRONOLOGY
 INTRODUCTION
 One: BRITANNIA: OUTPOST OF EMPIRE
 Two: HADRIAN: THE MAN, THE EMPEROR, AND THE GRAND DESIGN
 Three: BUILDING AND MANNING THE WALL: LEGIONS AND AUXILIA
 Four: FRESH MINDS: ANTONINUS PIUS TO SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS
 Five: THE ANATOMY OF HADRIAN'S WALL
 Six: FORTS AND TOWNS: SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS
 Seven: LIFE ON THE WALL
 Eight: HOW HADRIAN'S WALL WORKED: UNDERSTANDING THE EVIDENCE
 Nine: CHANGING TIMES AND THE END OF EMPIRE
 Ten: VISITING HADRIAN'S WALL
 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING
 APPENDIX: THE KNOWN AND PROBABLE GARRISONS OF THE FORTS ON HADRIAN'S WALL
 CREDITS
 NOTES
 INDEX

Excerpt:

'Just when you think you are at the world's end, you see a smoke from East to West as far as the eye can turn, and then, under it, also as far as the eye can stretch, houses and temples, shops and theatres, barracks and granaries, trickling along like dice behind—always behind—one long, low, rising and falling, and hiding and showing line of towers. And that is the Wall!' 'Ah!' said the children, taking breath.

'You may well,' said Parnesius. 'Old men who have followed the Eagles since boyhood say nothing in the Empire is more wonderful than first sight of the Wall!'

I suspect that hearing my father read these words to my brother and me at bedtime was the first time that I 'saw' the Wall. These days Kipling is not very fashionable, so I wonder how many children hear or read Puck of Pook's Hill, but I remember loving these stories of English history, and most of all the three chapters where Parnesius, centurion of the Thirtieth Legion, tells his story. The Romans have always had an appeal for me that is hard to explain, although part of it is that they came to where I lived, which made them somehow more real and part of 'my' history.

Parnesius was a likeable hero, as much a first-rate British subaltern in late-nineteenth-century India as he was a Roman officer, and his story was full of wars and battle, which always have a great pull on a boy's imagination. Reading the story now, some of it is odd, such as the appearance of the 'winged hats'—Vikings a few centuries early—to dominate the Picts and lead them against Hadrian's Wall, which they then try to capture tower by tower. Yet, as is often the case with Kipling, there are moments where you still feel that he found the essence of a time or place, and this passage is one of them. His Wall is a bit higher than the real thing, while so far there is no trace of a Roman theatre along it, and we now know that by the late fourth century, when the story is set, the civilian settlements outside forts were greatly diminished or had vanished altogether, and most of the turrets had been demolished. Even so, the picture he paints of a bustling, raucous community of soldiers and civilians drawn from all of the empire and now living on its distant northern frontier probably contains a lot of truth for much of the Wall's history.

In the years after hearing Parnesius's story, I have read more about the Wall, starting while still very young with Ladybird's Julius Caesar and Roman Britain, in which I crossed out the H from the label on the maps behind its front and back covers to rename the structure 'Adrian's Wall'. At the time this seemed hilarious. Later I moved on to ever more serious and scholarly works. My first visit came after wheedling my parents into diverting from the quickest route on the return journey from a family

holiday in the north of Scotland. Decades later, I am still reading and still learning, and have visited sites on the Wall many times, but that first glimpse described by Parnesius to the children in the story is always at the back of my mind. Hadrian's Wall is special, not only to those of us interested in Ancient Rome and the Roman army, but more widely.

Hadrian's Wall, begun c. AD 122 and on which work continued for much of the next two decades, stretched for some seventy-three miles (118 km) from coast to coast across northern Britain. Although this is impressive, in size it is dwarfed by the complex of fortifications making up what we know as the Great Wall of China, which was also in use for far longer than the 'mere' three centuries or so of Hadrian's Wall. The Wall lay on the fringe of Roman Britain, itself on the fringes of the Roman Empire, the frontiers of which ran for thousands of miles, along great rivers, through mountains and deserts. Hadrian's Wall was one small component of the empire's border control and defence, and rarely would it have occupied the thoughts of the emperors who ruled this vast empire.

All this is true, but the Wall is still special because it is unlike any other Roman frontier. Nowhere else were the defences so elaborate or monumental in scale, nor is there so much archaeology to see in so small an area. In a way, the Wall figures larger in our sense of the Roman world than it surely did to the Romans, much as provincial and rather vulgar Pompeii and the more sophisticated Herculaneum have shaped our ideas of Roman city life and art because of the catastrophe that led to their remarkable preservation. Because so much of the ancient world is lost forever, the sites that survive often assume far greater importance than they ever possessed when they were living communities. In 1987, Hadrian's Wall was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site (incorporated into the broader Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site in 2005), which acknowledged its importance. Over 90 percent of it is now invisible on the ground, and yet even so it is the largest of the many monuments left by the Roman Empire and one of the most famous.

It is also one of the most frequently visited, drawing people to walk the Hadrian's Wall path or look at the excavated remains of forts and the Wall itself.

If it lacks the intimate detail and dramatic story of Pompeii and Herculaneum, or the obvious history and importance of Rome itself, or the spectacle of theatres, amphitheatres, temples, or aqueducts dotted around the old empire, still tens of thousands come every year to see it. Most go to the central sector, where more of the Wall is exposed and it snakes across a landscape of dramatic ridges and crags. It is very rare to see a photograph of other sections of the Wall, so people are usually surprised to learn that for most of its length it crossed gentler rolling countryside, or that in the far west, its last few miles ran close to the sea along the shore of the Solway Firth. The Wall itself was also part of a much larger network that included military bases, towns, and roads to the north and south, and military installations along the Cumbrian coast in the west. Because it was occupied by the Romans for the best part of three hundred years, generations of soldiers and civilians, of provincials and local peoples lived their lives on and around the Wall and the broad military zone it created.

In most people's minds the purpose of any wall is fairly simple, especially one of the sheer size of Hadrian's Wall. A wall is a barrier, dividing one side from the other, and for many the idea persists that it was built 'to keep the Scots out'—or Picts, for those with slightly more sense of history.

Hadrian's Wall can be seen as the end of the empire, where civilization stopped and barbarism began—although today's fashionable hostility to empires no doubt will incline many to sympathise more with the so-called barbarians.

Archaeologists know that the truth is different and a good deal more complicated, but they will also admit that there is much about the Wall, its purpose, and its operation that we do not understand. Only a tiny fraction of the literature of the ancient world has survived into the modern era. These texts mention Hadrian's Wall no more than a handful of times, and the sole surviving statement about its purpose claims that Hadrian built the Wall 'to separate the barbarians from the Romans.' The comment is brief and was written down some two hundred years later by an author notorious for his inaccuracy and inventions, so that it is a sign of the extreme poverty of sources that we make use

of it at all. It is only in recent years that we have evidence that it may indeed have been named after the emperor who ordered its construction, although using his family name Aelius rather than Hadrianus. The Vallum Aelium or 'Wall of Aelius' kept this name for only a generation or so, and afterwards was called simply the Valium.

Hadrian's Wall can only be understood by examination of its physical remains, backed by inscriptions, finds from the sites along it, and comparison with what we understand of the Roman army and the Roman world from other places and sources. Yet no other Roman frontier was quite like Hadrian's Wall, making direct analogy difficult, while debates over its function strike to the heart of wider debates over how the Roman Empire worked. Excavation has provided a lot of information, even though older reports are often frustratingly vague in their recording and the result of less sophisticated methods. Archaeological investigation is expensive, and these days, funding is in short supply and work on the Wall less fashionable than it deserves to be. Even so, where work occurs, it continues to produce surprises that fundamentally alter our understanding of the Wall.

Frustratingly incomplete as our evidence is, we face an even greater problem because almost all of it deals solely with the Roman side of things. The Iron Age peoples living to the north of the Wall are poorly understood. Roman sources give us the names of tribes and some places, but we can never be sure whether these reflect the reality, because outsiders so often misunderstand other cultures. Far more settlements have been located than used to be known, suggesting that at least some parts of what would become Scotland were relatively densely populated, while environmental evidence suggests that some regions were also extensively cultivated for some of the Roman period. Iron Age sites are difficult to date with the sort of precision that might allow us to relate developments in settlement north of the Wall to the Roman frontier's purpose and day-to-day functioning.

We really do not know enough about the political and military practices of the tribes to describe the threat they posed to the Romans—or for that matter the threat the Romans posed to them. Wars were fought between the Romans and the tribes in

the second, third, and fourth centuries AD, but, as we shall see, very little is known about any of them. Raiding appears to have been common—perhaps universal—in Iron Age Europe, so we would expect to find this small-scale military activity in northern Britain, but extending what we know of ‘Celtic’ society elsewhere (which in itself comes largely from the viewpoint of Greco-Roman outsiders) to the peoples of the north must only be done with caution. Linguistic links may not necessarily reflect a common political and military culture, but in the end we simply do not know. Thus, we must do our best to reconstruct the story of Hadrian’s Wall, knowing that at most we have mere glimpses of only one side of the story. Whatever military threat existed—or was perceived by the Romans—can only be conjectured by looking at the methods they used to deal with it.

With Hadrian’s Wall there are few definite answers, many theories, and even more questions. This book cannot hope to explore them all in detail, but its aim is to give an idea of how scholars try to understand the Wall and its place in the wider history of Roman Britain. Rather than qualify every statement, sometimes the book will reflect my own judgement on the most likely interpretation, but the works cited in Suggestions for Further Reading at the end of the book will allow interested readers access to the considerable literature on each subject.

My central premise is that Hadrian’s Wall and all the installations associated with it were intended to assist the Roman army in performing the tasks assigned to it in northern Britain. Soldiers were not there to serve the Wall, but the Wall was there to serve them. This may seem obvious, but there is always a danger that physical remains take over our thoughts at the expense of the human beings whose activities and lives leave less tangible reminders. The sheer scale and longevity of Hadrian’s Wall make it clear that it performed a practical function and that—at least most of the time—it performed it well. That much we can say with confidence, but understanding just what that function was and how it developed over time is much like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle when most of the pieces are missing and without the picture on the box to serve as a guide. <>

[New Perspectives on Late Antiquity](#) edited by David Hernández de la Fuente [Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 9781443827188]

Perhaps it is fully justified to think of Late Antiquity (3rd-7th centuries) as the first Renaissance of the Classical World. This period can be considered a fundamental landmark for the transmission of the Classical Legacy and the transition between the ancient and the medieval individual. During Late Antiquity the Classical Education or *enkyklios paideia* of Hellenism was linked definitively to the Judeo-Christian and Germanic elements that have modelled the Western World. The present volume combines diverse interests and methodologies with a single purpose unity and diversity, as a Neo-Platonic motto providing an overall picture of the new means of researching Late Antiquity. This collective endeavour, stemming from the 2009 1st International Congress on Late Antiquity in Segovia (Spain), focuses not only on the analysis of new materials and latest findings, but rather puts together different perspectives offering a scientific update and a dialogue between several disciplines. *New Perspectives on Late Antiquity* contains two main sections 1. Ancient History and Archaeology, and 2. Philosophy and Classical Studies including both overview papers and case studies. Among the contributors to this volume are some of the most relevant scholars in their fields, including P. Brown, J. Alvar, P. Barceló, C. Codoñer, F. Fronterotta, D. Gigli, F. Lisi and R. Sanz.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface: *New Perspectives on Late Antiquity* by David Hernández de la Fuente (Universidad Carlos III / Universität Potsdam)

Key Note Paper: *The Field of Late Antiquity* by Peter Brown (Princeton)
Part I: Ancient History and Archaeology
OVERVIEW PAPERS

The Deconstruction of the Emperor in the IVth Century by Pedro Barceló (Universität Potsdam)

Paganism and Christianity during the 4th Century: Crossed Influence by Jaime Alvar (Universidad Carlos III)

The Seclusion of the Orator and the Decline of Hellenistic Paideia in the Christian Empire by Rosa Sanz Serrano (Universidad Complutense)

Oriental Trade in the Iberian Peninsula during Late Antiquity (4th-7th Centuries AD): An archaeological perspective by Enrique García Vargas (Universidad de Sevilla)

CASE STUDIES

New Findings of Late Antiquity in a Town of the Vascones Area (Los Banales de Uncastillo, Zaragoza, Spain) by Javier Andreu, María J. Peréx and Juan José Bienes (UNED)

Anti-Germanism in Constantinople or the Revolt of Gainas? By Eike Faber (Universität Potsdam)

The Possibilities for Financial Gain in Lusitania during Late Antiquity by Marta González Herrero (Universidad de Oviedo):

Coins and Power in Rome: Political Ideology in the 4th Century by Cláudio U. Carlan (Universidad Federal de Alfenas / Minas Gerais)

Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fourth Punic War by David Alvarez Jiménez (Universidad Complutense)

From villae to villulae: Settlement and Social Organization in Late Antique Hispanic Countryside by Saúl Martín González (Universidad Complutense)

New Lines of Enquiry in the Study of the Late Antiquity of Baetica (I): The Christianisation of the Rural Landscape by Francisco José García Fernández and Jerónimo Sánchez Velasco (Universidad de Sevilla)

New Lines of Enquiry in the Study of the Late Antiquity of Baetica (II):

Archaeological Topography of the City of Córdoba by Jerónimo Sánchez Velasco (Universidad de Sevilla)

Late Roman Metallurgy in Castro of El Castellón (Santa Eulalia de Tábara, Zamora) by Jose Carlos Sastre Blanco (Universidad de Granada) and Patricia Fuentes Melgar (Universidad Complutense)

Part II: Philosophy and Classical Studies
OVERVIEW PAPERS

How Original was Neoplatonism in the Platonic Tradition? By Francisco L. Lisi (Universidad Carlos III)

On the One and the Diverse: Pervigilium Veneris by Carmen Codoñer (Universidad de Salamanca)

John of Gaza and the Late Antique Greek Ekphrastic Poetry by Daria Gigli (Università di Firenze)

The One and the Many and the Circular Movement: Neo-Platonism and Poetics in Nonnus of Panopolis by David Hernández de la Fuente (Universidad Carlos III/ Universität Postdam)

Rhetoric, Satire and Encyclopaedia in Martianus Capella by Paula Olmos (Universidad Carlos III)

CASE STUDIES

Plotinus' Nous and the Timaeus'

Demiourgos: The Generation of the Sensible World in Enneades VI 7 [38] 1-3 by Francesco Fronterotta (Università di Lecce)

Dionysism in Late Antiquity: The Three Dionysos in the Dionysiaca by Rosa García-Gasco (Universidad Carlos III)

Christian Assimilation of "Pagan" Elements: An Apologetic Concept? Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui (Universidad Complutense)

New Perspectives for the Laterculus of Polemius Silvius by David Paniagua (Universidad de Salamanca)

Towards a New Critical Edition of Emporius' Work by Luigi Pirovano (Università di Milano)

Late Antique (Paideia) and the Greek Fathers: A Survey by Aglae Pizzone (Università di Milano)

Aesopic Tradition and Rabbinic Literature by Lorena Miralles (Universidad de Granada)

Bibliography
Contributors

Excerpt:

New Perspectives on Late Antiquity by David Hernández De La Fuente

It is essential for the History of Ideas to consider how the cultural legacy of Classical Antiquity was transmitted and reinterpreted as a faithful reflection of each epoch in order to understand the key moments of change in the history of mankind. Be it from the general viewpoint of history or the more particular fields of history of religions, literature, or philosophy, any cultural transformation of the Western World, as W. Jaeger has put it, has included a reinterpretation of the classical legacy, when it has not been directly caused by it.

Perhaps it is fully justified to think of Late Antiquity (3rd-7th centuries) as a first Renaissance of the Classical World. If we understand this concept as recreation and reaffirmation of the given cultural tradition that is recognized as the prestigious source of our civilization, this period can be then considered a fundamental landmark for the transmission of classical legacy. It was no doubt a time of drastic changes between two different conceptions of the world, which gave way to what would be the medieval Christian World in both the East and the West. In any case, it is during Late Antiquity when the classical heritage of the Hellenic *enkyklios paideia* was linked definitively to the Judaeo-Christian and Germanic elements that have modeled the Western World.

During the last half-century scholars have devoted great academic interest to the diverse impact of the cultural, historical and spiritual transformations of this period throughout the Mediterranean basin. The period known as Late Antiquity, after the pioneering coinage of the term *Spätantike* by A. Riegl (1901), has been the subject of intense and fruitful scientific debate among historians, philosophers and philologists in the last thirty years.

No doubt, Peter Brown is the most conspicuous scholar in this area of study, of which he has been a founder and promoter since his famous book *The World of Late Antiquity* (London 1971). Throughout his many books, from his biography of Augustine of Hippo until his essay *Authority and the Sacred* (1995) and beyond, Professor Brown has always upheld the interdisciplinary study of this distinct period, with special emphasis on the interaction between the changing society and the private spiritual life. Other authors (Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, London and New York 1993) have also promoted this label. More recent critics, however (B. Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*, Oxford, 2005) have questioned it as corresponding to the interests of the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic scholarship.

In any case, the differential validity of a study of this period has been already established enough in several disciplines, from history and philology to archeology. Issues such as the emergence of Christianity along with the booming of Neo-

Platonism, the economic crisis and the crisis of values, the movement of population, the ethnic and linguistic contacts and many other factors of this time of change have marked its analysis.

Particularly in the realm of the spiritual, from the seminal study of E.R. Dodds (*Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, Cambridge 1968), many efforts have been devoted by the scholarship to clarify the concepts not only of religious change and cult syncretism (cf. e.g. W. Fauth, *Helios megistos: zur synkretistischen Theologie der Spätantike*, Leiden 1995), but also of a certain "fundamentalism" *avant la lettre* (cf. P. Barceló, ed., *Religiöser Fundamentalismus in der römischer Kaiserzeit*, Stuttgart, 2010.) Thought and literature especially reflect a new aesthetic sensibility and a peculiar interpretation of the traditional legacy of Hellenism in the light of new philosophical and spiritual trends. As for literary studies, it should be also noted that the rhetoricalization of the educational system results in a noticeable increase of the importance of certain literary instructors and schools throughout the Eastern Empire.

Nowadays, the interdisciplinary study of Late Antiquity is offering important materials for a better understanding of the most influential phenomena of this period of change in historical, socio-political and spiritual dynamics (see works such as G.W. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar, *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World*, Cambridge, 1999). More than ever, it is necessary to work on this period from the joint point of view of philology, philosophy and social and religious history in order to provide a transversal analysis of the transformations of the classical legacy that shaped the foundations of Western civilization.

However, new trends in the study of Late Antiquity, and the reactions for and against, require a periodical scientific update. In this sense, and following the aforementioned studies, the present volume proposes a periodical overall approach to Late Antiquity beyond traditional boundaries between academic disciplines: History, Classical and Semitic philology, History of Philosophy and Archeology. A scientific update from a cross-sectional view gathered in a single volume.

Thus, the collective book presented here under the title *New Perspectives on Late Antiquity* combines

the diverse interests and the common desire of the contributors -unity and diversity, as a Neo-Platonic inspiration— and aims at providing an overall picture of this era, with particular attention to the texts and sources that testify the historical contamination of cultures, religions and languages, and their reflection upon literature and thought. This book focuses not only on the analysis of new materials and latest findings -as, for example, the new contributions of archeology-, but rather puts together the different pieces of this mosaic of materials and offers a dialogue from a plural perspective.

The origin of this volume is in the First International Congress "New Perspectives on Late Antiquity," which was held in Segovia (Spain), 21-23 October 2009, and has now taken shape here. This colloquium opened a series of international conferences that intend to regularly gather prestigious researchers from different universities and research centers to foster an academic debate on the current state of our knowledge about Late Antiquity. This series of meetings in the town of Segovia is not only a forum for scientific update, but also a meeting of international academic reflection and discussion about this historical period.

The present monograph consists of two sections, which include overview papers and case studies, introduced by a key note paper on the field of Late Antiquity by Professor Peter Brown. The first section summarizes the contributions of Ancient History and Archaeology, among which there is a historical study of Pedro Barceló on the demise of imperial power, an analysis of cultural interaction between paganism and Christianity by Jaime Alvar, a picture of the decline of rhetoric and the social role of rhetoric in Late Antiquity, by Rosa Sanz and, last, a scientific update about the latest archaeological evidences of the trade to the Mediterranean (4th to 7th centuries) by Enrique Garcia Vargas. The case studies of a select group of Spanish, German and Brazilian scholars (Javier Andreu, Maria J. Pérex, Eike Faber and Marta Herrero among others), present a very enriching variety of historical and archaeological issues, ranging from conflicts between Germans and Romans to the economic and social history of Late Antique Hispania.

As to the second section on Philosophy and Classical Studies, the general papers provide an overview of the position of Neo-Platonism between tradition and innovation in the History of Ideas, with an assessment of its insertion in the Platonic tradition by Francisco Lisi and three comprehensive studies on the reflection of philosophy upon Greek and Latin literature. The first of them, by Carmen Codoner, examines the *Pervigilium Veneris* between unity and diversity in the framework of the Latin Poetry of the fourth century. Two Late Antique Greek poets, Nonnus of Panopolis and John of Gaza, illustrate the impact of Neo-Platonic ideas in poetic ekphrasis, as it can be seen in the contribution of Daria Gigli and in my own paper. And a Latin Encyclopaedist, the fifth-century African pagan Martianus Capella in Paula Olmos' paper, exemplifies the boundaries between Rhetorics and Neoplatonic contents in Late Antiquity. As for case studies, presented by several Italian and Spanish scholars such as Francesco Fronterotta or Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui among others, they reveal an interesting panorama of the philosophical and literary trends of the time, examining the contamination not only of genres and categories, such as rhetoric, mythology and apologetics, but also of cultural traditions as Platonism, classical paganism, Christianity or Judaism. <>

[Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan](#)
edited by Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck,
and Enrico Morano [Wissenschaftliche
Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Mohr
Siebeck, 978316154531]

While there has been much scholarly attention devoted to the Enochic Book of the Watchers, much less has been paid to the Book of Giants from Qumran. This volume is the proceedings of a conference that convened in Munich, Germany, in June 2014, which was devoted to the giants of Enochic tradition and the Qumran Book of Giants. It engages the topic of the giants in relation to various ancient contexts, including the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and ancient Mesopotamia. The authors of this volume give attention to Manichaeism, especially the Manichaean Book of Giants, fragments of which were found in Turfan (western China). They

contribute to our understanding of the range of stories Jews told in antiquity about the sons of the watchers who descended to earth and their vibrant Nachleben in Manichaeism. [\[see below\]](#)

[The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary](#) by Loren T. Stuckenbruck [Texte Und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum, 978316146720] (English and Hebrew Edition)

While there has been much scholarly attention devoted to the Enochic Book of the Watchers, much less has been paid to the Book of Giants from Qumran. This volume is the proceedings of a conference that convened in Munich, Germany, in June 2014, which was devoted to the giants of Enochic tradition and in particular the Qumran Book of Giants. It engages the topic of the giants in relation to various ancient contexts, including the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and ancient Mesopotamia. The authors of this volume give particular attention to Manichaeism, especially the Manichaean Book of Giants, fragments of which were found in Turfan (western China). They make an important contribution to our understanding of the range of stories Jews told in antiquity about the sons of the watchers who descended to earth and their vibrant Nachleben in Manichaeism.

Contributors: Joseph L. Angel, Amanda M. Davis Bledsoe, Brian R. Doak, Ida Fröhlich, Matthew Goff, Gábor Kósa, Enrico Morano, Samantha Newington, John C. Reeves, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Michael Tuval, Jens Wilkens

[The Book of the Giants: The Manichean and The Dead Sea Scroll Apocryphal Versions](#) by W. B. Henning, Fabio R. Araujo [International Alliance Pro-Publishing, 9781609420048]

This book contains 2 versions of the Book of the Giants, a manuscript which tells the story of the fallen angels and their giant sons.

[The Books of Enoch: The Angels, The Watchers and The Nephilim: With Extensive Commentary on the Three Books of Enoch, the Fallen Angels, the Calendar of Enoch, and Daniel's Prophecy](#) by Joseph Lumpkin [Fifth Estate, 9781936533664]

The work of Joseph Lumpkin has been enlarged to include new research on the Books of Enoch, Fallen

Angels, the Watchers, and the Nephilim. After presenting extensive historical backgrounds and sound translations of The First, Second, and Third Books of Enoch, Lumpkin attempts to piece together a historical narrative of Fallen Angels, the Watcher, and the Nephilim, by comparing ancient texts. The history of the Fallen Angels integrated using such books as Enoch, Jasher, Jubilees, The Book of Giants, The War Scrolls, and others. The story is astonishing to reveal a secret history of the mythical backstory to apocalyptic Judaism and with echoes in New Testament frames of who was Jesus. Lumpkin explores new information on the First Book of Enoch. He describes the Calendar of Enoch and its pivotal place in the prophecy of Daniel. He takes First Enoch apart, section-by-section to describe its history, the time frame of authorship, and its contents. Copious notes and references are included throughout.

This volume, containing The First Book of Enoch (The Ethiopic Book of Enoch), The Second Book of Enoch (The Slavonic Secrets of Enoch), The Third Book of Enoch (The Hebrew Book of Enoch), and The Book of Fallen Angels, The Watchers, and the Origins of Evil. There is an expanded Commentary for the three books of Enoch, as well as the sections on Angels, Prophecies and the Enochian Calendar.

Excerpt: The essays in [Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan](#) constitute the proceedings of a conference, the "Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan." This was the first colloquium devoted specifically to the giants of Enochic tradition. As scholars of Second Temple Judaism are aware, over the past generation there has been a tremendous rise of interest in Enochic literature and traditions.' In terms of scholarly attention devoted to 1 Enoch and related texts, researchers have naturally focused on the watchers myth, the descent of two hundred angels to earth. They have sex with women who sire children, who are commonly referred to as giants. The sons of the watchers, according to the Enochic Book of Watchers, were dangerous and violent "bastards" who rampaged across the earth, killing humans and even eating them (1 En. 10:9). This disturbing violence is presented as the iniquity that arose on the earth which triggered Noah's flood. This tale, it is now widely recognized, was popular in antiquity and it

has been studied from a variety of perspectives. Our conference was born out of the conviction that the giants deserve to be a more central topic of consideration in on-going scholarly discussion on Enochic literature. The crimes of the giants have often been considered in terms of the question of the "origin of evil," a major theme of scholarly interest in Enochic literature and apocalypticism in general. Despite the growth of scholarship on Enochic literature and traditions, many basic questions and issues regarding the sons of the watchers require further analysis. Why are the children of the angels "giants" and how should we understand what a "giant" is? What, because of the clues that are provided in Enochic literature, did people at that time think these giants looked like? While there has been much interest in exploring the Mesopotamian cultural background of the watchers, what Mesopotamian texts and traditions can better illuminate the giants of Enochic tradition? How the giants of Enochic tradition should be understood in relation to the gigantes and Titans of Greek tradition has also, surprisingly, been relatively infrequently a topic of scholarly reflection. There are other basic questions regarding the Enochic giants that deserve more exploration.

The "Tales of Giants" conference sought to assemble scholars who wanted to investigate in particular the fragmentary Aramaic composition from Qumran known as the Book of Giants! While most of the textual fragments associated with this composition were published in 2000 and 2001, there has been relatively little scholarship devoted to this work! No monograph has been published on this composition since the official edition of the relevant fragments has been published. With the Book of Giants, one must wrestle with a host of textual and reconstructive issues, owing to the poor state of preservation of the relevant fragments (see the article by Stuckenbruck in this volume). It is thus a matter of scholarly debate how one understands the basic narrative and plot of the work. Fundamental questions such as the function of this document, or who may have produced it, deserve more attention. Also, there should be more assessment in terms of what the composition contributes to our understanding of Enochic tradition and the reception of the watchers myth in antiquity. While the Book of Giants clearly adapts tropes

about the giants found in the Book of Watchers, several of the narrative elements of the text have no analogue in Watchers. For example, much of the extant plot of Giants revolves around two giants who are brothers (Ohyah and Hahyah) and the visions they receive through dreams (4Q530 2 ii). The giants do not have visions in Watchers. The Qumran Book of Giants presents new opportunities to understand the variety of stories people told in antiquity about the sons of the watchers. The "Tales of Giants" conference and the subsequent proceedings are not intended to provide a final answer to such questions but rather to encourage further study of the Sons of the watchers.

The second distinctive feature [Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan](#) is that these essays are both collaborative efforts by scholars of ancient Judaism and Manichaeism. The colloquium near Munich is, to the best of our knowledge, the first devoted to bringing scholars of both traditions together. Manichaeism is an important religion of late antiquity that constitutes a unique synthesis of a variety of traditions, including Persian religion, the gnostic tradition, and Jewish apocalypticism. It flourished in the West and the East, with evidence for the spread of this religion attested from Rome to China. Manichaeism is generally not an important topic of study among scholars in the field of Second Temple Judaism. Experts in this area have, however, come to recognize the value of studying sources that date much later than the Second Temple period itself, such as the writings of the Church Fathers or rabbinic midrash, since such materials may preserve forms of traditions that flourished before the turn of the common era. By and large this insight has not been applied to Manichaeism by scholars of ancient Judaism. One of the overarching ideas that shaped the "Tales of Giants" conference is that scholars of both traditions can benefit from inter-disciplinary dialogue. This is particularly clear with regard to the giants. It had long been known through canon lists of the Manichaean scriptures that among them was a work entitled the Book of Giants. But for a long time very little was known about this text. This changed when an important site of Manichaean documents, written in a variety of Central Asian languages such as Sogdian, Uyghur (Old Turkic), and Middle Persian, was discovered around 1900

in Turfan, in western China, in what is now Xinjiang Province. Among this horde of texts are fragmentary remains of what appears to be the Manichaean Book of Giants. These fragments were published by the Iranist Walter Henning in the 1940s.

Milik realized in the 1970s that the Turfan Book of Giants not only contained direct references to Enochic traditions, such as the descent of the watchers and the figure of Enoch himself, but also that the composition includes details that resonate with the Qumran Book of Giants much more than Watchers or other Enochic texts. For example, several of the names of the giants, such as Ohyah and Mahaway, found only in the Qumran scrolls in the Book of Giants, also appear as the names of sons of angels in the Turfan Book of Giants. In fact, the name Milik gave to the Qumran Book of Giants is based on that of the Manichaean composition. Milik's awareness of the Turfan giant fragments was critical for his realization that the Qumran fragments now classified as the Book of Giants constitute a distinct composition. While some scholars of Second Temple Judaism have, following Milik's original insight, turned to the Manichaean Book of Giants when interpreting the Qumran Book of Giants, in particular Stuckenbruck and Reeves, there needs to be further analysis with regard to the parallels between the two works, as well as more exploration as to how and why the Turfan work, generally regarded as later translations of a Book of Giants originally written by Mani, appropriated and transformed Enochic traditions. Also merited is a more extensive review of the Turfan horde in general to assess what other texts and traditions it contains that may be relevant to the study of Second Temple Judaism. For example, the Turfan corpus includes a version of the instruction of Ahiqar and a story about the figure of Daniel, as well as several biblical psalms, all in the Sogdian language, none of which to my knowledge has been substantively examined by scholars of ancient Judaism. The editors hope that the present volume will be received as one step toward future collaboration among experts of ancient Judaism and Manichaeism, borne out of the perspective that dialogue and exchange of ideas can help scholarship better understand the Enochic traditions of ancient Judaism and their reception,

and how Jewish and scriptural traditions in general were appropriated and transformed in the Manichaean tradition.

The essays in [Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan](#) fall into three sections. Part One is entitled "Gibborim and Gigantes: Antecedents, Reception, and Comparative Contexts from the Hebrew Bible and Greek Literature." It begins with an essay by Brian R. Doak, who is well known for his scholarship on giants in the Hebrew Bible. In "The Giant in a Thousand Years: Tracing Narratives of Gigantism in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond" he argues that the giant serves several thematic functions in the literature of the Hebrew Bible: "the giant as divine or semi-divine figure, as anti-law and anti-king, as elite adversary and elite animal, as unruly vegetation, and as the defeated past." He examines major texts such as Gen 6:1-4 and also the accounts in the Hebrew Bible of the Rephaim, the colossal aboriginal inhabitants of Canaan. A common function of giants in this literature is that they help demarcate various types of boundaries, such as a distinction between one historical period and another, or help signify one group as favored and another as rejected (Israel vis-à-vis Canaan). Doak applies these insights to the giants of Early Judaism. He stresses that stories about giants from this period are not simply entertaining tales but also that these giants "seem to encode a broadly applicable political theology" and were employed to signify different social actors, particularly political enemies of Israel such as the Roman Empire.

Samantha Newington, in her article "Greek Titans and Biblical Giants," encourages the appreciation of the diversity of Titan traditions in Greek mythology. Their presentation in Orphic tradition, as evident from authors such as Nonnus and Olympiodorus, is quite different from the account of the Titans in Hesiod's Theogony. Olympiodorus, for example, claims that humankind was formed from the ashes of the Titans, whom Zeus punished for dismembering Dionysus. The author examines Hesiod's account of the Titans and finds a number of thematic parallels between them and the Enochic giants; both, for example, are perpetrators of excessive violence. The author also explores broad affinities between the Orphic tradition and

Christianity, including themes such as punishment and original sin.

The last article of Part One is by Michael Tuval. His article based on (Prov 21:16): "The Giants in the Jewish Literature in Greek," offers a helpful survey of the term "giant" in ancient Jewish literature. His review incorporates a wide range of Greek materials, including the Wisdom of Solomon, 3 Maccabees, Baruch, 3 Baruch, Pseudo-Eupolemus, the Sibylline Oracles, and the writings of Philo and Josephus. He concludes that the basic contours of the watchers myth were available to Jewish authors writing in Greek, and that they express a range of reactions to this story, some positive, some negative.

Part Two of the volume focuses on giants in their late Second Temple Jewish context. The articles in this section examine texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Book of Watchers, and Daniel. The first essay of this section is by Joseph L. Angel. His essay, "The Humbling of the Arrogant and the 'Wild Man' and 'Tree Stump' Traditions in the Book of Giants and Daniel 4," engages the relationship between Enochic and Danielic traditions. Angel seeks to show that the points of similarity between Daniel and the Qumran Book of Giants are more extensive than the well established parallel regarding their throne-theophanies (see the essay by Bledsoe). He focuses on the visions in Giants recounted in 4Q530 2 ii, one of which involves the destruction of trees (1L 6-12; Hahyah's vision) and Daniel 4, which contains a vision of a tree that is chopped down and the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar into a wild man removed from human society. Angel argues that both Giants and Daniel re-work older Mesopotamian traditions that are appropriated in Daniel 4 to polemicize against Babylonian kingship. This suggests that Giants can be analogously understood as developing anti-imperialist formulations of Mesopotamian tradition in the Hellenistic age.

Amanda M. Davis Bledsoe, in her "Throne Theophanies, Dream Visions, and Righteous(?) Seers: Daniel, the Book of Giants, and 1 Enoch Reconsidered," offers a close analysis of the throne theophany disclosed in a vision to the giant Ohyah (4Q530 2 ii 15-20). This passage includes several details that are quite similar to the throne

theophany which is part of the vision of the four beasts in Daniel (7:9-10) and also to the account in Watchers of Enoch's journey to the heavenly throne room (1 Enoch 14). These parallels have been noted and constitute a key focus of scholarship on the Qumran Book of Giants. Bledsoe helpfully reviews the major parallels between these texts and leading scholarly assessments of them. While previous studies have focused on the question of influence and how to trace a line of development regarding the throne visions of Watchers, Giants, and Daniel, she prefers to examine the function and purpose of these visions in their respective texts.

Ida Fröhlich, in her essay "Giants and Demons," examines the watchers of Enochic tradition and their sons the giants. She emphasizes that these figures should be interpreted against the background of Mesopotamian culture. This is particularly the case with regard to demons. Watchers offers an etiology of evil spirits and asserts that they originated as the spirits of the giants, whose physical bodies were destroyed for their crimes (1 Enoch 15). Fröhlich argues that the descriptions of the giants in Watchers and Giants draw upon Mesopotamian demonological traditions as evident in cuneiform texts such as Utukku Lernnutu. She also stresses that the watchers myth should be understood in terms of the origin of evil, which the author associates with impurity.

The article by Matthew Goff, "The Sons of the Watchers in the Book of Watchers and the Qumran Book of Giants: Contexts and Prospects," lays out a series of questions and topics that deserve more scholarly reflection with regard to the Qumran Book of Giants and the broader topic of the sons of the watchers in ancient Judaism. The article also explores the value of the Manichaean Book of Giants for the study of the Qumran Book of Giants. He argues that instances in the Qumran text in which characters express a fear of death and acknowledge sin, which are too fragmentary in terms of the extant Qumran fragments of the document themselves to interpret sufficiently, can be better understood by turning to the Manichaean Book of Giants. In one fragment of this work (Mainz 344a) one giant (Sahm) explicitly expresses remorse for his previous crimes and prays for

forgiveness. It is plausible to argue that in the Qumran composition some giants may have likewise acknowledged their sins and may have even asked for forgiveness. The Qumran Book of Giants problematizes the widely held view that the giants of Enochic tradition were always regarded in the late Second Temple period as heinous, evil creatures who deservedly perished in the flood for their crimes.

Loren T. Stuckenbruck, in his "The Book of Giants among the Dead Sea Scrolls: Considerations of Method and a New Proposal on the Reconstruction of 4Q530," tackles the difficult issue of the material reconstruction of the Qumran Book of Giants. He stresses that the physical textual evidence should guide reconstruction of the narrative whenever possible. Stuckenbruck puts forward a possible sequence of the extant fragments of Giants. Among these texts 4Q530 is crucial. Fragments of this manuscript preserve remnants of three sequential columns, which contain the core of the extant narrative of the composition, which centers on visions disclosed to the brothers Hahyah and Ohyah. Stuckenbruck, applying Stegemann's method of material reconstruction, suggests that these important columns occurred near the end of the scroll.

Part Three is devoted to essays that explore the reception and transformation of Enochic giant traditions in Manichaeism. Gábor Kósa, in his "The Book of Giants Tradition in the Chinese Manichaica," offers an extensive and insightful discussion of Manichaean written and visual texts from China. While such materials are far removed from the ken of most biblical scholars, Kósa adroitly demonstrates that scholars of Enochic literature should be interested in Chinese Manichaean sources. He shows that a recently discovered corpus of Manichaean texts from Xiapu (Fujian) preserves in Chinese, as mediated through Middle Persian, the names of the four archangels who defeat the rebellious watchers and their sons in 1 Enoch: Raphael, Michael, Sariel, and Gabriel. Moreover, in recent years a medieval silk Chinese painting has emerged that provides a visual depiction of the intricate and nuanced Manichaean conception of the cosmos. It has long been known that among the scriptures of this religion was a so-called Picture-

Book, which consisted of illustrations that helped explain the complicated details of Manichaean cosmology. It appears that the silk painting, which Kósa calls the "Cosmology Painting," is a medieval version of the late antique Manichaean 'scriptural' book of images. Several images from this painting are available at the end of Kósa's article. Since Enochic traditions were an important influence on Mani's thought, this silk painting constitutes an important resource not simply for understanding Manichaean cosmology but also how Manichaeans adapted and incorporated Enochic tropes, including the giants, in the formulation of their cosmological beliefs.

The article by Enrico Morano, "Some New Sogdian Fragments Related to Mani's Book of Giants and the Problem of the Influence of Jewish Enochic Literature," publishes for the first time two Turfan fragments written in Sogdian. One of them discusses the giants and mentions the name Sahm several times; this is also the name of a giant in the Manichaean Book of Giants which, according to Text H, is a Sogdian rendering of Ohya, a name which in turn derives from that of Ohyah known from the Qumran Book of Giants. This newly published fragment may be from the Turfan giants book. Marano also illustrates the reception of Enochic tradition in Sogdian literature by publishing a text written in this language entitled the "Autumn Sermon." While it is not clear that this text should be identified as a fragment of the Manichaean Book of Giants, the document likely has some connection to Enochic tradition, since it discusses stars that have been bound and imprisoned.

The essay by John C. Reeves, "Jacob of Edessa and the Manichaean Book of Giants?," examines and makes available a translation of a little known scholion to Gen 6:1-4 in Syriac by Jacob of Edessa. This scholion describes the giants dying before the flood by waging war against one another. This resonates with the major Enochic trope that the giants perished by fighting one another in a 'war of destruction' (1 En. 10:9). The Syriac text preserves the traditions that large heaps of the bones of the giants remained on the earth until the flood and that the earth was formed with their excrement. The scholion asserts that foolish and heretical people believe such fables. Reeves

plausibly argues that this document constitutes important evidence for the watchers myth in Syriac Christianity and that Jacob had access to traditions found in 1 Enoch and Jubilees. Reeves also suggests that the heretical people mentioned in the text is a direct reference to the Manichaeans. It is an important element of Manichaean cosmogony that the sons of darkness were destroyed and their bodies were used to make the cosmos. The "fables" which the text derides may be a reference to the Manichaean Book of Giants.

The essay "Remarks on the Manichaean Book of Giants: Once Again on Ma-haway's Mission to Enoch" by Jens Wilkens offers a discussion and new edition of Mainz 317, a Uyghur text of Mani's Book of Giants. The fragment in question is Text B in Henning's edition of the composition. The Qumran Book of Giants contains a passage in which one of the giants, Mahaway, the son of the watcher Baraqel, flies (using his wings) a great distance to reach Enoch so that he may interpret the visions disclosed to the brothers Ohyah and Hahyah (4Q530 7 ii). In Text B of the Manichaean Book of Giants a "son of Virogdad" flies and hears the voice of Enoch, who urges him to turn back. "Virogdad" is Middle Persian for "gift of lightning," a name that thus resonates with that of Mahaway's father according to Enochic tradition, whose name means "lightning of God. It is reasonable to understand the figure who flies in the Uyghur text as Mahaway, whose name appears elsewhere in the Turfan Book of Giants (Mahawai; e.g., M101c). In the Qumran giants work, the journey of this giant to Enoch is his second such visit, since the text refers to a previous visit to Enoch by Mahaway that is not preserved among the extant fragments. Wilkens argues that his new reading of Mainz 317 clarifies that it recounts a version of the first journey of Mahaway to Enoch.

The essays in [Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan](#) examine giants in ancient Jewish literature, in particular the depiction of the sons of the watchers in the Book of Watchers and the Book of Giants from Qumran. Many papers in this collection also explore how ancient Jewish traditions regarding the sons of the watchers were adapted by adherents of Manichacism, focusing on the Turfan fragments of the Manichacan Book of

Giants. The editors hope that this volume will help spark interest and encourage future scholarship in the giants of Enochic tradition and their Nachleben, the appropriation and re-formulation of the sons of the watchers in Manichacism. <>

Essay: Angels by Adam J. Johnson

The intersection between angelology and the doctrine of the atonement offers an indirect route for exploring the connection between the atoning work of Christ and the broader created spectrum which experiences the effects of sin, without itself having sinned. Such reflection brings balance and proportion to a doctrine which runs a strong risk of being overly anthropocentric. In this chapter, we will explore some of the benefits received by the un-fallen angels from Christ's atoning death and resurrection. While angels need no saving from sin (Heb. 2:16), the New Testament relates Christ's work to them: they are said to long to understand things pertaining to the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 1:12), and most significantly, God reconciled to himself all things in heaven, "making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19-20). What might it mean for the things in heaven to experience reconciliation?

The most familiar view regarding the impact of the atonement on the angels is that of Christ's work repopulating the heavenly city. Origen influentially argued that God predetermined a definite number of rational creatures, which would be sufficient for his creative purposes (289). Drawing on this idea, Augustine writes:

Since it was not the whole company of angels that had perished by deserting God, those who had perished should remain in perpetual perdition, while those who had persevered with God ... should have the joy of knowing that their future happiness was assured. As for ... humanity, since they had totally perished by reason of their sins and punishments ... some of them were to be restored to fill the gap left in the company of the angels by the devil's fall.

This is the same fundamental framework employed by Bernard of Clairvaux (245-246) and Anselm, who integrated this view with the question of God's honor, in *Cur Deus Homo* (289-300). On this view:

Christ did not die for the angels, but the redemption and liberation from evil of any human by his death benefits the angels since such a person in a sense returns into good relations with them after the enmity caused between men and the holy angels by sins, and by the redemption of men the losses caused by the fall of the angels are made good.

Second, the work of Christ affected the angels by changing their song (compare, e.g., the song of Isa. 6 with that of Rev. 5). The work of Christ, revealing the character of God to the angels in an unprecedented manner, resulted in a corresponding change and development in the worship of the angels. As Jonathan Edwards argues in his *Miscellanies*, "The perfections of God are manifested to all creatures, both men and angels, by the fruits of those perfections, or God's works ... so the glorious angels have the greatest manifestations of the glory of God by what they see ... in the death and sufferings of Christ".

Growth in knowledge unfettered by sin, immediately resulted in spiritual growth, which in turn naturally manifests in worship. At the sight of Christ the angels are "filled with admirations of God, ascribing praise, honour, and glory unto him for evermore; for the beholding of the mystery of the wisdom of God in Christ ... is the principal part of the blessedness of the angels in heaven, which fills them with eternal delight, and is the ground of their ascribing praise and glory unto him for evermore".

But are there limits on the extent to which they can change? The church typically asked this question under the category of the "confirmation" of the angels: the point at which the choice of the angels to love and worship God is ratified so as to be irreversible. Augustine thought that consequent to the fall of the angels, the remaining angels experienced "a sure knowledge to make them secure concerning their own everlasting stability, from which they were never to fall" (60-61; Dante, 310-311). While this view proved dominant in early and medieval theology, some Protestant theologians departed from this view, tying the confirmation of the angels to the atoning work of Christ (Turretini, 384-385).

Calvin offers one of the boldest accounts of Christ's confirmation of the angels. Of Colossians 1:20, writing:

It was, however, necessary that angels, also, should be made to be at peace with God, for, being creatures, they were not beyond the risk of falling, had they not been confirmed by the grace of Christ ... Farther, in that very obedience which they render to God, there is not such absolute perfection as to give satisfaction to God in every respect, and without the need of pardon. And this beyond all doubt is what is meant by that statement in Job iv.18, He will find iniquity in his angels ... We must, therefore, conclude that there is not on the part of angels so much of righteousness as would suffice for their being fully joined with God. They have, therefore, need of a peace-maker, through whose grace they may wholly cleave to God. (Calvin, Colossians, 156)

We find in John Donne delightful exploration of this theme:

How have [the angels] any reconciliation (Col. 1:19-20)? ... They needed a confirmation; for the Angels were created in blessednesse, but not in perfect blessednesse ... But to the Angels that stood, their standing being of grace, and their confirmation being not one transient act in God done at once, but a continual succession, and emanation of daily grace, belongs to this reconciliation by Christ, because all manner of grace, and where any deficiency is to be supplied ... proceeds from the Crosse, from the Merits of Christ ... Yet the Angels might fall, if this reconciler did not sustain them. (298-299)

While the possibility of angelic iniquity, fear, or lack of perfect blessedness after the fall provides one avenue for exploring this topic, focusing attention more specifically on their response to the mystery of the incarnation provides a second. John Owen says:

By the recapitulation of all things into this one head, the manifold, various, unsearchable wisdom of God was made known unto the angels themselves. They knew not before of the design and work of God after the entrance of sin. These could not comprehend the wisdom that might

repair that loss ... But hereby the manifold wisdom of God, his infinite wisdom in the treasures of it, able by various ways to attain the ends of his glory, was made known unto them. (374)

This is similar to John Newton, who suggests that "there are likewise an innumerable company of elect or good angels (Rev. iii.11) who were preserved by sovereign grace, and are now established (together with believers) in Christ Jesus" (199).

A variant of this line of inquiry relates the confirmation of the angels to the work of the Holy Spirit. Basil, for instance, wrote that "the ministering spirits exist by the will of the Father, are brought into being by the work of the Son, and are perfected by the presence of the Spirit, since angels are perfected by perseverance in holiness" (62). John of Damascus similarly held that "through the Word, therefore, all the angels were created, and through the sanctification by the Holy Spirit were they brought to perfection" (19). Drawing these reflections together, we might reaffirm that the atonement of Jesus Christ is effective for the angels in that it is through his death and resurrection that they are confirmed by means of the Spirit of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, whose ministry of sanctification is the same (generally speaking) for the angels as it is for us, in that he makes the power of the atonement real and effective in us.

Our fourth line of inquiry considers the impact of Christ's atonement upon the unfallen angels as he becomes their "head," bringing order to the angelic ranks (and the whole of creation). The Catholic Catechism states, "Christ is the center of the angelic world. They are his angels ... They belong to him because they were created through and for him" (86). That they were created for Christ opens the interesting possibility of a telos yet to be fulfilled: the idea that Christ has not always been the center of their world in the same way. Calvin inquires: "But who might reach [fallen man]? ... One of the angels? They also had need of a head, through whose bond they might cleave firmly and undividedly to their God" (Calvin, Inst., 464; cf. Eph. 1:22; Col. 2:10). While in some manner Jesus has always been the head of the angels (they were created through and for him), the way in which the

triune God elected himself to be head of the angels was as the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ—and therefore the angels awaited their rightful head from the time of their creation until the incarnation, passion, and ascension of Jesus.

Thinking about angels helps us to "resist the confines of our usual theological constructions of the relation between God and creatures". And how does reflecting on the relationship between Christ's atoning death and the angels help us resist our usual theological constructions of the atonement? Reflecting on the intersection of angelology and soteriology helps cultivate our appreciation of the atonement as ordered toward creation as a whole, rather than merely an act directed at remedying the problem of human sin. That is to say, Christ's atonement is intended by God to bring to completion his treasured creation, which of course includes dealing with human sin, but reaches far beyond it, including the above ways of bringing wholeness and completion to the angelic realm. <>

[Gospel of John](#) by Edward W. Klink III [Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Zondervan, 9780310243601]

This series is designed for those who know biblical languages. It is written primarily for the pastor and Bible teacher, not for the scholar. That is, the aim is not to review and offer a critique of every possible interpretation that has ever been given to a passage, but to exegete each passage of Scripture succinctly in its grammatical and historical context. Each passage is interpreted in the light of its biblical setting, with a view to grammatical detail, literary context, flow of biblical argument, and historical setting. While the focus will not be on application, it is expected that the authors will offer suggestions as to the direction in which application can flow.

[The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John](#) by Edward W. Klink III [Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, Cambridge University Press, 9780521130448]

The last generation of gospel scholarship has considered the reconstruction and analysis of the audience behind the gospels as paradigmatic. The key hermeneutical template for reading the

gospels has been the quest for the community that each gospel represents. This scholarly consensus regarding the audience of the gospels has been reconsidered. Using as a test case one of the most entrenched gospels, Edward Klink explores the evidence for the audience behind the Gospel of John. This study challenges the prevailing gospel paradigm by examining the community construct and its functional potential in early Christianity, the appropriation of a gospel text and J. L. Martyn's two-level reading of John, and the implied reader located within the narrative. The study concludes by proposing a more appropriate audience model for reading John, as well as some implications for the function of the gospel in early Christianity.

Excerpt: For a good part of the past century the concept of atonement has been strongly denied to the message and theology of the Gospel of John. Rudolf Bultmann, followed by others (Forestell), argued that the Gospel's presentation of Jesus was intended to depict him as revelation, not atonement. Even refractions of atonement, Bultmann suggests, are best taken as John "adapting himself to this common theology of the church," for "the thought of Jesus's death as an atonement for sin has no place in John" (2:53-54). Such recent minimization of the passive, sacrificial nature of the death of Jesus stands in sharp contrast to the long-standing interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. Even more, it fails to do justice to the Gospel's depiction of the reconciliatory engagement between Jesus and the world, as well as the manner in which the concept of atonement is specifically and progressively applied to the person and work of Jesus.

The Light of the World and Reconciliation
The Gospel of John introduces the story of Jesus by employing concepts that depict the cosmic nature of Christ's ministry of reconciliation. The evangelist explains that Jesus entered a world where there was a seemingly insurmountable separation between the Creator and his creation, God and the world. But it is into this context of cosmic separation that Jesus, the Creator himself (1:3), came to his creation (1:11), in order to reconcile the world to God. This return involved a battle against the forces and agents of estrangement (Klink, "Light," 78-81), described by John as darkness (in contrast

to Light), flesh (in contrast to Spirit), falsehood (in contrast to Truth), and death (in contrast to Life). Jesus became all the things the world needed and had failed to be, in order to perform a ministry of reconciliation, revealing—for the first time since the Garden of Eden—the grace and truth of God the Father (1:17-18). This cosmic ministry of reconciliation is introduced and explained in the prologue of John (1:1-18), orienting the reader of the Gospel to the larger context of Jesus's ministry, as well as to the nature of these cosmic themes of estrangement, over which Jesus would become victorious.

The Gospel of John employs cosmological themes and concepts in a storied manner, depicting the reconciliatory ministry of Jesus as Light, Spirit, Truth, and Life. Each of these themes explains Jesus's engagement with the world and the nature of his reconciliation. The theme of Light and darkness (e.g., 1:5, 8:12; cf. 1 John 1:6-7) symbolizes the condition of the world and the cosmic battle into which Jesus waged war. The theme of Spirit and flesh (e.g., 1:14, 3:6, 4:24, 6:63) symbolizes the broken condition into which Christ entered and the source of his redemptive work. The theme of Truth and falsehood (1:17-18, 14:6, 16:13, 17:3; cf. 1 John 1:8, 2:4, 3:19) symbolizes Jesus's ministry of revelation and the true vision of reality he alone provides. Finally, the theme of Life and death (1:4; 5:24, 26; 6:57; 11:25-26) symbolizes the blessed existence under the saving sovereignty of God and the communion between God and humanity made possible by the one who is called "the Life" (14:6).

The prologue of John (1:1-18) is especially significant in its depiction of the larger reconciliation theme in the Gospel, intentionally echoing the opening verses of Genesis. The narrative's symbolism is given a pointed announcement in 1:5, where the narrator explains that "the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome/recognize it." The verb in the second clause (*katelaben*) refers either to the physical confrontation between the Light/darkness ("overcome"; NRSV, NIV, ESV), or to the misunderstanding regarding the things of God that will become so prevalent throughout the Gospel ("recognize"; KJV, NASB). The remainder of the Gospel fleshes out this introduction to the encounter

between the Creator and his creation, where Christ's appearance as "the Light" is met with direct and robust confrontation by the darkness (cf. 3:19-20, 8:12, 9:5, 12:35).

While the idea of "overcoming" is necessarily present (12:31), it is not merely a physical confrontation that is being referenced. The greater confrontation, the one more deeply rooted, is the spiritual encounter. The reconciliation initiated at the beginning of the Gospel by the coming of Jesus is finalized at the Gospel's end by the cross, the pinnacle act of atonement, where the Light of the World is revealed also as the Lamb of God.

The Lamb of God and Atonement

Jesus's ministry of reconciliation transitions from the cosmic themes of Light, Spirit, Truth, and Life introduced in the prologue (1:1-18) to the Lamb in the very next pericope (1:19-34), the first of arguably seven plot movements in the Gospel. The narrative reorients these cosmic concepts discussed above into a meaningful plot, directing all their energies to a developing story, which has as its goal the depiction and explanation of the death of Jesus.

The Announcement of Sacrifice (1:29). This is the first and most important passage that explicitly connects Jesus's person and work to the concept of atonement. With the Old Testament (OT) as a certain context for John, and in light of the reference to the removal of "sin," the pronouncement in John 1:29 can only be understood as pointing to Jesus as the "Lamb of God," who reconciles the world to God; a fitting development to the prologue's description of his reconciliatory coming into the world. This title for Jesus is clearly sacrificial, especially with the inclusion of the explanatory description regarding the removal of sin. While the sacrificial title has several possible referents (e.g., the Passover lamb, the lamb of Isaiah 53, the lamb provided by God in Genesis 22, or the triumphant lamb of Revelation 5:6), it is difficult to deny that the Gospel has introduced the theme of substitutionary atonement at its very beginning. The Lamb of God is Jesus, the crucified one. Ultimately, the title ascribed to Jesus at his first appearance in the narrative proper is coterminous with his last moments of life: a Passover sacrifice (18:28, 19:36).

The Mode of Mediation (2:19). The first mention of Passover includes Jesus's engaging in dispute in the temple with the religious authorities where he declared in no uncertain terms that his body—not the temple structure—was the true temple of God, that is, the place where God would meet with his people. John 1:14 had already made clear that Jesus constitutes the true temple of God by virtue of his incarnation. But when Jesus commands and foretells of his death ("destroy this temple") and resurrection ("I will raise it again in three days"), he declares himself to be the mode of mediation between God and humanity. The connection between Jesus's death and resurrection and the temple and its replacement associates the cross with sacrifice and expiation, especially with the OT as a context.

The Condition of the World (8:21). The prologue already described the world with the cosmic category of darkness (1:5), which the Gospel would later reveal to be as a result of sin and death. The world was in darkness because it was plagued, stained, and enslaved to sin. Early in the Gospel the narrator explains that the work of Jesus was intended to take away "the sin of the world" (1:29). The world was so darkened by sin that it did not recognize (1:5), know (1:10), or receive (1:11) God in the person of Jesus. The narrative depicts throughout the consequences of sin, often detailing a person's condition and not their name, like the blind man (9:1-41), the lame man (5:1-15), and the Samaritan woman (4:1-42), with the last suggestive of religious illness. The Gospel of John speaks about sin in a manner that matches its discussion throughout Scripture. Sin is a condition or state of all people, and its consequence is clearly stated in John 8:21: death. Jesus is the only remedy for sin and death (5:24, 8:24, 16:9), and the nature of his entrance into the sinful state of the world and taking on "flesh" (1:14), the incarnate body of Jesus is presented as both a corpse and a sacrifice. The Gospel does not spend much time defining sin because it assumes that the rest of the biblical story has made it clear.

The Need for Liberation (8:32). The world is enslaved to sin and death and needs to be redeemed. Jesus declares that truth brings

freedom. "Truth" in the Gospel is not only a philosophical concept but also a relational one: a true knowledge of God. The truth to be known is that Jesus is the eternal existence and the saving mission of God, the one through whom grace and "truth" came (1:17), and the authoritative expression of the Father and his love for the world. In short, the "truth" is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The term "freedom" is contrasted in John with sin (cf. 8:34), which suggests that the "freedom" about which Jesus speaks is equivalent to salvation. The truth, which centers upon the person and work of Jesus, is liberating. Again, this liberation is not philosophical or rooted in politics, but a spiritual freedom (cf. 12:31). Nor is this kind of freedom based on the original freedom of humanity that belongs to him, the authentic self of man, but a freedom that belongs entirely to God. It is the kind of liberation that can only come from a birth "from above" (3:3); it is the kind of kingdom politicking that requires the eschatological birth "from water and spirit" (3:5).

The Exchange of Life (10:11). The liberation Jesus alone provides comes at a great cost: his life. John 10:11 clearly expresses this, when, referring to himself as the Shepherd caring for his sheep, Jesus explains that the Shepherd "lays down" his life for his sheep. The referent can only be to his sacrificial death on the cross. This interpretation is not derived from the OT or any other source—its background can only be the cross of Christ. This is made all the more clear when it is described as being "for" (hyper), that is, "on behalf of," the sheep, a preposition that denotes purpose (cf. 6:51, 11:50-52). This exchange is given further explanation in John 10:18, where Jesus explains that he lays down his life (and regains it again!) by his own authority, which he received from God the Father. This is no Shepherd who falls to thieves or wolves while trying to defend his sheep; a martyr who can save his sheep but not himself. No! Death is not something this Shepherd might face; it is the very thing he must face—and willingly so. What makes this Shepherd and this act of shepherding so mysterious and remarkable is that death is the means by which he saves his sheep. For this Shepherd is not only guarding the sheep from those on the outside, but also from the sheep themselves. This Shepherd wields not a wooden staff but a

wooden cross. The authority of Jesus is confirmed when the religious authorities themselves announce their plan to use Jesus's death to save all the people (11:50-52). These texts depict not merely the power of Jesus over his death and resurrection, but also how his death is an act of substitutionary atonement.

The Reception of Salvation (17:26). The liberating, life-saving work of Jesus is obtained, according to the prologue of the Gospel, by "receiving" Jesus, that is, by "those who believe in his name" (1:12). "Believe" is a central term for John, used a total of ninety-eight times, which towers above the use of the term by other New Testament (NT) authors (even more than Paul—fifty-four times). The concept of belief makes a clear connection between knowledge and the atoning work of Jesus. The Gospel invites the reader to hear its message of the work and person of Jesus and believe (5:24), an act that requires alignment and allegiance. To receive Jesus is to hear his voice and follow him (10:16). This is expressed most clearly in Jesus's prayer for his disciples, especially John 17:26, where Jesus connects the knowledge he gave to his disciples and links it to their participation in the love of the Trinitarian God. Jesus even defines eternal life as knowledge of God through Jesus Christ (17:3). This is the vision of God mediated by the Son first announced in the prologue (1:18), a vision of not only the person of God (ultimately the Father), but also the work of God (specifically the Son). To know God is to know and participate in his life and his mission, the extension of his life to the world, a life with the Father, through Christ, and in/by the Spirit.

The Passover of the New Covenant (19:31). The date of the crucifixion is a climactic component of the Gospel's multiform depiction of the sacrificial death of Jesus. When the prologue describes Jesus as "flesh" (1:14), the Baptist declares Jesus to be "the Lamb of God" (1:29, 36), Jesus declares himself to be the replacement of the temple (2:21), and Jesus commands the eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood (6:51-56), the system of atonement rooted in the OT is being applied to his crucified body and sacrificial work. Even more, the role of the Good Shepherd (10:11), the political strategy of Caiaphas (11:51-52), the imagery of

his public statement (12:4), the humiliation of the foot washing (13:10), and the prayer of consecration (17:19) cumulatively reflect the image of sacrifice. Even the narrative's account of the death of Jesus is filled with detailed allusions that directly connect the crucifixion of Jesus to the Passover and its elements: the unbroken bones of Jesus (19:33-36), the hyssop used to give Jesus a drink (19:29), and possibly even the reference to "the sixth hour" (19:14). By connecting the Passover to the death of Jesus, the Gospel transfers the theology of Passover and the Old Covenant (the lamb, the blood, the ceremony) to Jesus and the New Covenant. The entire Gospel had been aimed at the cross, the sacrificial death of Jesus—his life on behalf of the world. And fittingly, precisely on the Day of Passover, God's Lamb and first-born Son was the offering that atoned for the sin of the world.

Conclusion

Was the evangelist adapting himself to what the church already believed, as Bultmann suggested, or was the church responding to the Gospel's message? The evidence from the Gospel suggests the latter. The entire Gospel is aiming at the cross, and the time spent on the last week of Jesus's life and ministry is by far the longest section of the narrative. For John the gospel is the fact that Jesus died and rose again, and the meaning of that fact: that Jesus has now accomplished the full purposes of God and fulfilled by his life and body all human persons (he is the Second Adam), all human religion (he is the fulfillment of Judaism and the true High Priest), and all human kingdoms (he is the King and Lord of God's Kingdom). The death of Jesus is the atonement for sin and the reconciliation of the world to God, the Creator renewing his creation on his terms and by his Word. <>

[The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium](#)
edited by Anthony Kaldellis, Niketas Siniosoglou
[Cambridge University Press, 9781107041813]

This volume brings into being the field of Byzantine intellectual history. Shifting focus from the cultural, social, and economic study of Byzantium to the life and evolution of ideas in their context, it provides an authoritative history of intellectual endeavors from Late Antiquity to the fifteenth century. At its heart lie the transmission, transformation, and shifts

of Hellenic, Christian, and Byzantine ideas and concepts as exemplified in diverse aspects of intellectual life, from philosophy, theology, and rhetoric to astrology, astronomy, and politics. Case studies introduce the major players in Byzantine intellectual life, and particular emphasis is placed on the reception of ancient thought and its significance for secular as well as religious modes of thinking and acting. New insights are offered regarding controversial, understudied, or promising topics of research, such as philosophy and medical thought in Byzantium, and intellectual exchanges with the Arab world.

Excerpt: Ideas have lives of their own. Their genealogies, careers, mutations, and legacies form historical patterns and ontologies different from those of individual human beings and societies, though they are linked to them in manifold ways. Ideally, the history of ideas should be studied diachronically and across the boundaries of states, cultures, and periods, these being the most important categories that artificially break up intellectual history. Yet the questions of how the Byzantines interacted with ideas which they received from earlier periods, and how they developed ideas of their own, are occluded in existing scholarship. It is typical for diachronic studies to jump from antiquity to the Renaissance, reinforcing a particular concept of the genealogy of the "west." Intellectual histories of the medieval west rarely include the Byzantine world,¹ even though the western tradition draws from the same Greek, Roman, and Christian sources that were also part of the Byzantine patrimony. Moreover, within Byzantine Studies intellectual history is probably the least developed subfield, lacking titles to its name and definition in relation to other inflections of historical inquiry. We have therefore chosen the format of an Intellectual History of Byzantium as a preliminary step toward rectifying this imbalance: first, to provide the resources with which more integrated cross-cultural, diachronic, and analytical narratives may one day be written, and, second, to spur the growing interest in Byzantine intellectual history as a more or less distinct discipline.

Why Byzantine Intellectual History is Important

Not only did the Byzantines develop a vibrant and complex intellectual culture for themselves, they can justly claim an important place in the intellectual history of the world. In an ideal world driven by genuine intellectual curiosity, cultures would be regarded as fascinating and worthy of study for their own sake. But as we live in more utilitarian times, it is necessary to list some of the contributions that Byzantium made to cultures other than itself, and also why it is important for historians of ideas to study it. This will also reveal some of the ways in which it is interesting in its own right.

Byzantium preserved, selected, and shaped the canon of the Greek classics. It is regularly acknowledged — even if only grudgingly — that the Byzantines were responsible for preserving almost all ancient Greek literature that we have today. Some texts survived through translations in other languages, stone inscriptions, or papyri, but they were a tiny minority compared to the volumes painstakingly copied out by Byzantine scribes over the duration of a millennium. When we look at our "classical libraries" (the Loeb, Oxford Classical Texts, or Teubner collections) we are in fact looking at a Byzantine classical library. In terms of the totality of surviving premodern Greek literature, our classical libraries are only a part of what the Byzantines chose to keep, in addition to their own writings that we artificially excise from our corpus of "classical Greek literature." This, in turn, is only a subset of everything that was ever written in Greek, a great deal of which was lost because the Byzantines allowed it to lapse according to their confessional, curricular, and ideological priorities. Their own writings reveal those priorities. Yet the discipline of Classics has, to make an understatement, not been receptive to Byzantium and its texts. Most classicists fail to recognize that the Byzantines were their kindred spirits, indeed their forebears, when it comes to the study of the Greek classics. For the Byzantines did not preserve ancient literature for the benefit of future scholars in a more enlightened western society: they preserved the texts for their own use and benefit. Moreover, they did not merely preserve ancient literature: they made choices in selecting what to preserve and developed new textual technologies

for that purpose. Thus, they played an active role in shaping the canon. Modernity may, in its ignorance, take it for granted as representing "the Greeks," but in fact it represents a Byzantine vision of the Greeks too.' To a large degree we are bound by Byzantine choices, we study and love the texts they did, and often unknowingly see Greek antiquity through their eyes. Therefore, we need to understand their point of view. This volume contributes to that goal. Many of its chapters show how antiquity was the starting point of Byzantine thinking in many fields.

Byzantium is our first point of contact with ancient Greek thought. For centuries scholarship has labored to create the illusion of unmediated access to the classical past, but it is largely a process of artificially wrenching our ancient heritage out of its Byzantine context, stripping it of Byzantine residues and accretions, and then claiming authenticity for the reconstructed product. Yet in material terms, the closest we can usually come to an ancient text is a Byzantine manuscript that dates after the tenth century. It is unwise to believe that those books are "pure" media that preserve classics immaculate. Byzantium was responsible for crucial changes to the textual technologies of learning, including the universal adoption of the codex form, the invention of minuscule script, and the concomitant need to "transliterate" all texts, leading to a bottle-neck of selection and loss. Texts were adapted, selected, anthologized, excerpted, abridged, and interpolated. Ancient commentaries, scholia, grammatical aids, and dictionaries were broken up and recombined with new Byzantine material that is often impossible to tell apart.

Modern historicism has tended to treat texts as anchored so firmly in original contexts that one can easily ignore their later textual settings, however important those settings may have been to the (possibly dominant) reading and perception of these texts throughout most of their history ... Cultural histories thus tend to be written as narratives of a succession of discrete moments of creative acts of composition.

But classicists who really want to know where their texts come from and what their words mean will inevitably end up dealing with the likes of Photios, the Souda, the Etymologika, and other Byzantine

texts and authors for which their training has rarely prepared them.

Byzantium created the Orthodox tradition. Christianity began as one among the many cults of the ancient Mediterranean, but it became a world religion only in early Byzantium, specifically in the eastern provinces of the late Roman world. Its doctrines, theology, intellectual traditions, norms, and governing institutions took shape and were codified between the fourth and the sixth century, first in Greek and then derivatively in Latin and other languages. Thus, if we include early Byzantium within our scope, it is fair to say that Christianity in most of its forms after 300 CE has a Byzantine matrix. This volume, however, focuses on the later phases of Byzantine intellectual life, after 600 CE. By that point, Christianity in both east and west was set on variant trajectories that would lead away from its distinctively Byzantine configuration. But the latter subsequently became the crucible for the entire Orthodox world. The impact of Byzantine Orthodoxy on the intellectual life of the cultures that accepted Christianity from the eastern empire, from modern Greece to Russia, cannot be underestimated. This volume, then, charts the fundamental modes and orders of Byzantine Orthodoxy as they emerged after the formative period of late antiquity. They include, for example, the distinctively Byzantine theology of icons, the differential reception of Plato and Aristotle, the tense and conditional use of the Greek philosophical tradition (in the original), and the positions that emerged through contact with the rapidly changing west after the eleventh century, and also in the wake of Hesychasm.

Byzantium was a major player in its time. In addition to looking vertically at its past and future, we must also look at Byzantium horizontally in terms of its neighboring cultures. Today Byzantine Studies may be a relatively small field in comparison to its western medieval and early Islamic peers, but Byzantium, in its own time, was a major intellectual interlocutor and conduit for its neighbors. This was true not only for its art and the prestige of its imperial tradition, both of which were widely imitated and so have been studied, but also in the realms of ideas and scholarship. Byzantine exports included its unique access to the

Greek tradition in the original language and its Orthodox inflection of Christianity, but there are also signs that medieval Europe, both western and eastern, accessed aspects of ancient Roman tradition not directly from Latin but from their Greek versions kept alive in Roman Byzantium. Let us not forget that Roman law was fixed for posterity by Justinian and, before it was revived in the west in the late eleventh century, it remained in force in the east through its Greek translations. We hope that this volume will provide a convenient point of entry for scholars in these "adjacent" fields who wish to learn more, and a starting point for further discussion of intellectual relations. Only a few chapters here are devoted to cross-cultural debates and contacts, but making the history of the Byzantine tradition more accessible in general is a necessary first step if we are all to engage in more interdisciplinary synthesis and dialogue.

Byzantium was a fascinating and unique combination of intellectual traditions in its own right. It was the only post-classical culture in the history of the world that (a) spoke and wrote in Greek and therefore had immediate access to the textual basis of ancient Hellenism; (b) was Orthodox, which meant that it had immediate access to all foundational Christian texts (the Gospels, Church Fathers, Acts of the Councils) and, also, was the first which had to work out a way of including selected pagan texts and concepts within an exclusive Christian framework; and (c) it also retained a strongly felt Roman identity and approaches to government, politics, and law, which were more or less modified (or only inflected) to accommodate Christian notions. No other society has ever been Greek, Christian, and Roman in this way, making Byzantium a fascinating laboratory for cultural and intellectual fusion, reception, combination, and reinvention.

What is Intellectual History?

An ancient Platonist would be surprised at the way in which modern historians view and treat ideas. 'Whereas Platonic ideas are timeless and changeless, modern scholars of Platonism typically assume that even Plato's ideas changed over time. The paradox stems from a homonymous use of the word idea. Plato's ideas are Forms that transcend history and the world of change, but Plato's ideas

about the Ideas qua Forms do not. The former are by definition unhistorical; the latter exist only within history. By extension, the reception of Plato in Byzantium amounts to different elaborations and applications of Plato's philosophy to politics, epistemology, and ontology that diversely reflect the changing interests of pagan, Christian, "heretical," or idiosyncratically "other" authors.

The distinction between the belief in ostensibly timeless entities (as Ideas) and the systematic study of ideas as reflecting shifts in human thought is typical of modernity. Classicists might point out that Aristotle and the ancient doxographers were already moving in that direction when they classified and commented on the views of ancient philosophers, but the history of ideas and concepts emerged properly as a distinct field with Jacob Brucker (1696-1770), Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), and French Enlightenment thinkers such as Pierre Bayle (who attempted a history of "the human spirit"). Ties between original philosophy and the history of philosophy remained strong and fundamental philosophical questions gained new impetus: Do ideas persist independently of their agents, or are they contingent artifacts shifting according to historical circumstance? Do they have a purpose, i.e. are they teleologically directed to an end? These and related questions led Vico to conceive the possibility of a "conceptual dictionary" and "conceptual language common to all nations," as well as an "ideal eternal history," in order to explain the rise and fall of nations according to the transition from one paradigmatic age to another, each age defined by a central concept: People first sense what is necessary, then consider what is useful, next attend to comfort, later delight in pleasures, soon grow dissolute in luxury, and finally go mad squandering their estates.¹ Vico was therefore one of the first to postulate a history of humanity based not entirely on periods and cultures, but on conceptually defined ages as well.

Gustav Teichmüller's *Studien zur Geschichte der Begriffe* (1874) subsequently took a step toward a thematic history of concepts rather than of individuals or events. But it was not easy to decouple the history of concepts from original philosophy. Hegel, who is sometimes credited with introducing the term *Begriffsgeschichte*, thought of

the history of philosophy as a philosophical endeavor in itself, and later Hegelian philosophers, such as Benedetto Croce, effectively identified philosophy with history: Philosophy and history "are not mutually conditioned, but identical." It was up to philosophers, rather than historians, to study concepts, especially in their "pure" form (focusing, for example, on their logical consistency).

Not everyone agreed, of course. Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897), the great historian of Renaissance culture and friend and esteemed colleague of Friedrich Nietzsche (both inspired by the late Schopenhauer), argued that *Anschauung* (intuition and contemplation) is more important than speculative reason for the purposes of accessing the collective experience of the past. Art, poetry, and myth inspired an appreciation of history and culture very different from the conceptual schemas employed by state education, by the Church, and, last but not least, by philosophers: "Leave me to experience and feel history on this lower level instead of understanding it from the standpoint of first principles," Burckhardt wrote to a friend in 1842, in a tone typical of his aristocratic liberalism. He was not convinced that history was governed by the exposition or unfolding of philosophical concepts.

By the end of the twentieth century, the history of ideas and concepts was progressively and effectively uncoupled from the history of philosophy. Various new methodologies and technical field-labels were introduced in order to study how people thought: history of concepts, conceptual history, history of ideas, intellectual history. These terms are not synonymous, though in practice they may bleed into each other. The history of concepts places emphasis on cataloguing and interpreting the occurrences of terms in sources and contexts. One example in our field would be the use of Aristotelian terms in Komnenian texts. Conceptual history tries to interpret historical conflicts through the concepts employed by their protagonists. Iconoclasm is an example of a Byzantine conflict with both a political and a strong and overt conceptual aspect. Here ideas may be studied in their historical role as weapons, rather than from a more detached philological-lexicographical standpoint. In some cases, the

historian might know that "reality changed long before the change was conceptualized," while at other times "concepts might have been formed to set free new realities."

[These elements are "implicit, or incompletely explicit assumptions, or more or less unconscious mental habits, operating in the thought of an individual or generation." Lovejoy's beautiful book sees Plato as providing the ideal case-study: the idea of the Chain of Being, namely the idea of the complete rational intelligibility of the world, which evolved into "an experiment in thought carried on for many centuries by many great and lesser minds", from Plato to Schelling, albeit one failing in a grandiose manner: the hypothesis of the absolute rationality of the cosmos is untenable.]

The founder of the history of ideas, the American philosopher Arthur Lovejoy (1873-1962), sought to write the "biography" of ideas, arguing that they were not only historical, but also transhistorical, in the sense that they surface again and again in the form of specific "unit ideas": the equivalent of chemical or component elements in the natural sciences, unit ideas are the "primary and persistent or recurrent dynamic units of the history of thought." For example, he talked about the idea of the "chain of being" as it moved from culture to culture. Other ideas that could be studied from this point of view include the belief in an exclusive revelation of religious truth, or the very ideas of salvation, God, and man. Contrariwise, Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge School of intellectual history brought attention to particular contextual constraints, conceptual change, and rhetorical applications of philosophical vocabulary. Whereas conceptual history (as understood by Reinhart Koselleck) was "chiefly preoccupied with the slower march of time," the focus now moved to "the pointillist study of sudden conceptual shifts." Still, in both schools of thought concepts were seen "less as statements about the world than as tools and weapons of ideological debate."

This survey could be expanded by including perspectives that proved less popular, yet are potentially no less fascinating. For example, the philosopher and intellectual historian Hans Blumenberg (1920-1996) suggested a history of metaphors (*Metapherngeschichte*). Nicolai

Hartmann explored the possibility of a *Problemgeschichte* or history of arguments, suggesting that problems, rather than ideas, span historical time even if they are reflected in variable concepts. In a similar vein, Leo Strauss criticized the "historicist thesis" which argued that, whereas all answers to philosophical questions intend to be valid, modern scholars treat them as "historically conditioned" and defective. He argued that the questions themselves may be universal and intrinsic to the philosophic effort, enabling classical thought to speak meaningfully to modernity." Others moved in the direction of a *histoire des mentalités*, a history of mentalities or attitudes that account for collective social mindsets and outlooks rather than individual ideas. This form of intellectual history was most closely allied with social history. Each approach made its own methodological distinctions, which are rarely maintained rigidly in practice. Different perspectives may be complementary rather than antagonistic. For example, a "sociology of ideas" that traces networks and alliances or the study of "social objects," for example divorce and legal agreements, may be related to philosophical or religious ideas that defined the existential orientation of epistemic and social agents.

Intellectual history today is most often defined as the branch of historiography that focuses on the evolution of concepts and ideas within specific historical contexts and explores their political and rhetorical sources, entanglements, and effects. It is premised on the assumption that abstract thought and arguments emerge and change within shifting and intertwined social, political, and philosophical circumstances. Intellectual historians try to establish why and how historical agents defended, refuted, elaborated, or recontextualized particular ideas in a given situation, and how those ideas then may have impacted the surrounding social context. It may, then, be seen as a field of inquiry concerned with: (1) the relation between an author's life and his texts; (2) the relation between society and texts, especially in regards to the origins of his ideas; (3) the relation between an author's intentions and the reception and interpretation of his texts; and (4) "conceptual shifts," that is, (a) how words change meaning within varying sociopolitical situations, and (b) how changes in the sociopolitical framework caused ideas to shift, fade away, or reemerge,

influencing the way that historical agents thought of philosophy, theology, medicine, or law, For example, how and why did conceptions of Hellenism, authority, revelation, or Orthodoxy change?

Intellectual history maintains an equal distance, on the one hand, from pure history of ideas and concepts, which more or less isolates ideas from their sociopolitical framework and which is closer to some varieties of pure philosophy that offer a kind of timeless "view from nowhere"; and, on the other hand, from social and cultural history, which tend to treat philosophical discourse and intellectual pursuits as mere epiphenomena of cultural trends or social circumstances.

For example, many social historians of late antiquity and Byzantium tend to treat classical paideia monolithically as a badge of elite distinction, forming an interchangeable currency of political facilitation. It can instead be seen as a tense and dynamic complex encompassing ideas at odds with each other, and choices within it were meaningful and purposive. Instead of studies in which disputation appears as a social performance without regard for what exactly was being disputed and why, we can ask instead what, then, is the author or intellectual who introduces an idea, or elaborates on an idea, doing exactly? Intellectual historians often see texts as containing speech acts: words and terms are deeds, insofar as they not only are carriers of depersonalized meaning but reflect the intentions of historical agents and the intentionality of texts that function as agents in a historical setting. So this also entails a break from strict analytical philosophy, which often treats speech acts without reference to historical context: intellectual history aims to uncover the function of words and ideas in a given social context.

Any "history of intellectual history" will show that the field has been inclusive and pluralistic in its methodological priorities. Moreover, approaches that at one moment seemed to have long lost their appeal resurface in interesting and inspiring ways. For example, recent theoretical work reappraises Lovejoy's belief that it is possible to transcend the restrictions of periodization and that it is legitimate to study ideas through time, across different cultural settings.¹ The strict compartmentalization of

conceptual shifts imposed by the once dominant paradigm of contextualism — the idea that cultural artifacts, including ideas, can be properly interpreted only within their narrow historical context — now appears questionable. The flexibility of contemporary methodological approaches is particularly relevant and an asset to an emerging field such as Byzantine intellectual history, where pagan antiquity and late antique Christianity continued for centuries to shape a changing conceptual osmosis, thus inviting a *longue durée* historical treatment of its conceptual components, both underlying and on the surface. Moreover, from a philosophical perspective, contextualism may simply not suffice to appreciate the actual contents of concepts and ideas, as opposed to their implications and application at the narrow sociopolitical moment of their promulgation.

Thus, intellectual history may be seen as potentially taking into account both the diachronic aspect of ideas (Where does this or that term come from? How has it traveled from there to here?) as well as their synchronic aspect (How does this or that concept relate to the Byzantine context, or to other ideas that have a different history?). This includes studying the immediate impact of ideas in their natural context, but also their consequences as effective agents in the long run, that is, to use Hans-Georg Gadamer's term, their *Wirkungsgeschichte* or "history of influence (or - effect)." Of special interest, then, is the broader intellectual space (*Ideenraum*) defined by the dissemination of ideas, and, *mutatis mutandis*, the limitations and restrictions imposed upon it (for example) by political or clerical authority. From the viewpoint of intellectual history, issues of intellectual conformism or dissent, dissimulation, heresy, and ideological deviance may instigate fascinating research. For example, how far did the trials of philosophers in Byzantium influence the intention and ability of intellectuals to experiment with ancient Greek philosophical ideas in innovative ways? And how far did heresy from late antiquity to late Byzantium preserve and perpetuate philosophical queries that were considered obsolete in mainstream theological and clerical discourse?

An important premise of intellectual history is that novelty does not presuppose the truthfulness of its

propositions. Novelty-claims are independent of truth-claims. This effectively and further divorces intellectual history from what is commonly seen as the principal endeavor of analytical philosophy: establishing the validity of arguments. The former contextually explores perspectival revisions and shifts, while the latter abstractly seeks to establish the conditions of meaningful propositions and judgments. For example, the Neoplatonic triads might or might not reflect the ontological order of the world in a truthful way, and Cappadocian theology may or may not be true. But the very question about their presumed truthfulness is not the essence of intellectual history. Interpretations do not need to be true to be intellectual or, indeed, interesting and culturally meaningful. In Quentin Skinner's view, critical engagement with the truthfulness of past claims and beliefs diverts us from a genuine appreciation of their historical significance. There can be no account of ideas isolated from their context, but only a history of their uses: "There is nothing, I ventured to suggest, lying beneath or behind such uses; their history is the only history of ideas to be written.

We might call this the topical rather than essential significance of ideas. The point is that past claims and beliefs are interpretative moves performed within shifting nexuses and intellectual constellations, potentially generating new nexuses and constellations out of the old ones. For the vast majority of the historical agents that we seek to understand, then, the essence of the world is taken to be inseparable from their situated acts of interpreting the world. This is the point of convergence for Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte*, Gadamer's hermeneutics, Derrida's deconstruction, and Skinner's intellectual history. Rather than reveal a preexisting and set timeless reality, interpretation perpetually reveals meaning that consists in the way concepts are used.

However, it must be emphasized that the approach to intellectual history outlined above might create a mentality in modern researchers that is fundamentally at odds with that of their historical subjects. The modern (implicit) advocacy of contingency, ontologically anchorless flux, and nominalism seems to safeguard the open-ended and inclusive character of political discourse.

Intellectual historians prioritizing the topical or situated significance of ideas are therefore deeply mistrustful of essentialism and realism. But the Byzantines were not committed to such projects. We may treat ideas as contingent cultural artifacts that changed over time, but from Proklos to Gennadios Scholarios the Byzantines were sincerely invested in the transcendent truth of those ideas and involved in processes of self-definition based on them. Even if we allow that ideas are not "real" in the sense of possessing an essence of their own outside history, they may still be essential to the worldview of their bearers as well as to the outlook of scholars studying them. Consequently, a mere retrieval of the topical significance of ideas alone does not fully exhaust the scope of their existential significance. Byzantine intellectuals did not think that their ideas were valuable only or primarily because they had immediate rhetorical, political, and social repercussions. They thought that they were meaningful and valuable insofar as they were true. It was epistemology and metaphysics that determined these thinkers' modality of being and life experience. It is one thing to make use of a notion, for example for rhetorical or polemical purposes, but it is another to commit ourselves to its conceptual content. Beneath the mere use of ideas lies the capacity of ideas to evolve as way-of-being, a *tropos hyparxeos*. The historian who steps out of the nexus of philosophical priorities that defines the metaphysical projects of his subjects isolates himself from their thought-world in much the same (absurd) way that the philosopher isolates himself from their lifeworld when disregarding the need for a historically embedded understanding of agents and ideas. In both cases the danger is to assume a viewpoint-from-nowhere that alternately overstates the case for historicizing or abstracting ideas.

Put otherwise: the competition of perspectives is referable to a competition of worldviews. As Wilhelm Dilthey put it, worldviews are structures of life, that is, sets of beliefs that have their roots in experience and the psyche, in the intellect as well as in will and emotion. They are a mode of existence that, when shared, potentially ties individuals together into a community. Worldviews become criteria of evaluation by means of which historical agents judge whether a particular belief

is sensible, and they include moral principles, symbols and systems of signs, and products of religious revelation. For example, Orthodoxy in Byzantium was felt to be a worldview and criterion, just as Platonism was for late antique pagans. Worldviews often relate to pre-theoretical, possibly subconscious reflection and commitments. Still, the principal claim of most worldviews is that they approximate truth about the Whole, which is why, according to Dilthey, both ideas and people "coalesce into groups among which there exists a certain affinity." Thus intellectual history becomes social and religious history, creating or at least fueling it. An important question here concerns the relation among worldviews. For example, were Hellenism and Christianity in Byzantium worldviews in permanent tension at all times, or parallel internal discourses that may be studied non-combatively, or perhaps varied according to circumstances? And are there idiosyncratic instances of confluence and hybridization owing to individuals moving beyond mainstream Church and state discourse, such as mystics and heretics?

The Contours of Byzantine Intellectual History

By ancient and medieval standards, Byzantine society was marked by a fair degree of literacy. Its various departments of state were bureaucratized and run by paperwork to a relatively high degree. Byzantium produced many authors, who collectively wrote thousands of works, and also many scribes who copied the latter along with the works of antiquity that they deemed worthy of preservation. In addition, the official religion was based on a set of sacred texts (the Scriptures), and an official theology that was produced by the Church Fathers (also authors) and ratified by Church Councils. The Church was just as bureaucratized as the state, and also required a certain degree of literacy from its officials. Throughout Byzantine history, debates raged on matters of politics and religion, and these often took the form of written exchanges. It is natural, then, for an intellectual history of Byzantium to focus on this world of authors, books, and codified doctrines for its subject-matter, and this volume will indeed do so. But before we commit to this approach, two important qualifications must be made.

First, we traditionally organize our studies according to texts that have survived, focusing on authors as the building-blocks of analysis, but intellectual history was by no means textually limited. Many debates took place orally (whether primarily or initially so), and the texts that we have record only one or two voices in them, sometimes after they were settled. Also, some of our texts aim to capture or reflect oral media such as speeches (that were later "published" in writing), debates (written up in the form of "dialogues"), and proceedings of meetings (such as Councils), whereas others were written with oral presentation in mind, including speeches, epistolography, curricular philosophy, and in some cases even historiography. Thus, we should think in terms not of a polarity between "orality" and "textuality," but rather of a spectrum of discourse in which some written genres emerged from an oral background to capture one side or only one moment in a primarily oral debate. For all its (rightly) vaunted literacy, Byzantium was still mostly an oral culture. Yet the groundwork has not been laid in the field that would enable an intellectual history such as this to have an oral component. It remains a desideratum.

The second caveat is an extension of the first. Just as texts do not capture the sum of Byzantine intellectual history, intellectual activity was not limited to the world of bishops and elite lay authors, specifically to those whose works managed to survive, whether by accident or design. Every human being has an intellectual biography, though that of most Byzantines lies beyond our reach, and there is no guarantee that the few whom we know were more interesting or more important than the millions that are lost to us. We still (wrongly) think of paideia in terms of texts, yet it was possible through the channels of oral culture alone, especially by attending church and memorizing the key texts that were recited there, for the average Byzantine to acquire a substantial religious education. And the ability to think critically about the content of that education did not necessarily require a familiarity with, say, Aristotle, any more than it does now.¹ Unfortunately, apart from tentative studies of village culture and popular politics in Constantinople, the groundwork has not yet been laid for a People's Intellectual History of Byzantium.

A further distinction is now necessary. Our authors generally did not come from the super-elite: few of them were emperors, leading senators, owners of vast estates, or generals, but many were the latter's secretaries, mid-level officials, courtiers, along with bishops, priests, deacons, and monks, a large number of whom had humble social origins. In other words, most of our texts come from the service class directly below the truly powerful. This class had many privileges compared to the majority of the population, but also vulnerabilities. The loss of patronage and salary could be devastating. Second, our texts were for the most part not generated on behalf of institutions. To be sure, the Byzantine Church was probably the leading institution in terms of the production of texts and documents pertaining to intellectual history, as it had stakes in the maintenance of authority over certain spheres of thought. Few Byzantine monasteries had a sustained impact on the empire's intellectual life (as did, for example, that of Stoudios), though they played a great role in copying and transmitting texts. Still, it is not clear that new works written by individual monks within them enjoyed the sanction of the institution when (or if) they were disseminated. The state produced even less in this regard (we might take imperial panegyrics as a genre that reflected its priorities). In sum, for the most part our subject-matter was produced by individual authors writing probably on their own initiative, backed only by their personal name-recognition, office, or patron. Their fate in the market of ideas could not be known in advance. Some were forgotten or ignored in their own time, or unexpectedly condemned as heretics, while others managed to reformulate Orthodoxy and become saints.

These, in a nutshell, are the social contours of Byzantine intellectual history. What about its disciplinary contours? These are harder to discuss, because among the many subfields of Byzantine Studies, intellectual history is so far the least developed, in fact it hovers tenuously between existence and non-existence and is liable to be conflated with related and adjacent modes of inquiry. Few Byzantinists have ever openly admitted to intellectual history (possibly only one); what we tend to have instead are books with theology, dogma, or philosophy in their titles. The

rest of this section proposes a model for this promising field which attempts to define it against the background of other ways of arranging and studying the same material.

Our proposal generally follows the models of intellectual history that are practiced in many other fields, though it will likely encounter resistance, stemming from the particular and peculiar biases and ingrained assumptions of Byzantine Studies. We do not here claim to speak for the other contributors to this volume, nor can we present a "safe" consensus that will be relatively uncontroversial. There can be no consensus here, in part because the field of Byzantine intellectual history does not yet really exist, so in carving it out of existing scholarly practices we will necessarily engage in controversy. Conversely, we do not intend for our (provisional) model to be limited to this volume: there is scope for much more research to be done in the future. We hope that intellectual historians come out of the shadows cast by the current configurations and emphases of the field. The study of Byzantium has traditionally focused on its political, military, diplomatic, social, economic, and ecclesiastical-religious history, for which texts — or rather brief excerpts of texts that are more often than not removed from their context — are used as "evidence." Using texts as a means, in an instrumental way, has not been conducive to the emergence of intellectual history. For both heuristic and substantive reasons, intellectual life needs to be conceptually distinguished from the needs and preoccupations of other ways of looking at history: while sometimes they overlap, there are times and contexts when they diverge. For example, historians have abandoned the idea that political and economic history must march in step; we now know that political and imperial failures in the eleventh century were nevertheless accompanied by economic and demographic growth. So too we should distinguish intellectual history from, say, political history. For instance, the imperial decline of the Palaiologan empire was accompanied by remarkable experimentation and innovation in many areas of intellectual life, but this did not happen, by contrast, during the imperial collapse of the seventh century. Accordingly, a reign that was "great" in terms of military history need not have also patronized literature. Shifts in social

history were not necessarily accompanied by new intellectual models (viewed perhaps as their epiphenomena).

The same disjunction should be applied to the level of the individual. Intellectual identity can be different from social or religious identity. Just because a person goes to church, or says the right words in contexts when they are required, does not mean that his thinking is orthodox in the way that contemporaries understood and valued orthodoxy. We cannot deny that a person was preoccupied with "pagan" thoughts on the grounds that he did not also go around performing pagan sacrifices: social conformity (or its opposite) is not the issue. The history of heresy in Byzantium makes it clear that deviations from the norm did not necessarily imply one's parting from the ritual of the Church. In effect, no amount of evidence about a person's social life can predetermine the content of his or her intellectual identity, and it should, accordingly, not limit our options when it comes to its interpretation (to give a modern cautionary tale, consider the case of Mother Teresa, whose diaries present a spiritual profile riddled with doubt and insecurity in the faith, at odds with her public profile). Thus, different methods and assumptions are appropriate to establish the existential sites of our authors' lives that are studied by different subdisciplines, and these must include theology and the history of philosophy. The study of intellectual history should be taken at face value as distinct while remaining in open dialogue with all others.

As stressed in the previous section, intellectual history should not be seen or practiced in isolation from other types of history, with which it is mutually imbricated in more ways than can be described here. It does not occur in a vacuum, and so context is critically important. If we could summarize the middle ground that we aim to capture, it would be thus: "Ideas mattered, they were often reacting to cultural trends and social realities, and impacted upon them with what we might call an autonomous force; at the same time, however, they were always produced by specific authors reacting to their circumstances, whether immediate or general, and their existential valence and historical impact cannot be fully accounted for by general cultural, political, or social factors." Changes in the

Byzantine sociopolitical framework caused ideas to shift, fade away, or reemerge, but the reverse could happen just as well. For example, Byzantine theological controversies, which obviously had a major impact on politics, society, and ideology, have never been successfully explained as expressions of other, underlying historical factors (e.g. social or ethnic struggles); instead, through mechanisms that have yet to be explained, differences in strongly held beliefs somehow created polarized social blocks. There is, of course, no way to sort out the reciprocal causal relationships between intellectual and non-intellectual factors and existential sites. In all fields, historians view events as driven by ideas (or ideologies) to a greater or lesser extent, and our contributors fall along different parts of this spectrum whenever they engage with this specific issue.

Despite its emphasis on cultural, economic, and social history, Byzantine Studies obviously does not entirely lack traditions of intellectual history. One substantial area of research, for obvious reasons, is theology.

But for long the study of Byzantine theology either operated on a level of almost pure academic abstraction, or assumed a confessional vantage point that often claimed to be a natural continuation of the Byzantine tradition itself. Having said that, scholarly exponents of Orthodox theology are immensely useful guides who keep the field grounded in the key texts and concepts, a service whose value increases when they are used as correctives to more flighty readings of the texts prompted by au courant literary theories (which tend, for instance, to dissolve the boundaries of "Christianity" or "Orthodoxy" and make them compatible with nearly anything — thus presupposing a viewpoint as unhistorical or ahistorical as any religious doctrine). On the other hand, the scope for a truly critical approach (beyond exposition) in exegetical scholarship is limited to subordinate aspects of the arguments. While confessional bias remains an issue — and one, moreover, that is rarely acknowledged — the study of theology has recently made tremendous advances, producing critical and historically embedded studies of religious-intellectual history,

especially, in the case of Byzantium, of Orthodox—Catholic relations.

"Philosophy" in Byzantium (or, more problematically, "Byzantine philosophy") is a controversial area for other reasons. For long this field was served by B. Tatakis' brief and rather inadequate survey from 1949 (published in English translation in 2003, despite being hopelessly outdated). The study of philosophy in Byzantium has recently entered a new and vigorous phase, producing stimulating readings, especially of the Komnenian period and after. But, as Chapter 16 of this volume proposes, fundamental conceptual problems remain, or have been skirted. Most importantly, there is still no definition or consensus on what exactly might pass as philosophy in Byzantium: Was it anything that the Byzantines said it was, including the feats of physical self-denial practiced by ascetics? Can theology or scriptural revelation, which most of them took to be "true philosophy," ipso facto count as philosophy for modern analysis? Such an inclusive approach would not pass muster in a department of philosophy, so by what standard are we to find philosophy in Byzantine texts? It sometimes seems as if this growing subfield is agreeing to pretend that the fundamental conceptual issues have been solved. What it tends to produce in the meantime are philologically oriented studies which take the form "Byzantine thinker X's use of ancient thinker Y's concept of Z," focusing on commentaries and thereby skirting the question of what philosophy is — or should be — as an analytical category. At any rate, whether or not the Byzantines produced much that properly counts as philosophy according to ancient and modern criteria, the Byzantine record manifests with clarity a profound preoccupation with the challenges posed by philosophy to a system of theological Orthodoxy that wanted to use philosophy for many of its own purposes but not grant it epistemic autonomy. It may be said that Byzantine thinkers were obsessed with the tension between "inner" and "outer" wisdom, as they experienced it. Thus, the history of the concept of "philosophy" at their hands, as a perennial tension embedded in this culture that was in different ways both Hellenic and Christian, is just as interesting as any original philosophy they may have produced. We look forward to vigorous

debates on this, as philosophy itself deserves no less.

Theology and philosophy — however defined and approached — do not exhaust the remit of intellectual history, which this volume takes in an expansive sense to include engagement with classical literature, the theorization of rhetoric, various technical fields, and more. This brings us to what is likely the biggest challenge faced by our emerging field in its efforts to achieve self-definition: the recent growth in the study of Byzantine "literature," an altogether salutary development but one which itself faces challenges of definition. On one level, this is the study of the literary aspects of all the texts out of which textual-intellectual history must necessarily be built. These two fields need not be competitors, of course, and in fact they must work together. Specifically, analysis of the ideas in any text must rest on a firm understanding of the goals and contextual constraints of the genre of writing in each instance; it must also factor in the "rhetorical moment" of its composition, the text's specific circumstances and (often unacknowledged) specific targets. Byzantine authors will often make abstract, depersonalized arguments which seem to be making a general "intellectual" case, even if in practice they are marshaling those arguments to gain an advantage in a specific debate, and might happily abandon them, or use their opposites, when caught up in a different fight. How did Byzantine authors find ways to innovate and break out of the rhetorical conventions within which they thought when they needed to? How far did they (or could they) expect their thought to be applied beyond the situational needs of the rhetorical moment?

The recent spur of literary-historical analysis has taught us a lot about this aspect of Byzantine writing, though it is a problem faced by intellectual historians of any period or society. But "literature" and intellectual history do not overlap as analytical categories to the degree that some philologists turned literary critics seem to think, or at least not always on the terms that they propose. It used to be the case, until past the mid-twentieth century in fact, that the editor of a Byzantine text would provide an introduction to the author that often counted in the field thereafter as the standard

discussion of his ideas (one thinks, for example, of introductions provided by L.G. Westerink). The parallel history of literary and intellectual analysis reached its apex (and likely terminus) in the massive surveys of Byzantine secular and ecclesiastical writings by H. Hunger and H.-G. Beck, which are still standard points of reference. Their division of texts into fields and genres formed the starting point for subsequent research and is still generally respected. In recent decades, however, the development of Byzantine literary studies has taken that branch of research in new directions which, while exciting, do not always serve the needs and interests of intellectual history. Specifically, it is not clear that Byzantine literature is always defined so as to include what authors and texts had to say, as opposed to how they said it, to whom they said it, and why. Thus, we now have sophisticated analyses of the rhetorical structures, modalities, and innovations of authors, texts, and genres; of their imagery; of their engagement with tradition; of concepts of authorship and constructions of social-authorial personae for the presentation and reception of their work; as well as of the networks of patronage and social occasions that framed their works and defined their intentionality — all well and good, but in the end some studies avoid discussing whether these authors expressed interesting ideas in their works that are worth discussing as such. Were there intellectual (rather than socio-rhetorical) purposes for which this whole apparatus of literary composition was set into motion? A recent study of Byzantine poetry, while stimulating in all those other fronts, answers No to this question, which is candid but strikes us as improbable and harkens disquietingly to older prejudices that the Byzantines had nothing really new or interesting to say.

A final challenge to which we must draw attention is the persistent tendency by the field to homogenize Byzantine society — politically, religiously, intellectually — and to subordinate individuals to normative ideas that allegedly exerted a stranglehold on the mind of the entire population. Study after study claims or assumes that "the Byzantines" could not conceive a particular radical, heterodox, or supposedly modern idea because they could not think outside the box of their imperial-Orthodox framework, a framework that is

constructed by scholars through the selective use of quotations taken from texts valorized as normative. It is thereby commonly assumed that everyone was "normal" in terms of Orthodoxy or acceptance of the imperial system and social hierarchy, and that it was only minor personal or historical circumstances that differentiated one expression of these ideals from another. This can become a true analytical bias, closing off interpretative avenues on a priori grounds. It is not clear why a conformist drive has been applied so dogmatically to Byzantium in particular. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "Byzantium" was treated by many as an archetypical Orthodox and absolutist society, whether negatively by its Enlightenment opponents or more positively by its modern Orthodox apologists: either way, its utility as a monolithic manifestation of an abstract type was too great to be troubled by the messiness of empirical case-by-case studies. It thus became possible to reify the Mind of Byzantium. More recently, and as an extension of the interpretative priorities of the rise of "late antiquity," Orthodox Christianity is seen less as a historical religion and more as an all-encompassing "discourse," a framework of modern analysis. This too produces a bias in favor of seeing everyone and everything as a variant of the basic discourse. Anyone who stands outside would (inconveniently) require a different framework of analysis.

We will make two methodological suggestions at this point, beyond the obvious empirical point that each case should be studied on its own merits and not forced to fit a preconceived model for a given society. The first is widely conceded by Byzantinists, whether or not they grasp implications for intellectual history. Byzantium was not an intellectually free society: there was an official religion, no other religions or systems of philosophical belief (with the partial exception of Judaism) were permitted, and penalties were imposed on those who were found or even only perceived to have deviated from Orthodoxy. "The concept of orthodoxy implies not only intolerance but also violence." This violence took many forms — physical, legal, rhetorical, and social — and was backed by the authority of powerful institutions, namely the imperial state and Church. Their direct interest in the circulation of ideas has left a

powerful negative imprint in the record, which is not often recognized: despite producing many heresies, Byzantium managed to ruthlessly suppress the transmission of heretical texts, contenting itself only with their refutation. Even pagan texts fared better — after they were properly "domesticated." As for living authors, trouble was only a half-step away for any thinker (philosopher or theologian) who said the wrong thing — even if it was not always clear in advance what the right thing was in unresolved areas. Many charged ahead anyway in the unshakeable conviction that they were right, but others, like thinkers in repressed societies throughout history, developed methods of playing it safe, or indirectly or covertly expressing subversive ideas. Few things are as easy to fake as piety. This is well studied in other premodern fields, but has hardly been touched in Byzantium. But knowing what we know about the context, we can no longer assume that any declaration of belief was sincere. Admittedly, this problem does not receive much attention in the chapters of this volume, but it forms an important area for future research: philology and hermeneutics need to be more context sensitive.

The second methodological point is this. The field as a whole is off-balance in stressing the normativity, conformity, and sameness of the culture, and needs to be more open to dissidence, marginal cases, and deviation. One approach that is fruitful when it comes to intellectual history is to assume that every idea or issue was the site of disagreement, and to seek to explore the relevant debate — rather than to look exclusively for the normative core or outcome and premise subsequent analysis on that. For every cultural artifact, we should ask: How did they disagree about this? How was it politically and intellectually contentious?

The normative standing even of "real" existing consensus is not always unproblematic. Those in power obviously have an interest in claiming that a state of affairs which benefits them rests on a stable, morally binding consensus, so one must take their testimony with a grain of salt ... [Moreover], conflict exists not merely between groups but also within each individual as diverse forms of morality struggle for hegemony. No era and no individual

has a completely clearly articulated, single consistent world-view.

No society has ever been as monolithic in its ideological make-up as the Byzantium that one often encounters in the pages of scholarship. The totalizing fallacy of ideology-as-worldview must be exposed. From this perspective, for example, Orthodoxy emerges as less a uniform blanket that covered the culture and more as a site of contestation: its very identity was constantly being challenged, defined, and redefined through dissent and disagreement. Orthodoxy was a matrix of heresy, and its relationship to Greek philosophy was especially fraught with tension from the beginning. While we did not put this before our contributors as a guideline, we find in the end that many of their chapters document this aspect of Byzantium, namely its vibrant and troubled intellectual life. Normative standards frequently became insecure, and individual thinkers broke from established beliefs (see, for example, Metochites and imperial ideology in Chapter 36). Others were thought to have done so in their own time but were later rehabilitated to Orthodoxy according to retrospective criteria (see, for example, the case of Maximos the Confessor in Chapter 24). Intellectual history is premised on the notion that historical agents could think for themselves in ways that problematize their subjection to those categories of cultural and social history that dominate the study of late antiquity and Byzantium today.

Byzantine intellectual history must, therefore, historicize confessional theology; adopt rigorous standards and definitions against a too-permissive notion of philosophy; insist on ideas, concepts, and debates against the formalist tendency of literary study to limit its analysis with genres, authorial modalities, and the constraints of the rhetorical moment; and look beyond the ideological formal orders and limitation that the field has sought to impose on all Byzantine thinkers a priori. We hope that the cumulative effect of this volume will be to give this emerging subfield its own voice and focus.

The Structure of this Volume

The overall shape of this volume and the major decisions that we made at its inception should be clear from the table of contents. In terms of

approach, we commissioned authoritative discussions of the "state of the field" in each topic, drawing on a mix of established scholars and newer voices. Contributors were given room to make original arguments if warranted, while still covering the important authors, ideas, and themes. Our imagined readership consisted not primarily of experts in each topic but of students and scholars from adjacent fields (for example, Classical, Medieval, Islamic, Renaissance, and Early Modern Studies) who want to know more about this important aspect of Byzantium. The volume should, however, be just as useful to Byzantinists. First, even experts in the various areas will find that the chapters make original arguments that can emerge only from synthetic overviews that eschew hyper-specialization on one text or author. Second, no one knows equally all the fields covered here, certainly not in their dynamic combination and juxtaposition, and many of them have not received a synthetic survey in many decades — or ever. In this way, we aimed to consolidate the current state of Byzantine intellectual history and provide a platform for the growth that is sure to come.

Though both editors have track records of eccentric, revisionist scholarship, we opted in this case for a more conservative approach, especially in the selection of topics. The Byzantines thought and wrote about a great many things, and there are perhaps no absolute standards by which some topics can be included and others excluded. The criteria that we used to select topics for coverage included (a) the bulk of the surviving material relating to a topic, as well as the resilience of ideas related to it, which loosely correlates to the intensity and popularity of Byzantine interest in it; (b) the particularity and discrete identity of any one topic relative to others, especially as expressed in the existence of distinct genres devoted to their exploration; for example, contributions bearing a field-specific title (e.g. relating to astronomy or rhetoric) indicate that the Byzantines themselves considered this as an identifiable area of thought; and (c) the existence of a relatively specialized vocabulary and set of ideas for discussing that topic in explicitly theorized terms. These criteria in combination led to the exclusion of equally fascinating topics such as Byzantine thinking about gender, holiness,

skepticism, the future, or economics. [Our criteria would include the exegesis of biblical and patristic texts but for reasons of space we omitted this tradition, which will be covered extensively in handbooks of Byzantine literature (in preparation). This tradition is heavily weighted in favor of early Byzantium (late antiquity), which we eschew in this volume.]

We do not rule out the possibility of editing a separate volume on such topics. The criteria listed above, which are intrinsic to the Byzantine evidence, were reinforced by an external one as well: we wanted to present a volume that would interface easily with traditional topics of study in intellectual history generally, so that scholars from other fields can use our findings and data in their own work.

Another choice that we faced was chronological. An empire whose history spanned 1,100 years and which had provinces in three continents, where texts were produced in at least half a dozen languages, presents an unwieldy mass of materials. For a number of reasons, we decided to focus on the period after the seventh century. The early Byzantine period, known also as the late Roman period or late antiquity, has been amply covered in recent studies and surveys (for example, the *Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*), whereas Byzantium after the seventh century has received less attention and never systematically in one place. The sheer bulk of the earlier material, and the space that would have to be devoted to such foundational authors as the Church Fathers and the Neoplatonists, would leave less room for those middle and later periods that are understudied and deserve a seat at the table. Intrinsic reasons reinforce this periodization. First, the imperial crisis of the seventh century led to a sudden decline in the practice of many areas of intellectual life, which were subsequently reconstituted on different terms, as the chapters that follow explain. In most fields, the transition from late antiquity to the middle Byzantine period involved a gap in production that lasted from the mid-seventh to the ninth century, or beyond. This gap justifies the period-break we adopt. While we do not wish to deny the axes of continuity which bridged that gap in various sites, Byzantine intellectual life was not a

smooth continuation of one or another late antique worldview. We therefore asked our contributors to focus on the period after c. 650 CE, but in many cases they felt it necessary to get a long running start in the earlier period.

Second, the gap mentioned above coincided with a loss of linguistic and cultural diversity, especially of the provinces in which Latin, Coptic, and Syriac were spoken, with the concomitant loss of the increasingly separatist ecclesiastical and theological traditions that some of them were harboring. In the early Byzantine period, intellectual life in Greek was, in many regions and the capital, influenced by and in dialogue with developments that were taking place in other languages, but this was much less the case after the seventh century. Only a small number of Byzantine thinkers subsequently read learned languages other than Greek. Therefore, while we are strongly in favor of inter-linguistic and cross-cultural study, we see intellectual life in Byzantium after the end of antiquity as essentially a Greek phenomenon. Parallel handbooks (in preparation) on Byzantine literary history have made the same choice. Third, to a far greater degree than in late antiquity, Byzantine intellectual life took place within an Orthodox Christian frame of reference. This is not to deny that individual thinkers took their engagement with pagan thought "too far," as exponents of official doctrine and political authorities saw it. But in the middle and later periods this phenomenon assumed different forms of expression: it was not supported by a thriving non-Christian intellectual scene. By 550 CE, the Church and its allies in the administration had driven it out of existence. We did not, however, want to commit to a full and representative coverage of the end of pagan thought (which, we believe, has been presented in far too irenic colors recently). Still, individual contributions make clear the extent to which late antique Hellenizing thought lived on in the works of later thinkers, whether as a resource under "containment" or as a potentially revived threat.

As many of the chapters in this volume make clear, the Byzantines often divided their intellectual patrimony into its pagan and Christian components, each of which had canonical authors for various

genres and fields. It is a commonplace to say that being educated in Byzantium meant that one had studied those canonical texts. But this had implications that are worth stating. Being educated did not, as it does today, mean that one was necessarily up-to-date on recent work. Indeed, it poses the question of whether Byzantine intellectual history was linear and accumulative, with each period building on the advances of its immediate predecessor. In many fields, it seems rather that each thinker was looking back to the culture's ancient and patristic sources, jumping over much that came in between — or pretending to do so. This phenomenon tends to defeat the effort to write a linear, progressive, and integrated history. A thematic approach works better, which allows our contributors to assess the extent to which each field built upon recent advances or looked to the past.

In the end, periodization is largely a convenience for organizing material according to educational or academic typologies, "for the sake of instruction" as a Platonist commentator might put it. In substantive intellectual terms, period-limits are repeatedly defeated by the long shelf life of books

and the ability of ideas to reproduce themselves immaterially and perpetually, which makes them so radically different from individual persons, social classes, economic structures, and political institutions. The case of Byzantium is eminently illustrative of this. Its political life was long enough as it was, but some of the basic templates of its intellectual life were even older, constituted by a selective appropriation of classical Greek thought that was subsequently overlaid, or reconstructed, by the Church Fathers. These legacies or patrimonies, the classical and the patristic, provided the basic modes and orders within which most Byzantine intellectual life took place. Proklos and pseudo-Dionysios loom large in debates that took place many hundreds of years after their time. Julian the Apostate and "the pagan scare" continued to influence the way that theologians patrolled the borders of truth a thousand years after the last pagan emperor died, as his avatar was firmly lodged in their view of the world: the Byzantines never "got over" Julian, who for them stood for the possibility that the pagan thought-world might rise

up and live again. Thus, the concept and viability of a pagan worldview was constantly present in Byzantine thought. To repeatedly deny an idea often amounts to preserving and perpetuating it. Thus, we encouraged our authors of chapters to reflect on classical or late antique material, to whatever degree deemed necessary to explain later developments. The volume thus has a flexible approach to periodization, while keeping its focus on the middle and later periods.

Contents

Introduction Niketas Siniossoglou and Anthony Kaldellis

Part I. The Transmission of Knowledge:

1. Institutional settings: the court, schools, church, and monasteries Jonathan Harris

2. Byzantine books Inmaculada Pérez

Martín

3. Questions and answers Stephanos

Efthymiades

4. Classical scholarship: the Byzantine

contribution Eleanor Dickey

5. Intellectual exchanges with the Arab

world Dimitris Gutas, Anthony Kaldellis

and Brian Long

Part II. Sciences of the Word:

6. Rhetoric and rhetorical theory Stratis

Papaioannou

7. Byzantine literary criticism and the

classical heritage Manolis Bourbouhakis

8. Theories of art Charles Barber

9. Legal thought Bernard Stolte

Part III. Sciences of the World:

10. Conceptions of science in Byzantium

Dominic O'Meara

11. Astronomy Anne Tihon

12. Astrology Paul Magdalino

13. Magic and the occult sciences Richard

Greenfield

14. Alchemy Gerasimos Merianos

15. Medical thought and practice Timothy

S. Miller

Part IV. Philosophy and Theology in

Middle Byzantium:

16. Philosophy and 'Byzantine philosophy'

Dimitris Gutas and Niketas Siniossoglou

17. The formation of the Patristic Tradition

John A. McGuckin

Section 1. Platonic Themes:

18. The Byzantine reception of

Neoplatonism Tuomo Lankila

19. Platonism from Maximus the Confessor

to the Palaiologan period Andrew Louth

20. Fate, free choice, and divine providence from the Neoplatonists to John of Damascus Ken Parry

Section 2. Aristotelian Themes:

21. Logic in Byzantium Christophe Erismann

22. The presence of Aristotle in Byzantine

theology David Bradshaw

23. Reading and commenting on Aristotle

Michele Trizio

Section 3. Individuals in Context:

24. Maximus the Confessor Phil Booth

25. John of Damascus' philosophy of the

individual and the theology of icons Anna

Zhyrkova

26. Michael Psellos David Jenkins

27. Trials of philosophers and theologians

under the Komnenoi Michele Trizio

Part V. Philosophy and Theology in Late

Byzantium:

28. Theological debates with the West,

1054–1300 Tia Kolbaba

29. The Hesychast controversy Norman

Russell

30. Orthodox mystical theology and its

intellectual roots Andrew Louth

31. Kabbalah in Byzantium Moshe Idel

32. Aquinas in Byzantium Marcus Plested

33. Theology, philosophy, and politics at

Ferrara-Florence Marie-Hélène Blanchet

Part VI. Politics and History:

34. Basileia: the idea of monarchy in

Byzantium, 600–1200 Paul Magdalino

35. Historiography as political debate

Dimitris Krallis

36. Theories of decline from Metochites to

Ibn Khaldun Teresa Shawcross

37. Plethon, Scholarios, and the late

Byzantine state of emergency Niketas

Siniossoglou

38. The Byzantine legacy in early modern

political thought Paschalis M. Kitromilides

Bibliography

Index of names

Subject index. <>

[The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.](#)

[500–1492](#) edited by Jonathan Shepard

[Cambridge University Press, 9780521832311]

Byzantium lasted a thousand years, ruled to the end by self-styled 'emperors of the Romans'. It underwent kaleidoscopic territorial and structural changes, yet recovered repeatedly from disaster: even after the near-impregnable Constantinople fell in 1204, variant forms of the empire

reconstituted themselves. The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire tells the story, tracing political and military events, religious controversies and economic change. It offers clear, authoritative chapters on the main events and periods, with more detailed chapters on particular outlying regions, neighbouring powers or aspects of Byzantium. With aids such as a glossary, an alternative place-name table and references to English translations of sources, it will be valuable as an introduction. However, it also offers stimulating new approaches and important new findings, making it essential reading for postgraduates and for specialists.

Excerpt:

Approaching Byzantium by Jonathan Shepard

Many roads lead to Byzantium, 'the New Rome', and guidance comes from dozens of disciplines, including art history and archaeology, theology and expertise in stone inscriptions, coins or handwriting. Indeed, those general historians who act as guides have themselves often majored in other fields, such as ancient Greece and Rome, the medieval west, the Slav or Mediterranean worlds, and even the Italian renaissance. The surest fact about the elusive 'New Rome' is that it lasted over a thousand years, albeit with a fifty-seven-year dislocation from 1204. Across this millennium, the questions of how, why and where the empire survived, receded and (most importantly) revived as a more or less functioning organism – and as an idea – underlie this book.

We take a narrower road than the one chosen by this volume's predecessor, *The Cambridge medieval history IV*, whose first part recounted political, military and ecclesiastical history in detail from 717 until the end of the empire, and devoted several authoritative chapters to neighbouring peoples and powers; its second part contained thematic chapters, on for example law, government, the church, music, the visual arts and literature. No such comprehensive treatment of Byzantium's culture will be attempted here. Our chapters follow the fortunes of the empire, as shifting politico-military organisation and as abiding ideal and state of mind, but do not attempt portrayal of Byzantium and its civilisation

from every angle; however, some important alternative approaches to its history are sketched in the third section of this introduction.

Our narrative picks out those occurrences salient to the political organism, with an eye for the many problems, external and internal, facing the upholders of imperial order from their capital in the New Rome. Unfashionable weight is given to individual emperors' characters, and to the statecraft of such giants as Justinian (527–65), Leo III (717–41), Basil I (867–86) and Basil II (976–1025), Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) and Manuel I Komnenos (1143–80). Their diverse, often successful, solutions to problems of governance are outlined, and a recurring theme is the pragmatism of Byzantium's rulers in coping with plague, financial straits and the inroads of 'barbarians', and also with unexpected problems of success. The dynamics of these improvisations, abrupt overhauls and longer-term shifts are traced through the course of events rather than through detailed analysis of institutions as such, a justifiable approach given that the precise workings of so many of Byzantium's institutions – from the army to provincial administration – are so hard to determine and highly controversial.

Topics of relevance to Byzantine political culture are brought into the narrative, from religious devotions to patronage of the visual arts, and the broader, provincial society revolving around that of the metropolis is outlined. Thematic chapters look at the economy and Christian missions, and there is treatment of several societies, elites and powers that had long-term dealings with Byzantium. Here, too, coverage is less than comprehensive: for example, no chapter is dedicated to ties between the empire and the lands of the Rus. But enough is provided to demonstrate the impact of Byzantium on various cultures of world significance: the world of Islam, the Eurasian and the Slav worlds, and the Christian west. The aim is to outline and analyse interaction rather than to recount every known detail of relations with a particular state. The importance of Byzantium to neighbouring or newly forming societies and powers emerges more clearly when their individual situations and needs are taken into account. This is particularly true of the tortuous interrelationship with the Christian west

across the centuries, and the vitality of the exchanges, cultural as well as ecclesiastical and political, between 'Latins' and 'Greeks' is brought out in full here.

The chronological range of our chapters spans from just after the formal termination of the western half of the Roman empire (476) to the fifteenth century, when the Christian west was viewed by some Byzantines as a potential saviour from the Turks. This broad yet careful sweep takes in the numerous communities and towns of Greek-speakers who came under new rulers after the empire's collapse in 1204, sometimes Venetians or French-speakers, sometimes Bulgarian or Serbs. The ebb and flow of the imperial dominions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is presented in more detail than is usual with this kind of survey, and it shows up qualities of the Byzantine body politic too easily overlooked: its 'variable geometry', a capacity to function quite effectively even without the use of apparently vital members; and resilience, its constituent parts realigning themselves with imperial dominion more or less of their own accord, without much prompting from the top.

The conspectus offered here, at once authoritative and unusually wideranging, should yield some fresh insights to specialists in, and postgraduate students of, the Byzantine world. But it also has something to offer newcomers to the enigma variations of Byzantium. No prior knowledge of the subject, or indeed of pre-modern history, is presupposed, and every effort has been made to provide guidelines for readers whose mother tongue or first foreign language is English. Translations of primary texts are cited in the footnotes where available, and a guide to sources in English translation is offered in the fourth section of this introduction.

Our introduction is divided into four sections, The first – this one – looks at Byzantine notions of empire, their tenacity in the face of adversity and the significance of religious rites for believers at grass-roots, constituting Byzantium's special blend of faith and power. It concludes with a discussion of the nature of the interrelationships between outsiders and insiders, and of their bearing on the broader question of the Byzantine identity.

The second section addresses the book's time-frame and considers possible alternatives. It is followed by a survey of the book's three main parts, which run from c. 500 to c. 700, c. 700 to 1204 and 1204 to 1492. Themes running through chapters that may, at first sight, seem rather disparate are picked out, part by part. The chapters are not surveyed in strict order of their sequence in the book: thus the topic- or region-specific chapters of Part II are considered en bloc, after the chapters forming the main narrative spine. Part III's contents, lacking a single fixed point, and encompassing a wide variety of populations and polities, receive fairly lengthy treatment without close adherence to the order of the chapters.

The third section outlines other possible approaches to those taken in this book, which mostly follow the course of recorded events of political, ecclesiastical or military significance for the empire. The outline draws attention to some more or less recent introductions to art, institutions and the human condition among the Byzantines. It is nonetheless slanted towards topics germane to the idea or substance of empire, whether political imagery, size of armies, or castration.

The fourth and final section of the introduction addresses some of the problems of approaching Byzantium without benefit of Greek and offers short-cuts that may help towards the study – and teaching – of the empire's story: historical atlases covering Byzantium and neighbouring peoples, chronologies, art-historical lexicons and whole dictionaries devoted to the subject. Far more works penned by the Byzantines or about the Byzantines by contemporary outsiders are available in English translation than is generally realised and further translations are underway. These make aspects of Byzantium readily accessible to newcomers from the English-speaking world, and this section of the introduction points to some of the online guides to English-language translations now available.

Notions of empire, resilience and religion

The phenomenon of Byzantium has multiple connotations and even the name which its rulers used of their polity, 'Roman', was controversial. [The term 'Byzantium' only came into use in the sixteenth century, when it was introduced to distinguish the medieval eastern Mediterranean

state from the 'Roman' empire of antiquity. Byzantium is a Latinised form of the name of the city chosen by Constantine the Great (306–37) to be his residence, Byzantion, renamed Constantinople after him.]. 'Greeks' was the name by which they and their subjects were known to many of their neighbours. This was a reflection of the language in everyday use in Constantinople and provincial towns and in which most imperial business was done from the sixth century onwards. To Goths fanning Italians' prejudices, 'Greeks' carried intimations of frippery and rapaciousness (see below, pp. 214–15). Yet a certain readiness to accept the empire's claim to be 'Roman' surfaces spasmodically among Frankish courtiers, for all their fulminations to the contrary (see below, p. 397). And while some Arabic writers in the Abbasid era stressed the Byzantines' cultural inferiority to the ancient Greeks or Romans, Rum ('Romans') was the name by which Muslims called the Byzantines, and the Turkish potentates who made themselves masters of south-central Anatolia from the late eleventh century became known as sultans of Rum.

The very terms Rome and Roman had overtones of unimpeachably legitimate sovereign authority, evoking the greatest empire the world had yet seen. Fantastic as popular notions might be concerning the imagery of classical monuments in Constantinople, Byzantine rulers still acted out triumphal parades through its streets and enlisted the citizens' support in staging them, manifesting the classical Roman concept of 'eternal victory'. Less flamboyantly, the City's water-supply kept flowing through an intricate network of pipes and cisterns established in the sixth century, to standards set by Roman engineers. The workings of this system, ensuring the pure water vital to Constantinople's survival, were seldom if ever set down in writing, and in fact the importance of this state secret features in a late thirteenth-century treatise on Byzantine political thought.

In contrast to mundane matters of pipelines, the supernatural protection enjoyed by the 'God-protected City' of Constantinople was a leitmotif of imperial pronouncements from the seventh century onwards, becoming engrained in the consciousness of Christians in the eastern Mediterranean world. The dedication of the new City by Constantine the

Great in ad 330 symbolised his conversion to Christianity and was commemorated each year on 11 May. Constantine's espousal of Christianity marked a new beginning not just for the emperor but for all mankind, whose spiritual salvation now became his avowed concern. Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, Constantine's counsellor and biographer, interpreted the turning point thus, laying the foundations for an ideology that would treat the history of the church as being coterminous with the bounds of the Roman empire.

The emperor thus became a pivotal figure in God's grand design for believers and unbelievers alike, and the conception gained monumental expression in stone from Justinian's building of St Sophia in Constantinople. Justinian's building-works were undertaken when, for all the pressures from external enemies on several fronts, military feats could still bring confirmation that the Christian God conferred victory, and churchmen ranged far and wide on missions to bring remaining groups of pagans within the emperor's fold.

The association of the empire of the Christians with the future of mankind remained vital even when the tide abruptly turned and, following a Persian occupation, the empire's eastern provinces were overrun by bands of Arab warriors in the mid-seventh century. Formerly deemed poor, divided and readily manipulable by the Romans, these Arabs now acted in concert, united in responding to their own revealed truth, as conveyed by God to the prophet Muhammad. Little more than a generation later, Pseudo-Methodius explained 'the Ishmaelites' extraordinary victories as God's punishment on the Christians for their sins. He prophesied that 'the Ishmaelites' would carry all before them until the emperor awoke 'like a man from sleep after drinking much wine', arose and put them to flight; the emperor would subsequently make for Jerusalem, and his arrival there would lead to the appearance of the anti-Christ and Christ's second coming. The text was soon translated from Syriac into Greek and the surviving version contains an interpolation alluding to actual Arab expeditions against Constantinople of the late seventh or early eighth century.

It also represents the Ishmaelites as momentarily entering the City before the emperor's resurgence.

The Arabs never did penetrate the walls of Constantinople and so these events were not, strictly speaking, relevant to Pseudo-Methodius' prophecy. But the interpolation reflects widely held Byzantine beliefs: that they were acting out events foretold in sacred writings, and empire and capital were closely bound up with the fate of mankind. Sudden strikes against the City by barbarians such as the Rus in 860 were interpreted as divine punishment for its sins, and after Constantinople's fall to the Crusaders in 1204, many believed this was God's warning that the Byzantines should mend their ways before He showed His displeasure terminally.

Faith and empire could no longer be held to be indissoluble to the same extent after 1204, yet eastern orthodox emperors remained at large and upon seizing control of Constantinople in 1261, Michael VIII Palaiologos (1258–82) presented himself as a new Constantine: his success in occupying the City was in itself a mark of God's favour towards him and of God's mercy for His people. Apocalyptic writings and sayings, some deriving from Pseudo-Methodius, circulated widely among orthodox Greek- and Slavonic-speakers alike. The Byzantine emperors' predicament in the face of Ottoman Turk advances from the mid-fourteenth century onwards, the collapse of other orthodox polities and then, in 1453, the City's fall to these Ishmaelites, appeared to bear out the prophecies.

These developments could be aligned with other computations that earthly time would cease upon expiry of the seventh millennium from the creation, a date corresponding with the year 1492. Such computations were commonplace in the higher echelons of the church, and Patriarch Gennadios II Scholarios (1454–6, 1463, 1464–5) foretold doomsday on 1 September 1492. He thus assumed the City's occupation by infidels could only be provisional, now that the empire was no more. Meanwhile, at grass-roots, orthodox Christian faith was integral to Roman identity; even today, a villager in north-eastern Turkey can explain that 'this was Roman country; they spoke Christian here'.

Thus Byzantium is best viewed as an amalgam of communities of religious ritual and faith in the power of God, and of administrative institutions

and defence works, some kept to a high degree of efficiency. True believers, however far removed from the material protection of the imperial authorities, could hope for spiritual salvation and perhaps physical protection through prayer, regular celebration of the eucharist and access to the holy. As with the bread and wine bringing the body and blood of Christ to mankind, other rites of worship and also the decor and layout of the structure within which they were celebrated symbolised higher things, the medley standing for an infinitely superior, harmonious whole. Willingness to see providential design in the domed interior of a Byzantine church was articulated by Maximus the Confessor, and it was further elaborated upon by Patriarch Germanos I (715–30) in his influential treatise on the liturgy. Theological meaning was assigned to even the humblest example of ecclesiastical architecture and its interior furnishings: proceedings inside the church building mirrored those in heaven.

The 'corporate consciousness' generated by rites revolving round the liturgy could hold communities of Christians together, so long as priests could be mustered to perform the church services. In a sense, therefore, imperial governmental apparatus was superfluous, and orthodox communities could carry on even under barbarian occupation. This was the case in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the populations under Frankish or Italian rule were still, in their hearts, 'turned towards Greek matters'. Such 'Greek matters', which did not distinguish very sharply between this world and the next, gave Marino Sanudo, a fourteenth-century Venetian observer, grounds for unease. In similar spirit the eminent holy man, Neophytos, ignored the Latins' occupation of his island of Cyprus, and as Catia Galatariotou has remarked, judging by his writings alone, one 'would be forgiven for believing that Cyprus never ceased to be a province of Byzantium'.

Byzantine writings about the apocalypse offer little coverage of rebounds of imperial power before the final awakening from drunken sleep, but individual emperors showed resilience, sometimes recovering territories after generations of barbarian occupation. An emperor's expectations of acceptance and collaboration from the orthodox

under outsiders' rule could be misplaced, as in the case of Manuel I Komnenos. But after the Latin occupation of Constantinople and the emergence of rival orthodox emperors, widely scattered populations still proved receptive to the idea of belonging to the original Christian Roman empire. Not even the well-organised, culturally accommodating regime of the Villehardouin lords of the Peloponnese could counteract this magnetism, and Marino

Sanudo's apprehensions were voiced at a time when the Palaiologoi were gaining ground on the peninsula (see below, pp. 803–33, 860). Only outsiders with overwhelming military might, bonded together by distinctive religious beliefs and able to count on numerous like-minded enthusiasts, had fair prospects of implanting themselves lastingly in the 'God-protected City'. This conjuncture did not come about swiftly or inevitably: the subtle, tentative quality of Mehmet II's (1444–6, 1451–81) measures even after his capture of Constantinople in 1453, suggests as much.

This is not to claim that the amalgam of faith-zone, imperial idea and state apparatus which the Byzantine empire represented was an unqualified asset, or that it was sustainable indefinitely. The bonds were coming apart as Athonite monks and some senior churchmen and officeholders denounced the overtures to the Roman papacy which beleaguered emperors, pressured by *raison d'état*, were constrained to make. The implacable opponents of ecclesiastical subordination to the Latins accused John VIII Palaiologos (1425–48) of betraying orthodoxy when he accepted a form of union with Rome at the Council of Florence in 1439. Perhaps other, un-imperial socio-political structures could better have served the earthly needs of Greek-speaking orthodox in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, allowing for the development of their burgeoning urban centres, trading enterprises and *littérateurs*. But the plasticity, even virulence, of the orthodox Roman order during its protracted decomposition goes some way to answering the question of why the empire lasted so long.

Contents

General introduction Jonathan Shepard

Part I. The Earlier Empire (c.500–c.700):

1. Justinian and his legacy (500–600) Andrew Louth
2. Eastern neighbours: a. Persia and the Sasanian monarchy (224–651) Zeev Rubin
b. Armenia (400–600) R. W. Thomson
c. The Arabs to the time of the Prophet Lawrence I. Conrad
3. Western approaches (500–600) John Moorhead
4. Byzantium transforming (600–700) Andrew Louth
- Part II. The Middle Empire (c.700–1204):
5. State of emergency (700–850) Marie-France Auzépy
6. After iconoclasm (850–886) Shaun Tougher
7. Religious missions Sergey A. Ivanov
8. Armenian neighbours (600–1045) T. W. Greenwood
9. Confronting Islam: emperors versus caliphs (641–c.850) Walter E. Kaegi
10. Western approaches (700–900) Michael McCormick
11. Byzantine Italy (680–876) Thomas S. Brown
12. The middle Byzantine economy (600–1204) Mark Whittow
13. Equilibrium to expansion (886–1025) Jonathan Shepard
14. Western approaches (900–1025) Jonathan Shepard
15. Byzantium and southern Italy (876–1000) G. A. Loud
16. Belle époque or crisis? (1025–1118) Michael Angold
17. The empire of the Komnenoi (1118–1204) Paul Magdalino
18. Balkan borderlands (1018–1204) Paul Stephenson
19. Raiders and neighbours: the Turks (1040–1304) D. A. Korobeinikov
- Part III. The Byzantine Lands in the Later Middle Ages (1204–1492):
20. After the Fourth Crusade: a. The Greek rump states and the recovery of Byzantium Michael Angold
b. The Latin empire of Constantinople and the Frankish states David Jacoby
21. Balkans powers: Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria (1200–1300) Alain Ducellier
22. The Palaiologoi and the world around them (1261–1400) Angeliki E. Laiou
23. Latins in the Aegean and the Balkans (1300–1400) Michel Balard

24. The Roman orthodox world (1393–1492) Anthony Bryer <>

[Medieval Textual Cultures: Agents of Transmission, Translation and Transformation](#) edited by Faith Wallis and Robert Wisnovsky [Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Tension, Transmission, Transformation De Gruyter, 9783110465464]

Understanding how medieval textual cultures engaged with the heritage of antiquity (transmission and translation) depends on recognizing that reception is a creative cultural act (transformation). These essays focus on the people, societies and institutions who were doing the transmitting, translating, and transforming -- the "agents". The subject matter ranges from medicine to astronomy, literature to magic, while the cultural context encompasses Islamic and Jewish societies, as well as Byzantium and the Latin West. What unites these studies is their attention to the methodological and conceptual challenges of thinking about agency. Not every agent acted with an agenda, and agenda were sometimes driven by immediate needs or religious considerations that while compelling to the actors, are more opaque to us. What does it mean to say that a text becomes [available](#) for transmission or translation? And why do some texts, once transmitted, fail to thrive in their new milieu? This collection thus points toward a more sophisticated [ecology](#) of transmission, where not only individuals and teams of individuals, but also social spaces and local cultures, act as the agents of cultural creativity.

Table of Contents

Faith Wallis and Robert Wisnovsky;
Introduction: Agents of Transmission,
Translation and Transformation
Alain Touwaide: Agents and Agencies? The
Many Facets of Translation in Byzantine
Medicine
Keren Abbou HersHKovits: Galenism at the
`Abbāsid Court
Charles Burnett and David Juste: A New
Catalogue of Medieval Translations into
Latin of Texts on Astronomy and Astrology
Warren Zev Harvey: Bernat Metge and
Hasdai Crescas: A Conversation
Christine Chism: Transmitting the Astrolabe:
Chaucer, Islamic Astronomy, and the
Astrolabic Text

Frank T. Coulson: Literary criticism in the
Vulgate Commentary on Ovid's
Metamorphoses
Michael McVaugh: On the Individuality of
the Medieval Translator
Raphaella Veit: Charles I of Anjou as
Initiator of the Liber Continens Translation:
Patronage Between Foreign Affairs and
Medical Interest
Rosa Comes: The Transmission of
Azarquel's Magic Squares in Latin Europe
Carlos Fraenkel: On the Integration of
Islamic and Jewish Thought: An Unknown
Project Proposal by Shlomo Pines
Index

Excerpt:

Agents of Transmission, Translation and Transformation by Faith Wallis and Robert Wisnovsky

The McGill University Research Group on Transmission, Translation and Transformation in Medieval Textual Cultures is a collaborative enterprise involving historians of medieval culture, literature and art. The working hypothesis of the research group was that medieval textual cultures, regardless of the particular discipline or the specific civilization under review, can best be understood as products of dynamic processes of transmission, translation and transformation. What was transmitted, translated and transformed was the legacy of the civilizations that emerged around the Mediterranean in the last two millennia BCE, particularly in Greece, Rome and the Near East.' More specifically, our project stressed the importance of the interchange of ancient legacies for understanding medieval textual cultures (transmission and translation), by recognizing that reception is a creative cultural act (transformation). This approach also evaded any temptation to reduce medieval textual cultures to mere receptacles of the ancient legacies. Placing the accent on the creative aspect of reception avoids two paradigms that in the past have shaped the perception of medieval intellectual history. First, in terms of transmission across time, the paradigm of "the survival/ revival of the classical tradition" yields to an approach which emphasizes the agency of learned communities in creating and naturalizing this tradition. Secondly, in terms of transmission between sibling cultures, we could set

aside an instrumentalist view that reduced the historic role of Islam to that of preserving and relaying ancient learning to Europe. Not only is Islam's creative development of ancient concepts better appreciated now, but the complex interaction between these Islamic reformulations and medieval Christian and Jewish textual cultures, each equipped with its own acquired practices of selection and transformation, is changing the way in which this process is understood. We hope to contribute to this new understanding.

The main methodological implication of our approach is that the centrality of transmission, translation and transformation to medieval textual cultures can be fully grasped only within an interdisciplinary framework. This framework challenges linguistic boundaries (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, the vernacular languages), religious boundaries (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), geographic boundaries ("East" and "West"), and boundaries of genre (philosophy, literature, science, art). The research group's working assumptions and their methodological implications were subjected to searching and productive discussions at two interdisciplinary workshops on "Vehicles of Transmission, Translation and Transformation" (2007) and "Agents of Transmission, Translation and Transformation" (2010). The present volume is the fruit of the second workshop.

The goal of the 2010 workshop was to build upon the "what" questions addressed in our "Vehicles" workshop of 2007 — specifically, the question of "What were the scholarly and literary vehicles by which the shared cultural forms inherited from antiquity were transmitted, translated and transformed?" In the second workshop, we focused on the people, relationships, societies and institutions who were doing the transmitting, translating, and transforming, in an effort to answer the question, "How did these agents propel the processes of transmission, translation and transformation?" The transition from vehicles to agents proved to be more complex than we had initially envisioned. The papers presented at the Agents workshop, and the discussions that ensued, made it clear that not every agent acted with an agenda. And even in those cases where an agenda could be identified, that agenda was sometimes

motivated by immediate needs, or by religious and moral factors, that were compelling to the actors, but that are more opaque to us. Some particularly pertinent methodological issues surfaced: for example, what exactly do we mean when we say that a text becomes "available" for transmission or translation? And why do some texts, once transmitted, fail to thrive in their new milieu? In other words, should we expand the notion of agency to account for a decision to discard some transmitted texts? In light of our ultimate ambition to re-frame the history of medieval textualities, the second workshop was a turning point, moving us towards a more sophisticated framework of the "ecology" of transmission where not only individuals and teams of individuals, but also social spaces and local cultures, served as agents who shape these textualities.

The Medieval Textual Cultures team was initially reluctant to adopt the theme of "agents" because it seemed impossible to arrive at a definition of agency that was both clear and specifically applicable to transmission, translation and transformation in medieval cultures. In the end, we agreed to give the idea a chance, even without an agreed definition. Our aim was modest: to assemble a provisional tool-kit of concepts and models of agency that would help us to understand something (if not everything) about processes taking place in different cultural settings in the medieval period. From that pragmatic standpoint, etymology, while not as satisfactory as definition, could at least give us a conceptual rope to grasp as we ventured into the unknown.

The Latin verb *agere* that underlies the English words "agency" and "agent" has an intriguing semantic range. It denotes activity, control and purpose; but can also evoke process without a view to an end, or even, oddly enough, passivity. *Agere* suggests action that is direct and even violent: forcing, pushing, throwing, agitating. It is the verb used to convey the action of storms or gusting winds. *Agere* means "to drive (cattle)" but also "to drive off (cattle)," that is, to steal or plunder. The coercive connotation of *agere* extends to provoking or inciting, routing, driving someone mad, condemning someone to exile or to the gallows, or taking someone to court. The element of control

moves into the foreground when *agere* means to drive a chariot, ride a horse, steer a ship, lead an army into the field, and manage or administer. From control, *agere* moves easily into the domain of purposefulness: to take action, adopt a policy, perform, achieve, accomplish, or bring something about, to make, construct or produce, to strive for something, to aim at something, even to be "up to something." The imperative *age* is a summons to action or attention ("Move it!" "Look out!"). Nihil *agere* means to be idle, but also to play the fool or to jest — in other words, to be an "actor" in the sense of a stage performer. Indeed, *agere* can mean to "act like" or "behave as" in the positive or neutral sense, but also in the negative sense of pretending. Moreover, the forceful action suggested by *agere* need not be intentional: it can denote the discharge of liquids, the emission of flames by a fire, or the sprouting of roots and shoots. Indeed, when impersonal circumstances are in play (*rebus agentibus*), it usually means that human agency is rendered impotent by force majeure. *Agere vitam* means simply "to live one's life," and the verb covers a whole range of meanings involving passing the time, experiencing the change of the seasons, celebrating a feast, staying busy, and just carrying on or proceeding. No end need be in view. Finally, and perhaps most importantly from our perspective, *agere* connotes discourse and relationships between human beings. It signifies, for instance, to have dealings with or to be involved with someone, or to transact business. It also means to discuss, to reason about, to argue, to make a point or state a case. In classical Latin, *agere* usually means "to discuss in writing," but it can also signify "to make a speech." To express thankfulness is *gratias agere*; to voice praise is *laudas agere*.

It is instructive to track comparable or contrasting examples of this semantic cluster in the many languages represented in the medieval worlds covered by our workshop. For example, in Arabic, the term *fi'l* translates three different Greek terms. The first refers to action (i. e., acting-upon, *poiēsis*), which is the opposite of passion (being-acted-upon, *paskhein*) (cf. Aristotle's *Categories*). The second refers to an act (i. e., deed, *praxis*), which is the product of an agent who possesses intellect and will; an act has moral valuation (cf. Aristotle's

Nicomachean Ethics). The third refers to activity (i. e., the state of actuality, *energeia*), which is the opposite of potentiality (i. e., potency, *dunamis*); activity is the product of a cause, which brings something that is in potentiality into activity. What is more, activity is not necessarily a product of intellect, since many changes are natural changes (cf. Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*). The point is that the Arabic term *fi'l* does not refer to the same thing in all the contexts in which it appears. Sometimes it refers to action, other times to act, and other times to activity.

For the moment, however, the Latin root of "agent" and "agency" will simply be conscripted to serve as a provisional starting point for reflecting on the workshop's themes. What we have, then, is a term that expresses "doing" in a particularly purposeful and effective sense, and at the same time encompasses the idea of just letting things happen. It has positive connotations of achievement and direction, and negative connotations as well (plunder, coercion, playacting...). It is a word about the use of words, about human interactions, about dealing with others and making deals. Let us see where it can take us.

Particularly since the "linguistic turn," historians have been wrestling with the theoretical and methodological complexities of speaking about the motivation of historical actors or assessing the connection between motivation and events. This workshop made us aware that transmission was often the product of an agenda motivated by immediate needs and situations that were evident to the actors, and yet elude us. The first two essays in this collection look at the spectrum of purposefulness — from decentralized and unorganized, through to focused and instrumental.

In "Agents and Agencies? The Many Facets of Translation in Byzantine Medicine," Main Touwaide addresses the re-appropriation by Byzantine translators of ancient Greek botanico-pharmaceutical knowledge through translations of Arabic texts that were themselves grounded in these ancient sources. To date, 120 codices containing around 60 such texts translated between the 10th and 14th centuries have been identified, but these constitute evidence of translation activity rather than a translation program. The products

were practical manuals, and their diffusion was apparently limited. In Constantinople, the figure of Symeon Seth (11th c.) marks the first major breakthrough of Arabic medicine. Symeon is also typical, in that he seems to have worked outside any scholarly group or patronage network. Sicily in the 12th century was the conduit for the Greek translation of *Provisions for the Traveller* and the *Nourishment of the Settled* by al-Jazzār, known as *Viaticum* in Latin and *Efodia* in Greek. The Greek text presents the remarkable spectacle of a multi-layered composition, with revisions and additions by a number of practitioners — in short, a work of spontaneous, unmanaged cooperation among users of the text. Translation activity in this type of material also varies along genre lines. There are collections of formulae for remedies translated by individuals who traveled from the centre of the Empire into the Islamic lands, particularly Persia. Translations of formal treatises, on the other hand, tend to be made by people hailing from the frontier zone between Byzantium and the Islamic regions. The third group comprises reference materials like Arabic-Greek lexica of plant names. Evidence of collaboration between a native Greek-speaker and a non-speaker can be detected on the pages of a codex written in Constantinople in the 14th century, and suggests a degree of physical mobility between the two cultural spheres. The historical moment may have played a role here, for the end of the caliphate and the recovery of Byzantine control of their capital city may have attracted to Constantinople Arab-Islamic physicians in need of employment. In sum, this translation activity was overwhelmingly practitioner-driven and unorganized. Its extent and diversity, on the other hand, are impressive.

Keren Abbou Hershkovits's paper on "Galenism in the 'Abbāsid Court" looks at the other end of the purposefulness continuum: a targeted translation program. Abbou Hershkovitz argues that Arab-Islamic learned medicine did not become "Galenic" by virtue of inherent superiority to other kinds of medicine, or even (at first) thanks to court patronage. The early 'Abbasid caliphs seem to have been eclectic and opportunistic in their choice of personal physicians, and Galenic doctors were not always their top choice. To gain dominance at court, Christian "Galenic" physicians had to market

their product as superior on grounds that re-defined and also transcended their reputation for efficacy. At the same time, they needed to police admission into their own ranks, and hence admission to the court. Textual knowledge of a corpus of Galen's works that had both philosophical interest as well as clinical value became the key to admission into this circle, defining the Galenic doctor as a scholar as well as a practitioner. Hence these works had to be available in Arabic. In sum, the precariousness of the situation of Galenic doctors at the court was a powerful motive for translating Galenic texts and transforming these texts into a sort of curriculum. Many intriguing questions emerge from this analysis. Indian medicine seems to have gone into eclipse after the fall of the Barmakid family, but what would have happened had the Barmakids remained in favour? Could Indian medicine, with its rich textual tradition, have been an intellectual rival to Galenism? Or would the Galenists have prevailed because Galenism possessed a textual corpus of a particular kind — one that could be packaged as philosophy as well as medicine?

The next two essays offer different reflections on what one might call the ecology of translation. What factors in the cultural environment cause a translated text to fail to thrive in its host culture? In the Latin West, astronomical texts that we know were eagerly and deliberately sought out, such as the *Almagest* of Ptolemy, were not always widely copied. On the other hand, a meaningful appraisal of what it means for a text to be "available" depends on comprehensive documentation and statistical analysis. This is the goal of Charles Burnett's and David Juste's project to catalogue all Latin translations of Arabic, Greek and Hebrew astronomical and astrological texts, including anonymous and suspected translations. The results to date are intriguing. The translations from the Greek were all of ancient authorities — no late Hellenistic or Byzantine writers. The goal seems to have been to replicate the Alexandrian curriculum, which extended from Euclid to Ptolemy. Yet despite the prestige of this corpus, the number of manuscripts is quite small. The classic canon seems to have been overtaken by a separate Arabic astronomical tradition rooted in Islamic Spain. These works comprised treatises on the astrolabe,

tables, and critiques of Ptolemy. They were quickly translated into Latin after their composition, and the new works displaced earlier ones. Tables in particular were rapidly superseded. Furthermore, with the passage of time Latin texts displaced Arabic texts in western universities, and these Latin works exist in hundreds of manuscripts. There are some exceptions, such as al-Farghānī's *Thirty Chapters*: John of Seville's translation survives in 68 manuscripts, Gerard of Cremona's in 48. But Ibn al-Haytham's *On the Configuration of the World* survives in only one manuscript. The transmission of astrological texts is markedly different. Again, the Greek classics fare poorly (three of the four translations of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* survive only in a single manuscript) while Arabic-Islamic authors do well — only now they hail from the central Islamic lands, not al-Andalus, and with the exception of some Fatimid-period materials, were all writing in the 8/9th centuries. Moreover, the number of manuscripts of these texts augments over time. Ought we to ascribe this to the conservative character of astronomical doctrine, and the lack of necessity to discard outdated data?

Local ecologies of transmission move into the foreground in Warren Zev Harvey's essay, "Bernat Metge and Hasdai Crescas: A Conversation." The environment in this case was the royal court of the kingdom of Aragon at Saragossa. In the decades straddling the turn of the fifteenth century, this court was the professional home of Bernat Metge (ca 1340 — 1413), humanist and author of the foundational work of Catalan literature, *Lo Somni* (*The Dream*), and of Hasdai Crescas (ca 1340 — 1410/11), rabbinical authority, philosopher and author of the *Or Ha-Shem* (*The Light of the Lord*). Both were educated in Barcelona, and both were royal advisors. They knew one another and talked to one another: indeed, a record survives of a three-way conversation between Metge, Crescas, and Queen Violant (Yolande de Bar) in 1390, which involved Crescas translating a Hebrew text into Catalan. They also functioned as agents of transmission to each other, and to their respective communities. Metge was a window for Crescas to the Latin classics and contemporary Italian humanism; Crescas was a window for Metge to Jewish traditions, including Jewish interpretations of Aristotle. Traces of their conversation can be

detected in their respective works. For example, in *Lo Somni*, Metge presents a chain of Old Testament proof-texts for the immortality of the soul. The ultimate source of some of these texts is Abraham ibn Daud, but the proximate source is Crescas, and they appear in the same sequence in *Or Ha-Shem*. Metge must have acquired them through a conversation with Crescas, since *Lo Somni* antedates *Or Ha-Shem*. This act of transmission is unacknowledged and unobtrusive, but it adds detail and credibility to our picture of the court of King Joan I and Queen Violant as a multi-lingual and interconfessional "ecosystem" that sustained transmission, translation and transformation.

Medieval people's awareness of agency in relation to transmission, translation and transformation is the dominant theme in the papers by Christine Chism and Frank T. Coulson. Christine Chism's "Transmitting the Astrolabe: Chaucer, Islamic Knowledge and the Astrolabic Text" observes that Chaucer's highly popular treatise on the astrolabe contains a history of the transmission of this instrument that is not linear (i. e. not a conventional *translatio studii*) but multi-centric. Knowledge of the astrolabe also leaves considerable agency to the individual, in that the astrolabe is an instrument which has many applications, and which needs to be customized to location. This fluidity and multi-directionality bestows a kind of power on the individual, who is encouraged by Chaucer to perform practical experiments and exercises. At the same time, Chaucer exhibits a certain defensiveness about knowledge of the astrolabe, as if it posed some kind of threat that needed to be neutralized. This awareness of multiple centres of agency in a transmission that is open-ended may arise from the nature of the object itself, whose interchangeable plates reproduced the sky in different latitudes or climates. Thus as one moved from (let us say) England to Rome on a pilgrimage, a passage through different linguistic zones and political jurisdictions would be mirrored by adjustments to the instrument. Can we speak, then, of an agency of the object itself in the transmission and transformation of knowledge about that object?

Reader agency and author agency also underpin Frank Coulson's analysis of "Literary Criticism in the Vulgate Commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*."

The focus here is the implicit awareness of the author of the Vulgate Commentary (who wrote in the region of Tours, c. 1250) that an Ovidian tradition was being shaped, and even invented, in his own medieval milieu. Unlike Virgil, Ovid came to the Middle Ages without an authoritative ancient commentary; moreover, he only became a popular poet in the eleventh century. The Vulgate Commentary, while summarizing prior scholarship on the *Metamorphoses*, adopts an open-ended and eclectic approach to the text. At the same time, it shows a marked interest in documenting Ovid's literary influence on authors from the period 1100—1250: Alan of Lille, Bernard Silvester, Alexander of Ville-dieu, Walter of Châtillon, Everard of Béthune, and even the commentator's exact contemporary, Bartholomaeus Anglicus. The Vulgate Commentary in effect showcases writers from his own age and milieu as the primary agents of transmission and transformation of Ovid.

The concept of agency embedded in the word's etymology seems inherently biased towards the individual, the "actor" who drives the chariot, leads the army into battle, formulates a purpose and brings something about. While our Medieval Textual Cultures project concerns itself with explaining processes that transpire over centuries and across cultures, and so is perhaps unconsciously biased against the individual, this workshop forced us to pay attention to ways in which thinking about the contingent and the individual can enrich synthetic analysis. In particular, Michael McVaugh's "On the Individuality of Translators" is a salutary reminder that a translator constantly exercises agency by deciding what word he will choose to represent the term in his source. These choices can open larger historical vistas, though the prospect is not always clearly visible, even when we have several translations from a single pen. For example, Arnau de Vilanova's translations of two medical works from the Arabic vary widely in quality: was the cruder translation the earlier work, and the more polished one a product of his maturity? Or does the difference reflect conditions of production (the cruder version being a working draft made for Arnau's own use)? Agency can be brought into somewhat sharper focus when we compare two translations of the same work, where the translators diverge in their choice of strategies.

The Latin translations of Maimonides's *On Asthma* are a case in point. The version by the Montpellier master (and nephew of Arnau de Vilanova) Armengaud Blaise is longer by 10% than the one by the Italian Giovanni da Capua. It is also more polished in style, more academic in diction and presentation, and marked by unconscious echoes of the New Testament — all markers of Armengaud's and Giovanni's different professional and confessional profiles. There are two Catalan translations, made almost at the same time, of the *Surgery* of Teodorico Borgognoni: one by a practitioner, Guillem Corretger, and the other by the academically trained Bernat de Berriac. Both translations are quite faithful and literal. Bernat used Guillem's translation of books 1-3, but made a new version of book 4. However, a manuscript now in Graz shows Bernat's own correction to Guillem's translations of books 1-3. In listing recipe ingredients, Bernat restores the technical term *ana* ("each" — to indicate that the same quantity of all the ingredients in the list is to be employed) where Guillem used a circumlocution. Other individuals are engaged in the work of transmission in this Graz volume, notably a Jewish reader (a practitioner in Majorca?) who rendered the Catalan chapter titles into Hebrew in the margins. The Jewish hand also added recipes translated from the surgery textbook of Lanfranc of Milan. But was he translating from the Latin Lanfranc or the Catalan Lanfranc? In sum, the finger of the individual points to a landscape whose contours beckon, and simultaneously fade from view.

It is important to recall that when medieval sources name the actor/auctor of a cultural production — especially, but not exclusively, a work of art or architecture — they are not necessarily referring to the artist or the architect, but rather to the patron or Bauherr ("building-lord" — the abbot, bishop or prince who had the authority to dictate the form of the edifice). Perhaps because our own professional sympathies lie with the scholar and translator, we must constantly be reminded of the agency of kings and rulers. Raphaela Veit's essay on "Charles I of Anjou as Initiator of the *Liber Continens* Translation: Patronage between Foreign Affairs and Medical Interests" tracks the agency of this king in locating a manuscript of the *Kitāb al-Hāwī* of Rhazes (al-Rāzī), commissioning its translation, and designing its

manuscript presentation. The prologue attached to the translation tells how Charles, whose realm (at least notionally) encompassed Anjou, Provence, Jerusalem, Achaia and the Kingdom of Sicily, sent a delegation to the "king of Tunisia" to ask for a copy of the *Liber continens*. He then hired as translator "a reliable man, who had mastered the Arabic and the Latin language," identified in the explicit as Master Faragius (Faraj ibn Sālim), a Jew of Agrigentum. Official documents from Charles's chancery confirm that the translation was begun on 6 February 1278 and completed 12 February 1279. The archives also contain accounts of the payments to the translator, and interim reports on his progress. They tell us that the Arabic original was in five volumes, that it was in the custody of the royal treasurer, and that only one volume at a time was released to the translator. The treasurer also arranged for the packing and transportation of the completed translation. Once he had received Faragius's text, Charles submitted it for "peer review" to physicians at his court and at the universities of Naples and Salerno, who were unanimous in their approval. Charles then commissioned a richly decorated manuscript of the work, now Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 6912. The direction of the project was confided to Jean de Nesle, physician and royal librarian, and the miniatures were by a famous illuminator, Giovanni of Monte Cassino.

In his capacity as ruler of Achaia, Charles commissioned a second copy through his chancery in Morea, now probably Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Vat. lat. 2398 and 2399. The prologue that chronicles Charles's agency in such detail was probably written by a courtier with academic training in medicine. In stately Latin, it presents Charles as a ruler who not only loves science, but translates his love into action, and is ready to expend effort and money to do so. But why choose Rhazes's *Kitāb al-Hāwī*, a sort of miscellany of medical observations and quotations which was neither successful in the Arabic world, nor (as it turned out) destined for great success in the Latin West? Were all the really useful Arabic medical encyclopedias translated already? It would seem that unlike Spain, Sicily contained few Arabic manuscripts for Christian rulers to exploit. Secondly, Charles was pursuing an ambitious

Mediterranean foreign policy. Of particular importance was his relationship with Tunisia, where partisans of Charles's predecessors on the throne of Sicily, the Hohenstaufen dynasty, had taken refuge. The transmission of the Rhazes manuscript may have taken place in the context of the diplomatic negotiations between Charles and the emir of Tunis that resulted in the expulsion of these partisans from the emir's lands. It is unlikely that Charles initiated a quest for this particular work; but once in his hands, he was ready to get maximum propaganda mileage out of it. In sum, what we have here is an incident of opportunistic transmission and translation.

The agency of rulers also features in Rosa Comes's "The Transmission of Azarquiel's Magic Squares in Latin Europe" — an instance of the importance of magic and other "power sciences" in medieval translation programs. The case in point is the translation by Azarquiel (Abu Ishāq al-Zarqālluh) of a description of a talismanic magic square in the Castilian *Libro de astromagia* commissioned by King Alfonso X, one of many works on applied astronomy sponsored by that monarch. A magic square is a square figure divided into an equal number of rows and columns to create cells; the cells are then filled with numbers chosen and arranged so that the sum of each row, column and major diagonal is the same. Magic squares are discussed in mathematical treatises, in magic handbooks (where seven types of magic square are connected to the seven planets, and are used for talismanic purposes) and in works which combine both genres. The earliest are in Arabic, from the 10th century, and are purely mathematical. But the first works to be transmitted to Europe were about talismanic magic squares, and their debut appearance was in Alfonso's *Libro de astromagia*. Alfonso commissioned translations of Azarquiel's treatises on astronomical instruments, and it was his admiration for this author that apparently led him to the *Kitāb tadbīrāt al-kawākib* (Book on the influences of the planets). However, only one of Azarquiel's planetary squares — the one associated with Mars — is to be found in Alfonso's fragmentary treatise. The chain of transmission then goes underground, only to re-emerge in 16th and 17th century works of occult philosophy by Cornelius Agrippa, Girolamo

Cardano, and Athanasius Kircher. However, a Mars magic square that differs somewhat in content (though not construction) from the Azarquel/Alfonso model survives in several manuscripts from the 13 —15th centuries. The instructions for constructing a talisman based on the square are roughly the same in both versions. However, Alfonso's version made some intriguing editorial changes to the text that are only found in this version. One of the "powerful men" who could be subdued by the square is a bishop (Alfonso's relationship with the ecclesiastical hierarchy was notoriously tense). Like Charles of Anjou, Alfonso apparently conceived of his cultural projects as part of a broadly political agenda.

Our collection closes with a reflection on the roots of the Medieval Textual Cultures concept and method in the scholarship of the 20th century. Carlos Fraenkel publishes the torso of a research project sketched in 1959 by Shlomo Pines, the eminent historian of philosophy and religion, as part of an application for research funding. Rather provocatively, Pines proposed embedding the history of medieval Jewish philosophy within the history of medieval Arabic thought. It is hard to underestimate the implications of such an approach: what would it mean to think of the sources of Jewish piety, theology and philosophy as springing from Arabic fountainheads? Fraenkel argues that Pines's embryonic project remains a desideratum. A case in point is Maimonides, who felt completely at home in the milieu of Arabic philosophy and its particular approaches to the ancient Greek legacy. Even the *Guide for the Perplexed* is essentially a work of "philosophical religion" deeply rooted in the achievements of Maimonides's Arab-Islamic intellectual milieu. Is this sufficient to justify Pines's stronger thesis that Jewish philosophy is a branch of the tree of Arabic thought? Perhaps not, but the fact that a scholar of Pines's wide-ranging and deep erudition was ready to try out this idea speaks to the robustness and appeal of the model of dynamic translation, transmission and transformation that we seek, in this volume, to expose. <>

[Byzantine Culture in Translation](#) edited by Amelia Brown and Bronwen Neil [Byzantina Australiensia, Brill, 9789004348868]

The chapters of this volume examine the practices and theories of translation inside the Byzantine empire and beyond its horizons to the east, north and west.

Byzantium was a culture of constant translation. Within the empire, individuals from the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople down to the people of the imperial capital, other cities and the countryside, engaged in translating the texts, structures and concepts of their Roman imperial past into a meaningful context for their present. In every era of Byzantine culture there was also contemporary translation: among various registers of written and spoken Greek, and in practices between the capital and the periphery, the cities and the countryside, the Church and the State. But Byzantium was also a culture of translation passing beyond boundaries of language, space and time. From its very beginnings there was almost constant translation between Latin and Greek, especially in the areas of law and the Church. In the East and West there were translations in and out of Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Latin and Coptic (among other languages), and translation of the Classical past to the complex present, especially after the conquests of Islam. To the north, agents of Byzantium from Ulfilas to Sts Cyril and Methodios created the scripts and translated the texts which brought literacy and Christianity to the Goths, Slavs, Rus and other northern groups. The northern polities of the Balkans (for example seventeenth-century Wallachia) and beyond translated Byzantine religion and culture with divergent reference to their own religious or Classical tradition than in the East or West. The reception and adaptation of Byzantine culture continued well beyond 1453, with new translations of its languages, practices and concepts made first by its Ottoman, European and Mediterranean heirs, and then even as far afield as the Americas and Australia.

The chapters of this volume examine the practices and theories of translation inside the Byzantine empire and beyond its horizons to the west, north and east. This volume builds on the presentations at the 18th Biennial Conference of the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, held at University of Queensland on 28–30 November 2014. Additional chapters were commissioned to complete

the volume and make it a coherent whole. Each chapter engages with specific translated texts or practices, and draws conclusions about the theories of translation employed, and the historical ramifications of these acts of translation at the time, and for our contemporary understanding of Byzantine culture and its legacy in the modern world. The themes and conclusions of each chapter are summarized below.

In Chapter One, Roger Scott traces the translation of the first Christian emperor Constantine through Byzantine chronicles from Malalas in the 6th century to Zonaras in the 12th, with reference to the divergent accounts of Constantine's baptism. With particular focus on the chronographers George the Monk and Kedrenos, Scott illuminates the complex process whereby eastern, Greek and more historically accurate accounts of Constantine's baptism at Nicomedia were gradually replaced in Byzantine chronicles by the translation of western, originally Latin and mostly mythical stories of his baptism by Pope Sylvester in Rome. He concludes that this happened in stages not only through the research and compilation methods of Byzantine chronographers, but especially because of the drive to give Constantine an orthodox rather than Arian and early rather than late baptism. These concerns importantly trumped not only proximity to Constantinople, eastern Christianity and Greek language sources, but even historical reality.

Michael Edward Stewart considers how attitudes to imperial court eunuchs as military leaders changed in parallel in both Greek and Latin texts from the 4th to the 7th centuries, and the key role played by Justinian's eunuch general Narses and his portrayal by Procopius as well as western authors. From the unified hostility of Claudian and Ammianus as eastern Greeks writing in Latin, he sees a split in the 5th century between scorn for eunuch assassins in the West and growing respect for their military activities in the East. The military success of Solomon and especially Narses in North Africa and then Italy, and their sixth-century Greek portrayal by Procopius in particular, seems to have then laid the groundwork for how the seventh-century campaigns and ambitions of Eleutherius and Olympius were received in Italy, and remembered in Latin texts. There is a link to the later 6th and early 7th

centuries, where antagonism towards Justin II in West and East caused a further escalation in praise of Justinian's eunuch generals. Thus by the middle of the 7th century, military eunuchs in Italy were portrayed in Latin texts as sharing an element of *romanitas* with the Byzantine East, whence they came, and even as potential rivals, under papal auspices, for the Roman imperium retained by Byzantine emperors.

Ann Moffatt's chapter compares tales of magical travel to and from Constantinople told in hagiographical contexts in three ninth-century sources (one Latin, two Greek). In his Latin account of the bishops of Ravenna, Agnellus tells the tale of Abbot John's return to Ravenna overnight in a magic ship, for which reason Damian, his saintly archbishop (692–708), required that he do penance. West and East both accepted a canon of the Quinisext Council in Trullo on the penalty for having recourse to magic. However, from the evidence of their Greek Lives, it appears that Joseph the Hymnographer (810–886), when held prisoner on Crete, escaped and made a very quick return to Constantinople through the intervention of St Nicholas of Myra, while on the other hand Leo, the bishop of Catania, personally defeated and bound the wicked local magician Heliodorus. The latter had twice travelled under guard to Constantinople and then escaped back to Catania to avoid capital punishment. Precedents for extraordinarily rapid travel are noted in ancient Jewish and Pythagorean traditions, e.g. in Ezekiel and in the Life of Apollonius of Tyana, with elements which also occur in the ninth-century hagiographical contexts. Moffatt concludes that the Christianization of tales of magical travel must have taken place as much in the realms of popular culture as in the written texts we now happen to possess.

Yvette Hunt draws out the background to Romanos II's gift in 948 of an illustrated Greek manuscript of Dioscorides' *de materia medica* to 'Abd al-Rahman III, the Umayyad ruler of al-Andalus. Her chapter gives greater depth to the traffic in medical manuscripts outlined by Maria Mavroudi in Chapter Seven, and the complex contestation of Classical learning and political status which underlay it. Diplomatic exchange of gifts was used to show

status, and express ownership, underlined by Romanos II's warning that this manuscript required a reader of Greek and medical scholar to interpret it. The context of this gift includes the Abbasid translation of Greek texts into Arabic, including Dioscorides, which had already made their way to Umayyad Spain, and Persian (hence Arab) claims to primacy in science, once destroyed by Alexander the Great and now rightly reclaimed from the Byzantine emperors who supposedly had hoards of Greek books under lock and key. Hunt then lays out the Byzantine side of this contest around the Classical heritage as it played out under iconoclasm and such figures as John the Grammarian, Leo the Mathematician and the patriarch and bibliophile Photios. All were involved with the eastern Abbasid court, and with Byzantine debates around Classical learning which Constantine VII and Romanos II tried in many ways to resolve. Like Mavroudi in Chapter Seven, Hunt emphasizes the two-way exchange of texts and ideas, noting that the monk sent to Cordoba with the Dioscorides text knew Arabic, and that 'Abd al-Rahman III had earlier been received in Constantinople using the Throne of Solomon. Thus, Romanos' gift of this particular Greek copy of *de materia medica* was part of reclaiming but also translating the Roman and Greek heritage of Byzantium at the eastern and western courts of Arab Muslim rulers, asserting the primacy of Byzantine culture between them and before them.

John Burke contributes a close reading of a funerary epigram on the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, and argues that it is a response to texts of many genres produced before and after Nikephoros' murder in 969. The epigram is attributed to a certain metropolitan John of Melitene, and Burke argues that this attribution is not incompatible with what we know of him: that he was learned and wrote in the early 11th century. He also clearly separates out the different speakers present in the epigram, investigates its mysteries of context and content, and dissociates its Scythians, Russians and pan ethnos from any historical later attack on Constantinople. Rather he carefully sets out how this epigram made a translation of the memory of Nikephoros Phokas, and his murder, into the early 11th century, by drawing on the historical work of Paul the Deacon,

the poetry (including an epitaph) of John Geometres, the poetic *de Creta capta* of Theodosius the Deacon and the Office for St Nikephoros Phokas. The epigram draws on all of these, and presents a progression of threats and prayers to the dead emperor with rhetorical exaggeration, irony and even parody. Like Scott's chapter, this is a helpful window into the forces that shaped our texts between historical reality, literary conventions and contemporary circumstances.

John Duffy observes with surprise how few early Byzantine religious tales were translated into Latin, then offers explicit and implicit evidence for the theory and practice of translation from Greek into Latin of one notable collection, the *Liber de miraculis* by John of Amalfi. This western monk was resident at the Zoodochos Pege monastery in Constantinople, and translated 42 Greek religious tales into Latin in the 11th century, probably from a *paterikon* which drew on Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow* and other sources. Beyond his claim to using the *sermo communis* so that his work might be read widely, John's translation methods are exposed by a comparison of his Latin version with the Greek of one of the tales, and found to be comfortably in context with the theories of translation of his more prolix contemporary Leo. Writing a Latin introduction to his translation of the *Miracles of Michael of Chonae* from the Amalfiot monastery on Athos, Leo strives for a balance between a 'word for word' and 'sense for sense' translation. He points to this necessity for himself and his predecessors. Seeing this put into practice in John's subtle emendments, occasional errors, frequent latinized Greek terms (or roots) and good Church Latin, illuminates the practice and the theory of eleventh-century translations of Greek religious tales for Latin-reading monastic communities from Constantinople to the Bay of Naples and beyond.

Maria Mavroudi provided the keynote lecture for our conference, and her chapter here highlights the evidence for three aspects of Byzantine translation, and how these might change some long-held ideas (and prejudices) about Byzantine culture. Byzantines translated their ancient Greek texts and models, and hence their own Classical tradition, to suit their own needs, producing copies, new collections and commentaries especially for

Christianity and to serve what we might call practical as well as cultural needs, whether for medicine, astronomy, philosophy or poetry. Though modern scholars have presented this as (inferior) imitation, or fossilization of Classical literature, it was an act of continuous translation by individuals for specific purposes. This is the case, she argues, also for the other two aspects of Byzantine translation covered in her chapter: the translation of Greek texts, old and new, into Arabic or Latin, and then the less well known movement in the other direction. She counters with specific examples the traditional story of the History of Science as passing by translation from Byzantine Greek copies of ancient Greek texts to Arabic and then Latin and the Renaissance. Overlooked or marginalized in this narrative is the influence of translations of contemporary Byzantine astronomical and medical texts in the 7th to 9th centuries, whether into Arabic, Syriac, Slavic or Latin. Thus the Greek to Arabic translations of Abbasid Baghdad led not just to Arabic-Latin translations later by the Crusaders and then in the West, but also pre-Crusader and Comnenian Christian Greek-Arabic translations in Syria and Mesopotamia, or Arabic-Greek translations in Constantinople. There was substantial translation of Greek material straight into Latin, too, especially in the Crusader states in Byzantine territory after 1204. Mavroudi's conclusion is twofold: that productions of contemporary Byzantium also played an important role alongside ancient texts in the translation movement, at least in the areas of astronomy and medicine, whether into Arabic or Latin, and that all the translation activity of the medieval world needs to be understood in context, as intended to fulfil specific purposes in each of the societies which inherited the Classical tradition.

Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides reflects on the reasons behind and results of translation in the other direction, namely Maximus Planudes' Greek translations of Latin philosophy, and especially works by Boethius and Augustine. Through a careful examination of passages from each of these translations, the original works, and ancient Greek philosophical texts, she argues that Planudes was genuinely interested in how the Latin authors had tried to reconcile Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Porphyry with one another and Christian doctrine.

Planudes supported the reunion of the Churches, and thus had political, religious and philosophical reasons for translating both Boethius and Augustine into Greek. Anagnostou-Laoutides gives a close analysis of parallel Latin and Greek passages on human reason, memory, the trinity and creation ex nihilo, and in each case shows convincingly how Planudes has chosen Greek vocabulary hearkening back to Aristotle and especially Plotinus to fit the Latin works into a Greek and orthodox philosophical discourse, helping his readers appreciate the common influences upon eastern and western Christian theology.

The next chapter takes this process forward in time, as Michael Champion traces the translation of the works of Dorotheus of Gaza from the 6th to the 16th century and beyond, with special attention to his reception among early modern and especially Jesuit humanists. Dorotheus was a doctor at a monastery near Gaza, and in Greek prose combined the Christian monastic and Greek philosophical traditions along with rhetoric and medicine. He was very popular in his original Greek, as well as in translation: in Arabic by the 9th century, Georgian by the 10th century, and Slavonic and Russian by the 15th century. Champion focuses especially on Dorotheus' influence on western monasticism and humanistic thinking through his many Latin translations, in both manuscripts and printed copies, and the annotations they bear, primarily those of the Benedictine Hilarion of Verona in the 15th century through to Balthasar Cordier in the 17th century. Through a close study of Dorotheus' Discourse 11, 'On Cutting Off the Passions,' Champion shows how subsequent Latin translations tied Dorotheus ever closer to Classical learning both philosophical (e.g. Aristotle, the Stoics) and medical, foregrounding elements which seemed congruent to their knowledge of ancient philosophy and medicine and their own interests. This gives insight into their own era, but also into debates about Dorotheus' own scholarship, which Champion argues might be appropriately understood as both Classical and monastic. Thus Classical, patristic, Jesuit and finally Counter-Reformation strands of thought entwined in the creation and consumption of Dorotheus in Latin.

Nigel Westbrook with Rene Van Meeuwen outlines a different form of translation in the imperial capital, the conversion of Byzantine to Ottoman Constantinople in the century after 1453 as seen in the Lorck Prospect, a panorama drawn from Pera looking across the Golden Horn c. 1555–1562. Though the Ottoman palaces and mosques loom large in this image, Westbrook and Van Meeuwen show how Byzantine buildings can be reconstructed among them, and argue for continuity of the physical urban landscape with some notable exceptions. It is difficult to separate deliberate reference to past architecture from common needs, especially as Ottoman architecture grew up so strongly influenced by Byzantium. Yet it is clear from archaeology and literary sources as well as the panorama that Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Constantinople shared many features: narrow but straight streets, covered markets, and neighbourhoods centred on religious buildings. The seawalls were also an important constant from Byzantine to Ottoman times. Both Ottoman sultans and Lorck himself emphasized various aspects of the change in religion and authority in the physical texture of Constantinople, but these changes were made alongside a growing population largely inhabiting the Byzantine urban infrastructure on the large and small scale.

Alfred Vincent's chapter examines two Greek writers who lived in Wallachia, modern Romania, in the early 17th century, and composed vernacular Greek verse chronicles about contemporary history, drawing on the Byzantine Greek poetic tradition in their Greek, Romanian, Vlach, Albanian and Slavonic-speaking contexts. He first summarizes the history of this region at the northern edge of Byzantine culture, under native rulers but in the 17th century pulled between Ottoman and Habsburg authority, with a growing Greek population in the upper class. Stavrinou the Vestiar (Treasurer) of Michael the Brave hailed from northern Epirus, and honored his patron's 'valiant deeds' in Greek verse shortly after Michael was assassinated in 1601. Stavrinou managed to combine historical events with mythical deeds and popular poetry to translate Michael into the realm of Achilles or Belisarius, and made him a Christian hero too. Stavrinou's poem was published in 1638 in Venice, together with a continuation up to 1618, a

more general historical verse chronicle by Matthew, Metropolitan of Myra, also an Epirot who settled in Wallachia. He also uses vernacular Greek, but with more religious references, and with advice for the Greek ('Roman') community in Wallachia. Their popularity (into the 19th century) lay in how both authors combined aspects of Byzantine and contemporary culture in their verse chronicles, and urged restoration of Christian rule in Constantinople by different means.

Penelope Buckley draws comparisons between Yeats' translation of Byzantine culture in his theory of history, *A Vision*, and his early twentieth-century poems, *Sailing to Byzantium* and *Byzantium*. She shows how he is intrigued by the eras just before and under Justinian, on the one hand, and under and just after the last iconoclast emperor Theophilus, on the other hand. Knowledge of these two eras of Byzantine culture throws into relief how Yeats played with their ambiguities of religion and art to evoke and employ tensions of antiquity and imagery. He returns repeatedly to the golden tree with automata birds built by Theophilus under the influence of Abbasid ceremonial and Persian decorative arts, but also references gold-ground mosaic icons. Byzantium is central to his theory of history, being situated between East and West, reason and religion. Buckley shows how his poetic reception of Byzantine culture provides readers with a remarkable translation of ideas and images from Byzantium into modern significance.

Finally, Bronwen Neil concludes the volume with a chapter on the current state of Byzantine studies in a global context and in Australia. Technological breakthroughs have allowed the sharing of texts, both primary and secondary, across the world and between disciplines, in ways that have allowed Byzantine scholars to overcome the tyranny of physical distance to a great degree. The field has broadened to include Late Antique studies and comparative studies that have relevance for the modern period. The sharing of knowledge via translations has been a vital part of the process of broadening Byzantine horizons, and Neil highlights the role that Australians have played in keeping Byzantium alive through the publication of translations of Byzantine texts in English.

In any volume of collected essays there will be gaps, and many important subjects that remain uncovered. For the non-comprehensive nature of our study, we crave the reader's indulgence, and offer instead spotlights on various moments in the long and at times tortuous process of translating Byzantine culture for later ages and across various contexts up to the current day.

Translating Byzantium in the New Millennium by Bronwen Neil

The first seven chapters of this volume consider moments in the history of cultural translation, starting from the sixth-century chronicles of Malalas (Roger Scott), through the eleventh-century saints' lives by John of Amalfi (John Duffy), up to the medieval Arabic and western translations of Greek texts, as well as the lesser known translation of Arabic and Latin texts into Greek (Maria Mavroudi). The final five chapters take us beyond the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to reception of Byzantine culture and texts by the Humanist philosophers (Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides), Jesuit theologians (Michael Champion), Romanian epic poets (Alfred Vincent), Ottoman architects (Nigel Westbrook and Rene Van Meeuwen), and as far as the twentieth-century Anglo-Irish poet William Butler Yeats (Penelope Buckley). If there is a common trait across all the modes and genres of translation studied here, it is the free adaptation of the Byzantine legacy by each of these translators—whether they were philosophers, theologians, poets, historiographers or builders—to the needs of their own society. We are now familiar with the verb 're-purposing' for building works, and I suggest that it can also be usefully applied to the context of handing down Byzantine texts and other cultural artefacts, as Yvette Hunt shows in her chapter on the Dioscorides manuscript.

As a conclusion to this collection of studies on the translation of Byzantine texts and culture into different languages and contexts, it seems fitting to consider the contemporary context of Byzantine studies and how it can be adapted to fit modern needs and interests. How has globalization affected the research agenda and research methods in Byzantine Studies over the past two decades? I seek to highlight the opportunities and

challenges posed by the internet revolution in the academic environment of contemporary Byzantinists in the global context and particularly in Australia. I also look at the impact of larger cultural trends on Byzantine studies, especially the increasingly limited opportunities for government funding in the Humanities generally. As in other countries, Australian scholarship is affected by changes in emphasis and methodology in the historical sciences in general, and in Byzantine and medieval studies in particular. These considerations will lead to a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges that our field faces in the new millennium. This epilogue also pays tribute to the philologists and historians of the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies (AABS) who have mediated Byzantine texts in translation to a global audience.

Changing Research Methods and Agenda

We do not have a separate funding body for the Humanities in Australia, meaning that history projects compete with researchers in science and technology for a fairly limited pool of funding. All external funding comes from the Australian Research Council, to which I am greatly indebted along with many others in Byzantine studies of history, archaeology, or religion. Over the past ten years Australian scholars have received government funding for various projects: Roger Scott and John Burke received three years' funding from the Australian Research Council for their edition of the Skylitzes Codex. Amelia Brown was awarded an Early Career Research Award for a history of maritime religion in ancient Greece (University of Queensland), but as a Hellenist her interests extend well into Byzantium, and she is also working on a diachronic study of ancient Corinth, through its pagan, early Christian, Byzantine and later incarnations. Caillan Davenport, also at University of Queensland, received an Early Career Research Award for his study of changing perceptions of the emperor in the 4th and 5th centuries. A recently-funded Future Fellowship project entitled *Dreams, Prophecy and Violence from 400–1000 CE*, combines the study of patristic, Byzantine and early Islamic texts on dreams and dream interpretation.

Many of these projects involve the edition, translation and commentaries upon Latin and Greek texts, a species of academic production that is not recognised by the national Department of Training and Education as a book, unless it is accompanied by a hefty introduction demonstrating 'original research'. Government-funding of projects on Classical and Byzantine archaeology, history and religious studies has declined markedly, making the period from 1990 to mid-2000s appear in retrospect a Golden Age for the funding of 'pure basic' research. Our stress on an objective, non-confessional approach to the sources is partially dictated by funding constraints. Recent Australian projects, however, have increasingly been shaped according to the need to demonstrate that they meet a perceived national benefit. These benefits include a greater understanding of inter- and intra-religious dialogue and conflict ('Defending Our Borders'; 'Understanding Cultures and Communities'). Projects which locate Australia in its Asian cultural context are also encouraged.

Manichaeism in Asia has been a particular focus of Samuel Lieu's work at Macquarie University over the past three decades. Lieu's project on Asian Manichaeism, which spread rapidly and successfully along the Silk Road and arrived in China before the Tang dynasty, is based at Macquarie University, in the Department of Ancient History's Ancient Cultures Research Centre, founded by two Australian Byzantinists. The varied nationalities of its investigators reflect the multicultural nature of the research topic, which brings together several international collaborators to study Manichaean missionary techniques through a close examination and publication of the surviving texts in Chinese from Dunhuang and Turfan and their parallels in Middle Iranian, Old Turkish and Coptic. Incidentally, out of more than 700 projects funded by the Australian Research Council in 2013, this was one of only two projects with the self-nominated Field of Research classification 'Religion and Religious Studies', an indication of the difficulty of attaining funding for religious projects. History has proved an easier discipline to justify for public funding purposes.

Due to the large number of Greek migrants who have settled in Australia since the 1950s, Byzantine

studies and especially Orthodox theology have a home-grown audience in our major cities, and especially Melbourne, where Eva Anagnostou Laoutides is a lecturer in Classical and Hellenic Studies at Monash University. Ken Parry, current president of AABS, is a specialist in Orthodox and Byzantine studies at Macquarie University, Sydney. The Ancient Cultures Research Centre there co-publishes the Brepols series *Studia Antiqua Australiensia*, which includes several volumes on patristic themes.^s Its director, Malcolm Choat, is an internationally recognised specialist in Coptic studies, who has completed a government-funded research project on literacy and scribal practices in Late Antique Egypt, and has been awarded funding for another on papyrus forgeries and how to identify them.

A new Discovery Project based at Macquarie University involves the study of inter- and intra-religious dialogue and conflict in the 5th to 7th centuries of Christianity—relations between Christianity and Judaism, paganism, and Islam. This project, *Memories of Utopia: Destroying the Past to Create the Future*, aims to identify common strategies used by pagans, Christians and Jews to rewrite their past or alter their built environment to aid ideological revisionism. Its chief investigators, Bronwen Neil, Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, are joined by post-doctoral fellow and art historian Leonela Fundic, from the Institute of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, and cultural historian Chris de Wet from the Department of Ancient and Biblical Studies at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. This multi-disciplinary project has relevance to the revision of history that is taking place in the Middle East under Islamic separatists, both in terms of their targeted destruction of cultural artefacts and their rewriting of early Islamic history.

Adapting to Contemporary Technologies

The field of Byzantine studies has been vastly assisted by the internet revolution, and recent technological advances in the fields of information dissemination and publication. Recent trends in the discipline reflect these advances, and include interdisciplinarity or fusion, the prevalence of translations of Byzantine texts into modern languages, and online publishing and language teaching.

Australian scholars in Byzantine studies increasingly endeavour to cross traditional divides, for example, between Classics and Christian literature; archaeology and literary studies; social history and theology; Christian and early Islamic history; studies in Late Antiquity. Necessity has surely been the mother of invention here, as we scrabble to achieve or maintain 'critical mass' in an increasingly uncertain economic climate. The emphasis on interdisciplinarity continues to attract collaborations with scholars of other disciplines.

Translating Byzantine Texts into English

Since 1982, annotated translations of Byzantine texts have been a specialty of Australian Byzantinists, and they have led the way in bringing little known Greek and Latin texts from the Byzantine era to scholars around the world. In 1982, Classicist Ron Ridley, from the University of Melbourne, produced a hugely popular translation of Zosimus. In the 1980s to 1990s, the founding members of AABS (Ann Moffatt, Michael Jeffreys, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Roger Scott, and later two young Oxford graduates, Brian Croke and Pauline Allen) produced the first English translations of some key Byzantine sources, including John Malalas and Marcellinus Comes. In particular, Australian scholars have specialised in Byzantine literary genres that had previously been downplayed as 'popular' and 'low-brow', such as chronicles, letters and sermons. The counter-cultural nature of such work in the Australian university environment of that time cannot be exaggerated. Recent volumes in the series include Eustathios of Thessaloniki's *The Capture of Thessaloniki* and *Secular Orations*.

Another recent highlight has been the success of Ann Moffatt's English translation of Constantine Porphyrogenetos' *De ceremoniis* in two volumes with the Bonn text. Dr Moffatt plans a second edition when the long-awaited French edition of the Greek text is published. ByZA has recently migrated to Brill, which will produce all future publications in the series in collaboration with the AABS. Other collaborations between respected European publishing houses and Australian universities include two Brepols series, co-published with Macquarie University: the *Studia Antiqua Australiensia* series mentioned above, which has also produced translations of Byzantine texts for

the first time in any modern language, and several volumes of the *Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum*.

The uptake of E-books has been particularly avid in Australia, where the distance from North American, British, and European publishing houses means long delays and high retail prices. Relatively small publishers like Ashgate (now Taylor and Francis) and Brill have been able to continue to make volumes on Byzantine studies available online. Selected papers from the 16th AABS conference, along with several commissioned contributions from international scholars, were published by Ashgate as *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society*.

The field of Byzantine studies is by no means alone in the proliferation of handbooks and companion volumes, aimed not just at scholars in the field but also at students and interested laypersons. Late-Antique studies have seen the same explosion in public interest. The publication of these handbooks has been much enabled by the appearance of the E-book, which has the added advantage of being able to be continually updated as new secondary sources appear. Two Byzantine/Orthodox theological handbooks have recently appeared under Australian editorship: *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, and *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Patristic Reception*. This format offers an opportunity for specialists to mediate their knowledge to a broad audience, while also offering a status quaestionis for other scholars in the field.

Online Language Teaching

The languages and literatures of Byzantium (Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic) are the foundation for the studies of its history, theology, philosophy, art history, and philology, but a working knowledge of Latin and/or Greek, which used to be mandatory for those wishing to undertake postgraduate studies in Byzantine studies, is increasingly difficult to insist upon as a criterion for enrolment. The teaching of Latin, patristic Greek and Syriac online allows us to run small combined classes of local and international students, even though there is no substitute for face-to-face teaching in real time. The requirement to teach for seminaries affects the curriculum and content but also allows us to keep ecclesiastical Latin and patristic Greek courses alive. Many more

institutions offer koinê Greek as part of their biblical studies offerings but no Byzantine Greek.

List-serves have also helped us build and participate in international scholarly networks. Our greatest opportunity to do this comes from conferences: the five-yearly International Byzantine Congress, and our biennial AABS conference. We welcomed invited guest Professor Derek Krueger from University of North Carolina at Greensboro to the 19th AABS conference in February 2017. The theme of the conference, which received a record number of offered papers, some thirty-four, is *Dreams, Memory and Imagination in Byzantium*. The International Byzantine Congress of the International Association for Byzantine Studies (AIEB), now under the leadership of John Haldon, plays a crucial role in bringing Byzantinists together from around the globe every five years. The choice of Istanbul as the next conference venue in 2020 is a welcome development and indicates a gradual broadening of the traditional parameters of Byzantine studies. The AIEB recently welcomed Argentina as a new member country, and Byzantine studies are flourishing in China.

University and federal funding for international doctoral scholarships on Byzantine topics has allowed an increase in enrolments over the past few years. Unfortunately, there are still many more expressions of interest—especially from Greece and eastern Europe as a result of the financial crisis that is gripping those countries—than there are successful candidates. There is also a pressing need for more postdoctoral fellowship funding, for both Australian and international students. There is plenty of room for strategic expansion in this area.

Larger Cultural Trends

Larger cultural trends across the globe have an impact on Byzantine Studies. These include decreasing government funding for research activities in the Humanities; the amalgamation of small research centres under large umbrella institutes; and an increasing focus within universities on international enrolments for higher degrees by research.

The Australian Research Council has limited federal resources for funding research in the Humanities. The tiny proportion that is awarded to history

projects favours Australian and especially Indigenous history. Religious studies are likewise not well funded. That being said, Byzantine research proposals are perhaps disproportionately successful. The abolition of research fellowships for mid-career scholars has hit postdoctoral researchers very hard. They have been replaced by Future Fellowships, mainly intended for Australians who wish to return from overseas. From the next round, they will be limited to those who do not already have academic positions. The three-year federal election cycle has huge repercussions for the long-term funding of any research in this country.

Silo-avoidance

The winds of institutional change are spreading a chill through the bones of Byzantinists in particular (already an aging population). There is usually not more than one Byzantinist in any one tertiary institution, and these individuals often moonlight in other disciplines, whether that be art history, English, classics or modern European history. This is now the case even at Oxford's Centre for Oriental Studies, which houses several Byzantinists of note. Macquarie University in Sydney is rare in that it now has three Byzantinists on staff. The most recent appointment, Meaghan McEvoy, author of an acclaimed book on child emperors, was employed specifically to teach and carry out research in this area. This may indicate a resurgence of student interest in the combination of disciplines that constitute Byzantine studies, and certainly bodes well for future generations of Byzantinists.

...What does the future hold for Byzantine studies in the current millennium? This is a critical period for the disciplines that come under the umbrella of Byzantine studies, not just in Australia but world-wide, with funding for the Humanities generally at an all-time low due to the recent Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and its repercussions, especially in the former Byzantine territories of the Balkans, Greece, Italy and Russia.

An increasing degree of secularisation is inevitable, and should perhaps be embraced as broadening public interest in the early Christian centuries, their literature, and their material culture. The focus is turning from the narrowly theological to the

broadly historical, and especially social and cultural history.

We need to de-mystify and secularise our scholarly undertakings so as to reach a broader audience. Similarly, the teaching and research of Byzantine studies need to be adapted to a broader (non-Greek-speaking) audience if they are to survive into the next millennium in our universities and beyond. As mentioned above, it is increasingly limiting to insist upon a working knowledge of Greek or Latin as a criterion for enrolment in postgraduate studies in Byzantine studies. The second-best option is to offer bridging courses for those who need to improve their language skills at the beginning of their candidature.

Technological breakthroughs—websites, web-marketing, E-newsletters, online teaching, print-on-demand, E-books and E-journals—have allowed us largely to conquer the tyranny of distance. The expense of international airtravel is still our biggest stumbling block.

The global perspective is one that was familiar to Byzantines or Romaioi themselves, and perhaps offers avenues for comparison that are yet to be explored. The study of Byzantium and its neighbours may have something to offer students of global politics, especially with the reintegration of Russia and its former satellites into capitalist markets. The rise and fall of empires is certainly of enduring relevance, as the theme of the next Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Studies Symposium, 'Rethinking Empire', suggests. Globalisation has made Byzantine studies more accessible to the general public, not less, and our secular universities are just beginning to pick up on the new popularity of Byzantine military and material culture, as well as the traditional courses in history, theology and art history. The challenge of diminishing public funds for Byzantine teachers and researchers will have to be met by innovation and adaptability to the new global market. As we seek to broaden Byzantine horizons, we stand to gain a whole new audience. The cultural translators studied within this volume would surely sympathise with such a goal.

Preface
Acknowledgements
List of Illustrations
Abbreviations

List of Contributors

Introduction by Amelia Brown
1 Narrating the Reign of Constantine in Byzantine Chronicles by Roger Scott
2 Breaking Down Barriers: Eunuchs in Italy and North Africa, 400–620 by Michael Edward Stewart
3 The Orient Express: Abbot John's Rapid Trip from Constantinople to Ravenna c. 700 by Ann Moffatt
4 Bang For His Buck: Dioscorides as a Gift of the Tenth-Century Byzantine Court by Yvette Hunt
5 Nikephoros Phokas as Superhero by John Burke
6 Byzantine Religious Tales in Latin Translation: The Work of John of Amalfi by John Duffy
7 Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic during the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition by Maria Mavroudi
8 A Web of Translations: Planudes in Search of Human Reason by Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides
9 Translating Dorotheus of Gaza: From Gaza to Humanist Europe by Michael Champion
10 The Translation of Constantinople from Byzantine to Ottoman, as Revealed by the Lorck Prospect of the City by Nigel Westbrook and Rene Van Meeuwen
11 Byzantium after Byzantium? Two Greek Writers in Seventeenth-Century Wallachia by Alfred Vincent
12 Yeats's Two Byzantiums by Penelope Buckley
Conclusion: Translating Byzantium in the New Millennium by Bronwen Neil
General Index

[Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase, Notes and Remarks on Education and Culture in Byzantium from Its Origins to the 10th Century](#) by Paul Lemerle, translated from the French by Lindsay Helen & Ann Moffatt [Byzantina Australiensia, Brill 9780959362633]

Excerpt: In the course of its long history Byzantium experienced two periods of "humanism". The first preceded the Crusades, with its origins and early flowering in the ninth to tenth centuries. This corresponded to a period in the West which was

still a dark age, just briefly lit by the passage of the "Carolingian renaissance". The second was the humanism of the Palaeologans in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, which was heralded and prepared for under the Comneni. This poses, however, the question of contacts with the West and the influences each exercised on the other and the question of the origins of what we call the Renaissance. This second humanism culminated in the great of Gemistos Plethon and of Bessarion, the Greek scholar popurepresented fleeing the conquering Turk, clutching precious manuscripts in his arms. It is this humanism which has been studied, although the true history of it, that of the scholars and their manuscripts before their arrival in the West, has yet to be written. To take just one example, in the area par excellence of humanism, that of philology, the fundamental work of A. Turyn on the tradition of the text of the Greek tragedians revolves around Triklinios, Moschopoulos, Planudes, Thomas Magister and Chortasmenos. But what texts did these philologists of the last centuries of Byzantium know if not those which their ancestors of the ninth to tenth centuries had bequeathed them? And what would they have been able to achieve had not their ancestors, three, four or five centuries before, passionately collected and saved and interpreted what survived of the heritage of ancient Greece?

So scholars seeking to go back to the origins and get to the root of the problem need to study the circumstances and character of this first renaissance. In doing this it will be valid to take the tenth century as the limit, for by then its encyclopedic enterprises corresponded with other needs and another way of thinking. Partly, too, these enterprises were matched by other texts and other manuscripts, for, in certain cases at least, manuscripts had been cut up into pieces for excerpta, and therefore were not chosen for transliteration, and were lost.

The problem itself presents many aspects. One simple statement suffices to show the nature and importance of it. Very few Greek manuscripts, and perhaps no literary manuscripts, were copied from the sixth, and perhaps even the fifth century, until the ninth. All came close to perishing and many indeed did perish. What we possess was saved in

the ninth and tenth centuries in Byzantium, and by Byzantium. Why, And how?

In an attempt to answer this it is necessary first of all to be acutely aware of this break in Hellenic culture which lasted for several centuries.

I assure the reader that for a long time I was reluctant to consign these pages to print. To explore such a vast field which has hardly been cleared is to condemn oneself to opening up just a few paths through dense undergrowth. To rely on documentation which is very often unreliable and so widely scattered as to be depressing is to lay oneself open indeed to many errors. And only touching, of necessity, on a thousand questions provokes just as many critics.

I only claim, then, to present some "notes and remarks", some temporary basis for a less imperfect structure which others will one day build...

The Hypothesis of a Link through Syria and the Arabs

Can we look to the East for the answer that the Latin West has denied us? For a long time the question has been asked whether it was not, in part at least, because the tradition of ancient literature and thought was preserved on the eastern borders of the Empire that it was revitalized in Byzantium in the ninth and tenth centuries. Specifically it has been suggested that the texts the Greeks then set about copying and the manuscripts in which they found them came to them from the Arab world. The manuscripts had penetrated there sometimes directly, but more often through the intermediary of Pehlvi, after the Arab conquest of Persia, and especially through Syriac, after the conquest of Syria. Confirmation of this was found in the influence these

scholars believed Islam exercised over Byzantium from the beginning of iconoclasm. And they believed they found an illustration of it in Photios' embassy to Baghdad, during which he is supposed to have discovered most of the works he discussed in his *Bibliotheca*. This is a difficult subject and one still not sufficiently studied, and there is no doubt that current research has surprises in store. However, in the present state of our knowledge, it seems to me that the hypothesis (a priori rather

improbable) of a kind of renaissance stimulated in Byzantium by the preservation of a tradition and some Greek manuscripts in neighbouring Islam should be firmly rejected. But it is necessary to go into a certain amount of detail.

It is well known that within the Muslim East the Ummayyad caliphate corresponded with a Syrian dominance. Syria had been the starting point for the fortunes of Moawiya and, with Damascus, it continued to be the centre of power of his successors. In the middle of the eighth century when the Abbasids succeeded the Ummayyads and Baghdad (or Samara) took the place of Damascus, the caliphate moved to the East and with it the Iranians rose to prominence. It could be said that the triumph of the Abbasids was the triumph of the Iranians and that the true successors of the Sassanids were the Abbasids. Other influences were at work, from India and central Asia, but the principal components of Muslim civilisation during its early centuries and its most active elements were, in accordance with the very logic of the conquest, Syrian on the one hand, or more accurately Syro-Egyptian, for Egypt's role was certainly not negligible, and on the other the Iranian element. Moreover they were both in various degrees vehicles of Hellenism.

In Persia it was chiefly the Nestorians, especially after their expulsion from the Byzantine Empire in the fifth century, who brought with them a certain kind of Hellenism and strengthened it. They emigrated to Mesopotamia and Iran and established schools. The most famous of these, at least the one best known, was a school of medicine at Gundishapur in the province of Khuzistan or Susiane. The Sassanid princes often called upon the services of Greeks, especially as doctors. Normally they showed themselves tolerant, even welcoming, towards Christians, particularly when they were heretics in the eyes of the Byzantines. They were also tolerant towards the last Greek pagans at the time of their persecution by Justinian, a subject to which we will have to return.¹ It is possible to imagine how, with the help of close, if not always peaceful, contacts between the Iranian and Greek worlds, some Greek manuscripts penetrated into Persia during the last two centuries of the Sassanids and sometimes were translated there into Pehlvi.

The hypothesis can then be formulated that certain Greek texts could have been accessible to the Islamic world, either directly or through the intermediary of Pehlvi, after the battle of Qadisiya (A.D. 636) had decided the fate of the Sassanid Empire in the face of Arab expansion and especially after the foundation of the Abbasid caliphate which was so strongly influenced by the Iranians.

In the case of Syria it is necessary to remember that its special position in the Graeco-Roman world had never ceased to manifest itself. This was vigorously asserted in religion from the earliest centuries of Byzantium. The Syrians, however, were none the less both Christians and contributors to Greek learning and thought. Though they produced nothing original, they were very active as translators. Starting from the fourth century they translated from Greek into Syriac treatises on medicine, physics and mathematics and certain philosophical works. The part played in this by Syrian schools and monasteries was considerable. Inseparable from this was the part played by the schools and monasteries of Mesopotamia in relation to the Iranian world shortly afterwards. The School of Edessa and then, after its closure by Zeno in 489, the School of Nisibis were widely renowned. Some names are famous: John of Apamea, Sergios of Reshaina who translated Galen into Syriac, James of Edessa and Athanasios of Baladh who translated into Syriac Porphyry's *Isagoge* and commentaries on Aristotle's *Logic*. Thus there was established a body of translations of scientific and philosophical works in Syriac (and this clearly presupposes the existence of Greek manuscripts). This was to be widely disseminated from the time when the Arab conquest and the establishment of the caliphate, by unifying the Near East, made such exchanges easy. The consequences for Arab culture were to be very important.

Finally Egypt poses a problem. It is certain that the School of Alexandria had had close ties with Athens in the fifth century. However, it did not suffer a decline comparable with that which affected the School of Athens after the death of Proklos in 485. Above all, when Justinian took measures which in 529 entailed the closure of the pagan schools in Athens, the schools in Alexandria

survived, with John Philoponos. It has been pointed out that it was not just by chance that, precisely in 529, Philoponos, who published a course of lectures on Aristotle given by his teacher Ammonios, refuted Proklos and, through Proklos, Plato. The significance of this at the dawn of the Middle Ages has not been missed. The pagan School of Athens, more or less identified with Platonism (for which Platonism was to suffer so long), disappeared, whereas the School of Alexandria, while ensuring the survival of the Aristotelian tradition and in a sense opposing it to the Platonic tradition, itself survived, but in a Christianised form. Better still, it weathered the Arab conquest and lasted until the caliphate of Omar II (717-720), migrating then to Antioch. I am not certain, however, that M. Meyerhof's attractive proposal can be accepted without qualification. Firstly he asserted, rightly, that the School of Alexandria was still very much alive at the time of the Arab conquest and was the only genuinely Greek school (as distinct from those of Syria and Mesopotamia) in the territories then conquered by Islam. Next he relied on Arab evidence of a late date to reconstruct the transmission, in his view direct, of Hellenism to the Arabs in the following way: from pagan Athens to Christianised Alexandria, from Alexandria to Antioch under Omar II, from Antioch to Harran (Carrhae in Osrhoene) which was already predisposed to favour Greek through the influence of the pagan Sabaeans and Christian Nestorians, and finally from Harran to Baghdad. Things were not so simple, nor would the route taken by the Greek manuscripts, teachers and scholars have been so direct from Alexandria to Baghdad, since these men were Christians and for the most part members of the clergy. Ancient and precise evidence is still lacking. When it appears, things will be seen in a different light.

Certainly the Arabs were not obsessed with taking over the cultural heritage of Antiquity from the moment of conquest. For one thing, for a long time they were obliged to leave administration in the hands of the local population and the Greek language remained that of government. And secondly they showed themselves generally tolerant towards the people of the Book, Christians, Jews and even Sabaeans. In the monasteries of Syria and Mesopotamia, life went on and scientific

treatises and philosophical works continued to be translated from Greek into Syriac as before. Then the Abbasid caliphate, if only because of the extent of the territories it brought together, created the political conditions for a new civilisation. At the same time the influences the caliphate was undergoing, mainly from Iran, made it feel the need for such a civilisation and this time it was to the benefit of Arabic. From the end of the eighth century there developed a great wave of translating from Syriac into Arabic, which meant in fact, from Greek into Arabic through the intermediary of Syriac. There are few examples in history of such a massive transmission of a whole scientific and philosophical culture. The role which the first Abbasid caliphs played in this has not been defined precisely, though the names of Mansur (754-775) and Harun al-Rashid (786-809) are cited. We are better informed in the case of Mamun (813-833) whose mother was Persian and who spent the first years of his caliphate at Merv. The "House of Wisdom" which he founded at Baghdad included, it seems, a school of higher learning, a translation centre, a library and an observatory. Mamun attracted to his court the polymath and encyclopedist, al-Kindi, who must have written no less than 265 scientific treatises directly inspired by, if not translated from, Greek works. Al-Kindi was also very interested in philosophical questions and deserved to be called failasouf al-arab, the Arab philosopher par excellence, perhaps because he was the only one who was actually an Arab. According to some sources, Mamun tried to procure Greek manuscripts for himself from Greek lands, and even some Greek scholars. Later on we will examine the tradition which has it that he asked the emperor Theophilos to "lend" him Leo the Mathematician. It seems that the immense task of translation accomplished under Mamun and his immediate successors was carried out working mainly from Syriac versions established in the preceding period; but it could be that sometimes they, and particularly al-Kindi, had recourse to Greek originals. In any case that was the position with the two most famous translators of the ninth century, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who headed the "House of Wisdom", and his son Ishaq ibn Hunayn. It even seems that, when they could acquire several

manuscripts of the same work, they compared them and endeavoured to establish a critical text before undertaking its translation into Arabic.

In the Arab world, as has been remarked, the ninth century was indeed the great century of translations." The importance of this is clear; one part of the Greek heritage, the sciences, including medicine, and philosophy (with Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Organon*), was thus transmitted by the Abbasid caliphate to large sections of the medieval world. There is point in remembering that classical philologists should no longer neglect these Arabic translations. Current research has already shown that their authors often had at their disposal a Greek or Syriac text representing a tradition older than that which our best Greek manuscripts provide, and closer to the text as it was in the fifth and sixth centuries. Sometimes they even knew works which are now lost.

From our point of view, however, it must be said that, though we may speak of a movement which carried ancient Hellenism in part into the Islamic world, we have no proof, not even a hint, of any movement in the opposite direction, from Islam to Greek-speaking lands, to Byzantium. Baghdad had, within the caliphate, numerous Syriac manuscripts and some Greek ones, and perhaps still procured certain texts from Byzantium, though it seems to me that the evidence which is cited for this is often exaggerated or even legendary. We have no examples of manuscripts coming from the caliphate into the Byzantine Empire. In other words, at this period we have ancient Hellenism clearly influencing Islamic culture, but no sign of any indirect transmission of ancient Hellenism to the medieval Hellenism of Byzantium by way of Islam.

Moreover, this hypothesis, in itself rather improbable, seems to me to be conclusively destroyed by one simple fact. While the renaissance of Hellenism in Byzantium extended progressively and more or less rapidly to all spheres of ancient literature including poetry, theatre, rhetoric, history etc., Islam took an interest only in the sciences on the one hand, and philosophy on the other, but not all philosophy, just Aristotelian logic and certain aspects, more or less distorted, of Neoplatonism. Thus Islam remained outside the intellectual and aesthetic world of the

Greeks. This makes both vain and futile any attempt to explain what was happening in Byzantium by reference to what was happening at the same time in Baghdad.

As for Greek manuscripts, they certainly had been numerous in Nestorian or Jacobite establishments and in some private libraries. However, and this is a not uncommon phenomenon, they disappeared gradually through carelessness or neglect once they had been translated into Syriac in the course of the fifth to eighth centuries and, in a sense, were replaced by the Syriac versions. Those, and I believe they were very few, which were able to survive to the period when Arabic versions were being made, disappeared in their turn through the very fact of the success and diffusion of these Arabic versions and also because of the progressive neglect of Greek.

Thus we have no reason to seek an explanation for the contemporary cultural resurgence in Byzantium in the appropriation by Abbasid Islam of ancient Hellenism. And what Islam appropriated - via Syriac (and sometimes Pehlvi) and much more rarely through Greek manuscripts - was a more limited part than has been admitted. The two worlds were strangers to each other and the two phenomena differed not only in the scale and form they took but in their very nature. It is certainly a remarkable coincidence, since one can establish that there was at almost the same moment a renaissance of culture in the Greek East and a comparable renaissance in the Latin West, but without either any relationship of cause and effect or any direct influence.

This influence of Islam on the Greek world has been sought by another route. It has often been maintained that Byzantine iconoclasm was strongly influenced, perhaps even sparked off, by an Islamic iconoclasm. In its extreme form this theory can be summarised as follows: the first measures against images were taken by Leo III in 726 because not long before this the caliph Yazid had taken similar measures in his territories; the basileus adopted the same attitude in order to prevent provinces hostile to images, notably in central and eastern Asia Minor, from detaching themselves from the Empire and allowing themselves to be drawn into a rapidly expanding Islam; strong presumptive

evidence could be furnished from the kind of war of the images which the emperors and the caliphs engaged in at the same time with their coinage.

No matter how broad a meaning might or should be given to the word "image", I do not think there is any need, in the particular case of iconoclasm, to associate too closely the problems of the imperial image and the religious image; that would be to fall into the trap that the iconodules themselves, for the sake of their cause, laid for their opponents. Certain simple facts call for caution: Justinian II was the first to associate the images of Christ and the emperor on his coins; the iconoclasts simply reverted to the imagery used on the coins prior to Justinian II when they removed Christ and kept the Cross; an iconodule usurper, and one who drew his support from the iconodules, like Artabasdes, did not restore the image of Christ on his coins; above all, the rulers who restored images at the end of the eighth century did not break away from the monetary iconography of their iconoclastic predecessors: we have to wait until Michael III for the reappearance of the effigy of Christ. In the iconoclastic period the coins reveal a far greater preoccupation with monarchic or dynastic concerns than religious matters. As for the monetary war waged by caliphs and emperors over the effigies on the coinage, this took place in any case before iconoclasm. It was begun by Abd el Malik in the last years of the seventh century and had, in my opinion, a political and economic significance which was distinct from iconoclasm.

There remains the problem of the edict of Yazid which preceded and provoked the edict of Leo III. I do not think there is any need to dispute the very existence of a measure taken against images by the caliph Yazid II (720-724), in spite of the more or less legendary context in which it has been handed down. Yet we know neither its date nor its text nor even its exact content. From a reading of the sources one cannot help doubting both its impact and its connection with the measures taken by Leo III. As for its impact, confronted with evidence like that of John of Jerusalem, we should not ignore what Theophanes said, namely that, through the grace of Christ and the intercession of the Virgin and the saints, Yazid died the year he promulgated his edict, without most people even

hearing of that edict. To which we add the fact that in no way did the measures taken by Yazid survive him. As for their connection with the iconoclasm of Leo III, it is true that certain Byzantine sources of the period point to it, but not all of them, and only in the vaguest fashion. Theophanes, though he is the most positive, after mentioning Yazid's death, only says that Leo III "inherited his wicked doctrine", and he repeats later on that Leo was attached to the arabikon phronema and that in this the Arabs were his teachers - but he does not say how. John of Jerusalem is not alone in showing the contagion of Arab iconoclasm winning over, not the basileus, but Bishop Constantine of Nakoleia; we will come back to him. Above all, one is struck by the great number of texts which put the blame on "Judaic" rather than "Arab" iconoclasm. Certainly it is not difficult to understand how the iconodule tradition very soon included the Jews along with the Arabs in the same condemnation and made them share, though perhaps not equally, the responsibility for Byzantine iconoclasm. This was a convenient way of reducing the responsibility of the Christians and particularly an opportunity to reduce the responsibility of the basileus. But nowhere is there a precise reference to establish a definite link between the iconoclasm of Yazid and that of Leo III.

The situation appears to me to be different. Two contemporary but contradictory facts seem to me, when considered together, to shed light on the origins of iconoclasm. On the one hand, there was the extraordinary intensification of the cult of images in the Christian world between Justinian and the beginning of the eighth century. This has been highlighted so well in a recent study that it is no longer necessary to labour the point. On the other hand we must consider the diversity and strength of aniconic trends occurring simultaneously among the Monophysites, the Armenians, the numerous "heretical" sects in Asia Minor whether called Paulicians or Manicheans, among the Jews, and finally within Islam. Each one in itself presents a problem and requires a new study which would bring to light many differences between these trends. Here, however, it is enough to note their existence and, after a fashion, their convergence, at the very time when the cult of images increased so greatly and took on external forms which were

close to superstition or magic. The crisis of Byzantine iconoclasm was to some extent the result of this conflict, this collision.

Asia appears as the chosen land for aniconic trends, that is, from the Byzantine point of view, Asia Minor, excluding the western coastal fringe. The key to the problem really lies there; it is not in Constantinople and the court of Leo III, it is in Asia Minor and among the clergy that we find the oldest form of Byzantine iconoclasm. Even though church historiography later applied itself to concealing this disturbing fact, it is certain that there was a strong trend hostile to images among the Greek clergy in Asia Minor before the official launching of iconoclasm. The earliest sources give a decisive role to Constantine, bishop of Nakoleia in Phrygia, and do not conceal the fact that he was far from being an isolated case. The letter from the patriarch Germanos to John, the metropolitan of Synnada (of which Nakoleia was a suffragan see), and his letter to Constantine himself, are very clear, and when both were read at Nicaea in 787, the patriarch Tarasios had the reading followed each time by this declaration: "The heresy came from Constantine of Nakoleia, it was he who instigated it". In another letter to another enemy of images, Thomas, bishop of Claudiopolis in Cappadocia, the patriarch writes: "At present whole towns and crowds of people are in great distress on that account". Germanos, too, in the treatise on heresies which he addresses after his abdication to the deacon Anthimos, characterizes iconoclasm, the most recent of heresies, as an "innovation" of the bishop of Nakoleia, and recognises that the latter has found numerous supporters in the very bosom of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The movement could not have developed as it did, had it not found fertile ground and very soon support in a large part of the population of Asia Minor. This can clearly be seen through the more or less veiled allusions of iconodule authors and the pious fictions of several saints' Lives. Above all, this is proved by the attitude displayed during several violent incidents by the army recruited from the population of Asia Minor, while the opposite attitude, shown by the European provinces and the army recruited there, provides complementary evidence.

The personal role of Leo III must be put in its proper perspective. From temperament, or conviction, or for political reasons, or all three, he was, or rather became, hostile to images. His first intervention in religious affairs in 722-723, however, related to the Jews and the Montanists. It was in 725 at the earliest that he began to "speak out" against images. It probably coincided with the period of residence in Constantinople of iconoclastic bishops from the interior of Asia Minor, whose statements about the importance of aniconic trends in their areas were perhaps confirmed by the reports of senior provincial officials. In 726 we note the first real measure, which in fact remained the only one: the removal of the image of Christ from the Chalke Gate. Certainly it was a gesture charged with significance, but there was neither a popular rising, nor savage repression, nor an edict promulgated then against images: the iconodule Germanos was still on the patriarchal throne, and did not dream of leaving it. After making some futile efforts to convince him, Leo III induced him, however, to retire at the time of the silentium of January 730. We know little about the course of these events but the silentium must have preceded the publication of an iconoclastic edict about which we know nothing further. However, Germanos departed quietly to end his days in his family home, and if we hear nothing more of Byzantine iconoclasm until the end of the reign of Leo III (741), this is because there was neither any outstanding event, nor a persecution.

This long digression leads us to the conclusion that no room is left for the hypothesis that there was a direct influence on Byzantium from the Arab world. The explanation for iconoclasm must in fact be sought within the Empire. In a sense, iconoclasm demonstrates the opposition between the Asiatic and European provinces which were so different in their entire history and character and in their religious mentality. It is also quite true, though, that in this situation the need to pursue the struggle against Arab expansion and to defend the Empire against the annual expeditions launched by Islam into the interior of Asia Minor led emperors to take measures which could increase the resistance in these provinces. The emperors were, for all that has been said, as much great reformers as energetic soldiers. What is called iconoclasm formed part of

these measures, and the term expresses as much the political, ethnic, social and military reality as the religious crisis, which is the only aspect brought out plainly in our sources. It was one means of strengthening local resistance, of responding to the aspirations or the traditions of these people of Anatolia who were placed at this time in the forefront of the defence of the Empire. It affected especially the rural masses who were both the most sorely tried and the ones from whom, from now on, the bulk of the army was recruited. Furthermore it was to last as long as the threat lay heavy on them in this form and in this area. To that extent iconoclasm was bound up, as was all the history of this time, with the great Byzantine-Arab conflict. There was, however, nothing resembling a connection with an edict of Yazid nor with Islamic aniconism.

Lastly we must dispose of, hopefully once and for all, an old error which has proved surprisingly persistent. This is the theory that Photios found the Greek manuscripts, which gave him the material for the 279 summaries in the *Bibliotheca*, in the libraries of Baghdad during a Byzantine embassy to the caliph Mutawaqil, which, it is claimed, must have taken place in 855-856. This, if it were true, would certainly be of decisive importance for the history of the tradition and transmission of ancient Greek texts, and it would change into near-certainty what I have called the hypothesis of an Arab link in the transmission. It is, however, due to a double misunderstanding, firstly about the date and nature of this embassy, and then about the source of the manuscripts Photios read.

That Photios was called on to take part in a Byzantine embassy responsible for negotiations with the Arabs is not in doubt, since he said so himself. But the date of the embassy is not known. The date A.D. 850-851 has been proposed, on grounds too inadequate, I think, to stand up to criticism. More recently it has been suggested, on grounds which, in my opinion, do not stand up to examination any better, that the embassy to the Arabs, or at least its connection with the *Bibliotheca*, is only an invention of Photios and that the *Bibliotheca* was compiled between 873 and 876 at the earliest.

Between these two extremes an almost unanimously accepted tradition places Photios' embassy in 855-856, and this has in its favour the authority of the *Regesten* of F. Dölger. That is to say that the embassy, which Photios speaks of in the preface and in the postscript of the *Bibliotheca*, is identified with the diplomatic negotiations between Byzantium and the caliphate for an exchange or ransom of prisoners which we know of only through Arabic sources and which began about the end of 855 and ended in February 856. Now these Arabic sources, Yakubi, Tabari and Masudi, who agree in essentials, do not speak of a large Byzantine embassy which was received in Baghdad (or rather, at this date, in Samara), but of ordinary, somewhat routine negotiations for an exchange between Christian prisoners in Arab lands and subjects of the caliph held prisoner in the Byzantine Empire. Negotiators were indeed sent from both sides, but it is not said, I think, by any trustworthy source that the Byzantines went to Baghdad, or the Arabs to Constantinople. It is far more likely that all this took place in the frontier region and, furthermore, the sources mention Tarsus. On the Byzantine side, a single envoy of the emperor is named, and seems to direct the affair, a certain George, son of "... . It appears that the name is not very clear in the manuscript of Tabari; "Karbeas" has been suggested, but M. Canard thought

"Kyriakos" more probable. The negotiations led to the caliph's proclamation of an armistice, which began in November 855 and was to end in March 856, and the military chiefs of the frontier marches were notified of it. In the month before it expired (in February 856) the exchange of prisoners took place and, as was the custom, they conducted the proceedings on a bridge erected over the river Lamos, 75 to 80 kilometres from Tarsus as the crow flies. The eunuch sunalf came from Tarsus to preside over the Arab side of the operation which was to last seven days. There was nothing out of the ordinary in all this, nothing corresponding to the rather sombre and, may I say, dramatic colours in which Photios painted the special embassy which was large and important, an embassy dangerous enough to make him fear for his life, and which he joined at the behest of the emperor. Moreover, no source names Photios. In short, the identification of the embassy which, according to Photios, gave rise

to the Bibliotheca, with the 855-856 negotiations lacks not only any probability but any foundation. These negotiations were uneventful and not dangerous and we have no authority to link Photios with them; the theory must be abandoned. Undoubtedly it would then be attractive to suggest another solution and another identification. Mme H. Ahrweiler suggested, with sound arguments, that Photios, while still a young imperial secretary, was in the entourage of the emperor Theophilos when the emperor set out in 837 on a campaign against the Arabs, and that the embassy he joined was the one when Theophilos, after serious defeats, fell back on Dorylaeum or perhaps Nicaea and in 838 sent envoys to beg a humiliating peace from the victorious caliph who was about to seize Amorion. This embassy was indeed dramatic, dangerous and very badly received. It is still an hypothesis, certainly, but this time a reasonable one. It must be added immediately that it leads to pushing the birth of Photios back to about 810. This meets with no objection and even makes the reconstruction of his career more satisfactory. We will return to this.

Since with the Bibliotheca we are dealing with a work whose place in the history of humanism is so considerable, it would be of some consequence to have to put its date of composition back by probably quite a large number of years. And it would be of particular consequence if we were to separate it from those negotiations of 855-856 which in any case, as far as the sources are concerned, lend no support at all to the hypothesis that it was in Baghdad that Photios found and read those Greek manuscripts which he analysed. For we must now return to this basic question and point out first of all that the course of the embassy of 838, if that really is the one to which Photios was attached, lends no support at all to such an hypothesis. In short, this theory is only a misunderstanding which a correct reading of Photios himself is sufficient to dispel. The proof of this was provided years ago by K. Ziegler, and it is strange that the misunderstanding has persisted.

Let us then for our part look at the texts, that is to say, since there are no others, the preface and postscript placed by Photios himself at the beginning and end of his collection. The preface, or rather the dedicatory letter to his brother Tarasios,

may be summarised as follows. When Photios had been appointed to take part in the embassy which was to go to the Arabs, his brother asked him to put in writing the "arguments" or summaries of the books which he himself had not participated in reading, so that he could gain from that some consolation for the painful separation, and also have some knowledge of those books which Photios had read while his brother was not with him. There were 279 of them. To fulfil Tarasios' wish, and more quickly than could have been hoped for, Photios, with the help of a secretary wrote down all that he could remember, in the order, or rather the disorder, in which he recalled it. It should not be surprising if the result is not perfect, for it is one thing to make a summary of a book at the time it is read, and quite another to do it for a large number of books all together and especially after a passage of time.

Unless one wishes to maintain, not without an element of paradox, that the text is pure fabrication, he speaks clearly. It was when he learned that he had been chosen to take part in the embassy that Photios decided to send his brother Tarasios a summary of 279 books which he had read previously, and in the reading of which Tarasios himself had not shared. It is of little importance that he clearly made use of notes taken as he read and that he contented himself with rounding these out. It is of little importance that he tends to imply, against all probability, that he wrote or dictated everything from memory and at one go: the fact is that we are concerned with works which he read before he was appointed as a member of the embassy.

The postscript confirms this and states it specifically. After the last summary, by way of conclusion, Photios more or less says this: "Here are the 279 works which I remember from what I have read on my own since the time I learned how to understand and evaluate literature. If I happen to die during the embassy, I will at least leave you this. If Divine Providence wills that I return safe and sound, the present work may be followed by others." It is clear that this was written, and therefore that the collection had been composed, before the completion of the embassy. And in particular it is explicitly stated that it concerned the reading which

Photios had done since he was of an age to understand, since his youth. The text itself, besides the sheer probability of it, prevents us from thinking that he is referring to reading done during the embassy, whether, as some have believed, of books (totalling 279!) which Photios carried in his baggage, or, as others claim, of books which he found, without mentioning it (but why the silence?), in the libraries in Baghdad, where there is no reason to believe he went.

It is therefore certain, and this is what matters to us, that Photios procured in Byzantine territory and read in Constantinople the Greek books which he analysed in his Bibliotheca. Was it also in Constantinople that he put his collection into shape with the help of a secretary? This is possible, but if one adopts the solution suggested by Mme Ahrweiler, that Photios, in the entourage of the emperor Theophilus, had quite a long sojourn in Asia Minor in 838 (or 837 and 838), we may also contemplate that it was there that he proceeded to write up the reading notes he had brought with him. This would explain the passage in his letter to Tarasios where he seems to say that he has had difficulty in procuring a secretary. But this is only an hypothesis.

Conclusion

"...this avarice of the cultivated man ceaselessly turning over in his mind the same acquired knowledge, the same culture, and becoming, like all misers, a victim of the cherished gold." G. BACHELARD, *La formation de l'esprit scientifique*, As I said at the beginning of this book, I have not claimed to do anything except present a certain number of "notes and remarks". Do they, in spite of their incomplete and provisional character, allow us to draw any conclusions? The first conclusion is, I think, that the answers to the questions we have asked ourselves must be sought within the Byzantine Empire, in the logic of its structures and its evolution. For during the whole period that we have considered (and that period only), Byzantium remained mistress of her destiny. During these seven centuries, she and she alone slowly created her civilisation which far surpassed the others. And that is why, in this field, too, one of the key dates in

our history is that of the foundation of Constantinople and the displacing of Rome. And this occurred after Christianity, an essential component in this civilisation, had been severed and torn away from Judaism and identified with the Roman Empire.

In the first centuries of the Greek Empire the situation created by the coexistence of the tradition of secular Hellenism on the one hand, and of the revolution brought by triumphant Christianity on the other, opened the way for the most diverse solutions. But we have made two statements. The first is that a tradition of Hellenism established itself in Constantinople in the fourth century and took root there, thanks to the imperial protection granted to the schools, the scriptoria and the libraries. And this tradition certainly represented a non-classical Hellenism which I would readily classify as baroque, an "imperial Hellenism", which was political in purpose, but yet assured continuity and permanence. The second is that Byzantine Christianity, inheriting the tool of dialectic which had attained a kind of perfection, chose to make use of it against its adversaries, and thus appropriated their culture, instead of destroying it. These two facts laid a durable foundation for Byzantium's originality.

It is not easy to understand why this equilibrium seems to have been in jeopardy in the sixth century. The personal influence of Justinian, which did not tend in the direction of humanism, is not a sufficient explanation, nor, for that matter, are the new relations established between the Church and the administration, though great attention should be paid to them. Was it a question then of the emergence and culmination of a much older tendency, as old as perhaps Byzantium, which circumstances might then have favoured? It is certain that the signs of a crisis in learning occur well before iconoclasm. But an increasingly dark shadow shrouds the achievements of civilisation, especially after the disappearance of Persia, in relation to which the West had for so long defined itself, and after the appearance of Islam, in the face of which Byzantium did not succeed in defining itself. We manage to find an explanation for the events; we establish a logical connexion between them which, whether true or false, seems likely:

what is more difficult to understand is the men who have said so little to us about themselves.

The final shape of Byzantium was forged with difficulty in the long struggle against the Arabs and in the long war of religion, namely the dispute over images. From our point of view we can be delighted that for the most part the Greeks prevailed in the struggle against the Arabs. We cannot therefore regret, without being illogical, that in the iconoclastic struggle the victory of orthodoxy was too overwhelming, for the two things were connected. It is not easy, however, to unravel a sort of contradiction. The triumph of the iconodule party was the triumph of a tradition which certainly preserved a part, but only a part of the heritage of Hellenism. Yet did it not also, and this time contrary to the spirit of ancient Hellenism, seriously interfere with the freedom of thought, the progress of knowledge and everything which opposes the inertia of tradition? There again, if we consider at the same time the greatness of the Byzantine State, within and beyond its frontiers, are we not forced to admit that what was going on in the cultural field necessarily had to entail many positive aspects? The "dispute over images", I repeat, was a great hotbed of speculation, a stimulating reexamination, a fruitful questioning concerning the fundamental values and the very essence of Christian Hellenism. Now neither of the two parties, with the exception of a group of zealot monks (but they were no longer playing the role they had played previously in Egypt), contested the meaning and the value of *paideia*. Even if the iconodules accused their adversaries of ignorance and lack of sophistication, this theme, obligatory in polemic, only means that they had a different idea of culture. And the iconoclasts, when they had the power to do so, did not upset the content of the learning. When the texts of the period enumerate the subjects of education, they are still the old disciplines, and even if we admit, as we must, that these enumerations are often just a matter of form, at least they show that no new system had been established to replace the old. Byzantium did not experience the dark shadows which covered other lands.

Thus, even if there was not a violent break, it is true that there was a slowing down and something like

a withdrawal in the face of more urgent tasks. For a long time, the absence of evidence for State higher education obliges us to admit that it had ceased to exist. This is confirmed by the unanimity of the sources, when it did reappear, in greeting this novelty. For a long time, it was isolated individuals, self-taught men, or sometimes those instructed by private teachers, who maintained the tradition of learning. Let us recall a few dates: Tarasios and Plato were trained about the middle of the eighth century; Nikephoros and Theodore the Studite some two decades later; John the Grammarian before the end of the same century. Leo the Mathematician must have been born about 790-800, Photios about 810, Constantine-Cyril in 827 (the year when the manuscript of the Pseudo-Dionysios was sent to Louis the Pious), Arethas about the middle of the ninth century. At the same time as John the Grammarian was searching for iconoclast documents, Leo the Mathematician, looking for secular manuscripts, visited the monasteries of Andros. From about 820, Leo taught privately in Constantinople and then was nominated in a personal capacity as a teacher appointed by the State, as was Constantine-Cyril, thanks to Theoktistos, around the middle of the century. And, in my opinion, it was a little after 855 that Leo was placed by Bardas at the head of the new School of the Magnaura. We have dated the Bibliotheca of Photios to about 838, and the Amphilochia to 868-872. The Bodleian manuscript of Euclid is dated to 888, and the Clarke Plato to 895. The ninth century was the decisive century, thanks to the action of a few individuals. This was well in advance of the setting up of the institutions, and these individuals all belonged to the capital.

It is John the Grammarian who shows us most clearly what must have happened. He was an ardent, audacious, restless, tormented figure. But finally the radical tendency which he represented failed, and it is with Leo and Photios that we see the crisis evolve and work itself out. Leo, even in his twofold designation as philosopher and mathematician, marks a sort of reconciliation. The least that can be said of this prelate who was enrolled amongst the iconoclasts, is that he lacked conviction. A self-taught man, eager to learn and to transmit his knowledge, he was not for all that a revolutionary. Far from destroying the ancient

patterns of learning, he was preoccupied with rediscovering its content, in his own way, it is true, and one which was not to be exactly that of his successors. His glory in our eyes, which he shares with the Caesar Bardas, is that he renewed the tradition of State higher education in that School of the Magnaura where the teachers were his students and where the four departments corresponded to ancient disciplines, with astronomy probably including arithmetic, and grammar including rhetoric.

Was Leo, who was also called "the Hellene", able to cause the revival of an authentic kind of Hellenism? Not so that it was beyond doubt. If in his time things were still, as it were, in the balance, the decisive turning-point was quite near, and it was Photios who committed Byzantium to Hellenism: the founder of a Byzantine classicism, we have said. But we have seen that the contribution he made to the sciences, to take only that example, was limited. On the other hand his contribution to rhetoric was great, and to considerations of vocabulary, language, composition and style, to the rules governing genres and to the field of syllogisms. It was, therefore, only one aspect of the ancient heritage which was gathered up, at the expense of the rest, and it does not seem to me that this was the essential part. Furthermore, it is quite remarkable that Photios drew mainly from Greek authors of the Christian era, those of the Roman Empire and the early centuries of Byzantium. Thus he finally gave the authorisation to a type of culture which, in comparison with ancient culture, was characterised more by concern to preserve than by any creative impulse. On the other hand, he corrected and completed it by the contribution of Christianity, at least of the most "orthodox" Christianity. This ambiguity was manifest in the way in which the tradition of Greek philosophy, which had never been completely interrupted, was revived. This was less in its original works, in spite of the diorthosis [editing] of the texts of Plato undertaken by Leo, than in the commentaries, and less in its spirit than in its forms. Arethas is an example of the danger inherent in this. He represented the prolongation of what Photios had stood for but equally he signalled a distortion and already almost a debasement of it.

But to sum up it can be said, I think, that even if a certain kind of scientific mind and of creative originality was condemned with iconoclasm, the Church gathered in the fruits of its victory, of its triumph over all the particularisms and heresies, its resistance to Roman pretensions, the success of a grandiose missionary task, in short, all that Photios best personifies. The Church therefore, finding itself thus in a position of power, could become more open to a Hellenism which gave it some techniques of reasoning, dialectical weapons, procedures for exposition, indeed, some means of going deeply into things and a certain philosophical horizon. This movement, taken as a whole, answered a need and fitted in with the evolution of Byzantium, as is shown by the fact that the institutions closely followed the actions of the individuals who had cleared the paths. Teaching posts and schools came into existence again and proliferated, and the leaders of the State, the logothete Theoktistos, the Caesar Bardas and the porphyrogennetos Constantine, were their founders and protectors.

It is not by chance that our enquiry has ended with the tenth century. Certainly Byzantine encyclopedism was a conclusion and, as it were, a balance sheet rather than the gathering of new forces with a view to an opening-up into the future. But this "treasure" which was of almost limitless proportions and enormous weight, was also a "mirror". By making sacrosanct the accomplishment of the great enterprise of recovering the past, it determined the place, or rather the function, of that past in the culture of Byzantium. The treasure of the past was a frame of reference, even as the "types" of the Old Testament herald and prefigure the dazzling truths of the New Testament. It established a correspondence between Christian Hellenism, by definition completed, and like the Revelation it was based on not subject to further perfection, and secular Hellenism which, we appreciate, was the preparation for it and sometimes even heralded it; consequently whatever was "useful" in secular Hellenism had to be preserved. The tenth century marks the end of the first of the two great periods in the history of the Empire, which also saw the unfolding of the full cycle of an early humanism, the non-Christian component of which can be defined as a Romanised Hellenism, in the same way that politically the Roman State, which had presided

over the birth of the Byzantine State, had not ceased during the same period to inspire the New Rome. The following century was to open the second period in the history of the Empire with an upheaval extending into all domains. It was to lay the foundations of the second period of Byzantine humanism, in one sense more "philological", less purely Byzantine, perhaps, and difficult to separate from what was happening at the same time in the West.

But let us restrict ourselves to the period we have chosen to consider. It is clear then that Byzantium appeared, in the midst of so many peoples still half barbarous, as the refuge of a culture whose tradition it kept alive. But what culture? The answer is not simple. Byzantium's creative role will not be contested in two areas which, because they go beyond the scope of our subject, I have only touched on. Firstly, the area of moral values, ethics: Byzantium's ideal of man was, without doubt, Christian, but it retained, in a remarkable synthesis, the essence of what was slowly won from the Graeco-Roman millennium, and the Byzantine man of the early Middle Ages is closer to us than his Western contemporary. Secondly, the powerful originality of Byzantium in artistic expression will not be disputed: it created the religious art par excellence, and the most transcendent of all forms of art. Nevertheless, we are disconcerted by the role Byzantium played - or did not play - in the various branches of knowledge and in the *humaniores litterae*.

We are not indebted to Byzantium for any progress. Not that stagnation in scientific thought is peculiar to the Christian Middle Ages: it has been decried from as early as the Hellenistic period.¹ But the transition from an ideal of untrammelled leisure, the ideal of Antiquity, to an ideal of religious leisure which succeeded it, radically transformed the exercise of reason.

Philosophy of the kind the Greeks established - and how significant it is that in Byzantium this word ended up designating the monastic state - lost its very purpose from the moment when through Revelation man was removed from this earth and, like Christ in the Ascension, transported out of reality. Science itself came up against these epistemological obstacles which, since G.

Bachelard, there is no longer the need to analyse further. The omnipotence of a "common opinion", infinitely reinforced by a common faith, placed beyond man's grasp, through the act of an unknowable and incomprehensible Creator, that very principle of unity which science had always sought. In the same way the transference of all finality and all hope to that hereafter which Byzantine art and religious poetry have magnificently tried to express, stripped in advance the significance from the here-and-now which was doomed to destruction. Certainly in the *Timaeus*, we could read that "our soul raises us above the earth by reason of its affinity with heaven", but apart from the aspiring towards an escape, what real affinity was there between Platonism and Christianity? By breaking the unity of knowledge, the fundamental principle of Antiquity, Byzantium created the distinction between knowledge within and knowledge outside, and subordinated the latter to the former "like the servant-girl to her mistress". Thus it shut itself within the confines of a world isolated from communication, in the closed circle of theological discourse, tirelessly, indefinitely repetitive.

What meaning can humanism have, when everything is directed towards passing beyond the human? Were the Byzantine Greeks, when they so freely invoked *paideia*, legitimate offspring, or rather usurpers? So many things about them shock us. It is not at all clear that they truly appreciated the beauty of Homer or Sophocles, Thucydides or Demosthenes. Just as Greek art, from which they borrowed some formulae, remained a closed book to them, but one which they could equal, it is true, by the sublimity of their own creations, so the writings of Greece remained almost incomprehensible to them, but here their best authors left almost nothing which approaches the ancient works. We are shocked by the use they made, during the period we have been considering, of the great works we love. They did not read them much; they were easily content with *florilegia*, collections of quotations, glossaries, commentaries and manuals. They did not seek out the spirit of them; everything seems to have been reduced to techniques. Often their erudition surprises us, but if we look closely, is ancient literature for them anything but a vast store of

props at the service of a learned and complicated "rhetoric"?

All this is true in a sense, but only in a sense. Doubtless the paideia, to the extent to which we have seen that it was turned towards the past, became as it were the repository for a definitive body of acquired knowledge, unacquainted with, if not hostile to, all novelty. And when we compare the mental world of a Greek of the tenth century and the world of his distant ancestors, surprise at first prevails. But we must take into account the fact that in Byzantium reality always had two aspects and was located on two different but not contradictory levels. History, for example, has two faces: on the one side, the heritage of the Roman Empire, the repetition of the past, an unalterable concept of the State and of the administration, apparent in official texts, in set speeches, in the liturgy of the court and in the symbolism of attitudes and formulae; on the other side, what ingenuity, sometimes boldly innovative and sometimes consisting of wise oikonomia, what effectiveness in adapting institutions, structures and the conduct of the State to conditions which were ceaselessly changing!

There was the same duality or, if you like, the same ambiguity, in the field of culture. It also involved a transcendence, and at the same time a quasi-ritual function. This last is what I have called, for lack of a better word, rhetoric. This plays a role in language comparable to style in art, and just as it has rightly been said that Byzantine art is a stylized art which destroys the human to attain the superhuman, so it can be said that in Byzantium paideia had as its object the acquisition of a "style". Thus, rhetoric was a collection of techniques and conventions, borrowed from classical Hellenism and especially from Alexandrian Hellenism, which brought about, in the third Hellenism, Byzantine Hellenism, a mode of literary expression which was its own. Thus, here again we are in the presence of a system of reference to the past, which is charged with significance and which must not be reduced either to an arbitrary archaism or to empty academic ornament. Byzantine rhetoric represents the other aspect of the language. It is allied to a language of initiates. It belongs to this world of signs, which is the double of and transcends the material world

and which is the other face of reality. So, we find this distinction again, which Byzantine authors so often set forth and artists so often expressed, between the perceptible universe, which surrounds us, and the intelligible universe, the approach to which demands preparation and almost initiation. And thus, we discover in paideia one of the profound and essential characteristics of the mentality and civilisation of Byzantium.

Contents	
Preface	
Translators' note	
Introduction	
I	The Break in Hellenic Culture in the West
II	The Hypothesis of a Link through Syria and the Arabs
III	The Fate of Secular Hellenism in Byzantium during the first three centuries of the Empire
IV	The Dark Ages: Break or continuity?
V	Intellectual Ferment, Curiosity and Technical Progress: The first great figures
VI	Leo the Philosopher (or Mathematician) and his Times
VII	Photios and Classicism
VIII	Arethas of Patras
IX	The Schools from Bardas to Constantine Porphyrogennetos
X	The Encyclopedism of the Tenth Century
Conclusion	
Index <>	

[Commitments to Medieval Mysticism within Contemporary Contexts](#) edited by Patrick Cooper, Satoshi Kikuchi [Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, Peeters Publishers, 9789042934474]

A remarkably balanced approach to the use of medieval texts for spiritual reflection by people in the twenty first century.

Why do we, as contemporary scholars of Christian medieval mysticism, privilege the reading of medieval mystical texts as our focus? How can we define their ability to uniquely address relevant issues for readers today, without losing our attention to their historical integrity? These meta-questions encourage contributors of this volume to

reflect critically on their own approaches to medieval mysticism from theology, philosophy of religion, hermeneutics in literature, and religious studies. Their diverse accounts for the meaningfulness of the study of medieval mysticism attest to the possibility of renewing a greater continuity of the heritage of medieval Christian spirituality in our time.

Excerpt: This book emerged from the international conference, *Commitments to Medieval Mystical Texts within Contemporary Contexts*, held on the 7-8 September 2012 at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Catholic University of Leuven. In cooperation with the Institute for the Study of Spirituality, the editors of this volume jointly organized this conference as representatives of two research units in the Faculty. Patrick Cooper is a member of the research unit Systematic Theology and its associated research institute Theology in a Postmodern Context, which engages in fundamental theological research amid contemporaneous challenges posed by plurality and difference. Satoshi Kikuchi belongs to the research unit History of Church and Theology which concentrates on the historical accounts of diverse aspects of Christian tradition from the Patristic period till today by means of source-based approaches.

Amid a convergence of postmodern and historical perspectives, this conference inquired "why do we, as contemporary scholars within the field of Christian mysticism, privilege the reading of medieval mystical texts as our focus?". And subsequently, "how do we define the historical continuity/discontinuity of those texts with our contemporary contexts and their ability to uniquely address relevant issues for readers today?". These meta-questions on the meaningfulness and commitments of scholarship encouraged participants to reflect critically on their own approaches to the medieval sources as well as on their relationship with the readers of those writings. Medieval mystical texts have thus far been defined either as an object of academic study solely along their historical or doctrinal lines, or as rich resources for the contemporary praxis of spirituality outside of the academy. Can we not avoid such a dichotomy, sacrificing neither the historical integrity of such texts, nor their existential value for today?

Is there no way to continue academic rigor, while allowing the results of such research to inform and edify the spiritual praxis of a non-academic audience? Or, in a larger view, can our scholarship contribute to the Christian tradition itself or to the Church institution, and ultimately to the whole society in which we live?

In response to these questions, participants provided diverse accounts of the meaningfulness of reading such medieval mystical texts. Some of them dealt with enduring relevance of medieval writings for contemporary theological, philosophical, and literary investigations. Others pointed to their fresh appeal within religious studies through reflection on pluralized, postmodern contexts. Thus, such diverse approaches attest to the possibility of renewing, in a scholarly way, a greater continuity of the heritage of medieval Christian spirituality in our time. Participants included internationally recognized senior scholars as well as junior scholars in the field of medieval mysticism (theology, philosophy of religion, hermeneutics in literature, and religious studies). Held in Leuven, located at the intersection of varied geographic and scholarly trends, this conference was privileged to bring such challenging attempts together. At the same time, it was also a meaningful occasion for Leuven scholars for redefining and promoting a distinct Leuven-approach to medieval mystical texts, with its dual attention to its historical rooted-ness and contemporary orientation.

The essays in this volume were initially presented in the conference and have been re-worked significantly for the publication, incorporating observations that emerged from subsequent discussions. They are divided into four parts based on thematic unity.

Part One, "Between Confessionalized and De-confessionalized Readings of Medieval Mystical Texts", includes essays reflecting on the question of what it means to be academic in this scholarship at the intersection between the demands of the mystical writings on the original intended audience, and the demands of the readers today who wished to approach the "message" of those writings for themselves. The main concerns are to develop an hermeneutics for critical reading of mystical texts,

and to reflect on the role of the scholar as intermediary between the texts and the readers.

Part Two, "The Retrieval of Medieval Mysticism in Modern Theology and Philosophy", presents scholarly attempts at retrieving values of medieval spirituality within postmodern contexts, especially in view of secularization, de-traditionalization, and the instability of religious identity. Some essays propose theological investigations for a re-engagement with medieval sources; others introduce figures in (postmodern philosophy who initiated a renewed attention to the question of mysticism and its impact upon experience, subjectivity, and the boundaries of rationality itself.

Part Three, "Between Historical and Contemporary Contexts", introduces approaches with a particular attention to the historicity of the distinct medieval character of the mystical texts as keys to their interpretation. These approaches defend the historical analysis of mystical writings, which clarifies their reception, dissemination, and readership in various societal and ecclesial contexts. This particular attention to their historicity can, however, help us to regain, from their often limited reception in the past centuries, their potential appeal as "classic" texts for us today.

Part Four, "Reading Medieval Mystical Texts from a Pluralistic Perspective", contains essays on Christian medieval mysticism written from the viewpoint of contemporary radical pluralism. It is a recent trend in the scholarship of mysticism to pay attention to Christian mysticism from multi-cultural perspectives, even from outside of the Christian tradition. This will also help scholars to rediscover unique features of the Christian mystical tradition as a spiritual heritage for humankind.

The introductions attached at the head of each part give a more comprehensive survey of the main lines of discussion in each of the essays.

Part One

The essays in Part One discuss the intersection between confessionalized and de-confessionalized approaches to medieval mystical writings. From different angles, contributors reflect on the question of what constitutes a suitable academic attitude toward such texts that possess a mystagogical purpose to communicate extraordinary religious

consciousness to their intended audience and readers, and continue to exercise a transformative force upon the spiritual life of today's readers. Scholars of mysticism share a dilemma of how to keep a critical distance to the subject matter, while not overlooking the nature of these texts. When taking a theological approach to the texts, a confessional reading of their content is in a way innate to this scholarship as a science about the relation between God and human beings. Meanwhile, in a literary perspective, these texts' distinct, aesthetic appeal comes more to the foreground. Can such approaches be regarded as compatible with each other?

Researchers in this field of study are also confronted with the demands of today's readers who wish to approach the "message" of the mystical writings, and to expose themselves to the transformative force of the texts to change their own spiritual life. It is indeed one of the facets of contemporary society that we are witnessing a renewed interest in medieval Christian mysticism (or mysticism in general). What is then the role of scholars intermediating between such writings and contemporary readers (academic as well as non-academic; religious as well as secular)? Or how can we deal with the relation between the texts and the readers as a (mystical-anthropological) subject matter?

In Part Three these issues will be seen from different perspectives: firstly, regarding the historicity of those texts and the timeless character (the force to go beyond time) of those texts; secondly, regarding how to fill (or not to fill) the distance (or gap) between the historical contexts in which the medieval texts were composed and the contemporary contexts in which the texts are read from an angle to our time.

The first essay in this part by Edward Howells suggests that there is a compatibility between the critical distance toward the medieval mystical texts as a subject of scholarship on the one hand, and the self-implication in those texts on the other hand, both within the academic framework. Howells argues that "a critical hermeneutic" useful for breaking down this dichotomy is provided precisely in the medieval mystical texts themselves, that is, the method of an other-directed openness with a

subjective questioning. As a classic example of such method, Howells refers to Augustine's *De Trinitate* (On the Trinity) as elucidating the relational constitution of the self toward God as Trinity. Hereby, Howells attempts to adopt this medieval method to today's academic reading of the mystical texts: "The challenge for readers today seeking to adopt this possibility lies primarily in the understanding of the self: the self here is wholly relational, grounded in relation to the infinite horizon of God's life. There is no autonomous self-standing outside the text, observing it from a position untouched by the movements of the text in relation to the self ... The self is being drawn out by an internal critique and openness to the possibilities of the other, and it is in this structured, ongoing self-other relationality that room for creative and critical dialogue with the text lies." The author calls this way of self-implication "critical", which is neither incompatible with the academic reading nor rejecting the personal commitment to the text. Therefore, Howells tries to draw connections between the moves of medieval interiority and those of hermeneutical theory for reading texts today (such as David Tracy and Paul Ricoeur).

Thom Mertens's essay reflects on a literary approach to the mystical texts, which is a recent trend in the study of medieval mysticism. First, he briefly discusses the history of scholarship on Dutch mysticism, in which a "de-confessionalization" took place, reading mystical texts "free of any religious denomination". Then Mertens points to the nature of a literary approach, directing the attention primarily to the aesthetic aspects of the texts: "the way in which the message is presented to us", rather than the message itself. Yet, Mertens further argues that the aesthetic reading proposed by the literary approach can stimulate the way to the message of those mystical writings, for "The poetic function is a way to access their referential and conative functions." The literary approach can function as an alternative approach to medieval mystical writings, consciously maintaining a position within the tension between the historical distance of the text from us and the nearness of their message for the modern spiritual life. Mertens clarifies such a position of literary scholarship for the one side of this tension: "they can both provide a reliable text and reconstruct the historical meaning of the terms

in the text, as well as give an explication of the literary means used by the author to communicate his or her message. In short, literary scholarship and philology have the task to remove the obstacles that create an unnecessary distance between the text and the reader, between the archaic mystical text and the modern reader." Furthermore, "The distance offers the reader otherness, a possibility to learn something new and unexpected; the distance also creates freedom to observe content and purport without obligation. On the other hand, the engagement and involvement allows the reader to see and appropriate the relevance of the text."

Miguel Norbert Ubarri aims to link mystical theology and sacramental theology, both from his scholarly position engaged in medieval mysticism, and from his confessional position involved in the Eucharistic movement in Spain. The author proposes a reconsideration of the importance of "sacramental mysticism" through reading Jan van Ruusbroec's *Een spiegel der eeuwighe salicheit* (A Mirror of Eternal Blessedness), especially his description about the Eucharist as an essential phase of mystical life. With this renewed view on sacramental mysticism, Norbert Ubarri tries to reconsider the experience of Manuel González García, bishop of Málaga and Palencia, and the founder of the Eucharistic movement Unión Eucarística Reparadora (UNER), when he had conceived the insight of the Sacramental presence and the abandoned Tabernacle in Palomares del Rio. From his perspective between the academic and confessional positions, Norbert Ubarri argues that this experience of González might have had a mystical nature. This hypothesis aims to confirm the religious profundity of the foundation of this movement. It also intends to rethink the nature of the mystical tradition by means of its inclusion of sacramentology (besides Ruusbroec, Norbert Ubarri refers to Therese of Lisieux, Edith Stein, and Titus Brandsma) in view of the still dominant ideas in contemporary Spain that mysticism is for "saints who had mystical gifts linked with supernatural phenomena" accompanied by "paranormal experiences: e.g., visions, locutions, prophecies, exorcisms, levitation."

Donata Schoeller's essay is based on a personal reflection on her academic engagement with

medieval mysticism, especially Meister Eckhart. She recognizes a "contradiction" between her pursuit of a career within the ever-increasing competition in academia and the creative-transformative nature of the subjects of her study beyond such narrow horizons. Schoeller disputes this contradiction, however, not on moral terms, but precisely because of the fruitfulness of the research which is losing its profound creativity while being more and more self-oriented. The medieval value of creativity — which goes hand in hand with the notion of "humility" — is meaningful for us as "a radical attitude of not adhering to the self-enhancing dynamic", but willing to let something new happen. Schoeller justifies her self-implication into this transformative creativity of the medieval mystical texts by referring to a "mystical" (or particularly "Eckhartian") method of the modern philosophy Pragmatism in its dynamic "letting go of an absolute and static notion of truth." She contrasts this hidden vein of transformative creativity — which connects Eckhart and the modern philosophical school — with the contemporary "cultural and academic environment that adheres to a notion of creativity that is measured by the quantity of output."

Louisa van der Pol offers a case study of the personal reception by a modern reader of medieval mystical writings. That is, the influence of Meister Eckhart's works on the religious conviction and the poetic language of the contemporary Dutch poet, Cornelius Onno Jellema, who is also known for his successful translation of Eckhart's German works into Dutch, under the title: *Over God wil ik zwijgen* (Of God I will not speak) (1999). Jellema borrowed this title from Eckhart's German treatise, *Daz buoch der götlichen troestunge* (The Book of Divine Consolation), which was originally intended to console the Queen of Hungary who lost her husband. Van der Pol's argument begins from the question of how emphasizing the ineffability of God can give consolation, if this ineffability suggests the unbridgeable distance between God and human beings. For Eckhart, suffering comes from the separation from God, while "to be silent about God" means to be receptive of the work of God giving birth to His Son in the human soul. Therefore, van der Pol argues, silence about God does not indicate a distance from God, but

relationality with God in which people find true consolation. Van der Pol turns her focus then to textual links between *Daz buoch der götlichen troestunge* and Jellema's poem *Hovenier*, which she finds in the common motif of the care of one's soul like a skillful "gardener" so that the Son of God is born in such a soul. In van der Pol's reading, the poet has consciously interwoven Eckhartian themes into his language. He, thereby, takes a critical view on the contemporary society, in which sufferings are considered "as absolutely meaningless" and people are "highly obsessed with egocentric self-reliance, because of which the relation to God has often disappeared."

Part Two

Retrieval, both within philosophical and theological quarters, can rightfully be called a major feature of renewed, contemporary approaches to late-medieval mystical texts. In terms of 'continuity', the theological impetus of this retrieval can be significantly traced back in part to the continuing influence of the twentieth-century *ressourcement* or 'nouvelle theologie' figures who advocated for a fresh return to various patristic and medieval sources amid their critique of neo-scholastic manual theology. At the same time, diverse philosophical figures similarly pursued a renewed attention to the question of mysticism and its impact upon experience, subjectivity, and the boundaries of rationality itself.

And yet, from a contemporary socio-cultural perspective, the full force of retrieving (late) medieval mystical texts can be regarded as primarily motivated by the challenges and openings offered by postmodernism itself "[U]p until the middle of the former century", writes Lieven Boeve, "Christian religious affiliation and identity were almost self-evident in large parts of Europe". However, due to secularization and de-traditionalization, communal and individual identity construction is "much more reflexive than before". Spanning the entire spectrum from 'progressive' openings towards *différance* and radical plurality, to that of more 'traditional' contextually mediated approaches in response to secularization and/or de-traditionalization, the rationale for the retrieval of such texts can in part be said to reflect the instability of contemporary religious identity itself

(individually and communally), thus engendering an unavoidable degree of reflexivity. And yet, it is most explicitly in the field of mysticism itself (as thus in turn, 'spirituality') that testimony is borne to these ongoing cultural debates, often pursued under the aegis of the question of (religious) experience. This is evidenced both in new multi-disciplinary academic trends that are now studying the 'praxis' of spirituality as a viable academic field of study, as well as their vigorous critiques, which argue that such developments are largely indebted to a late-capitalist consumerist economy and its manipulation of human desire that 'seeks' to construct such new identities and manufacture spiritual experiences. Following this argumentative line, mystical texts become reduced to a preoccupation of 'techniques', founded upon a strong account of subjectivity and its construction of meaning.

Amid these ongoing debates one can say that the singular unifying dimension of such retrievals is their consensus view that while "modernity rejected the sources of its own tradition, postmodernity now calls into question modernity's sources. As such, postmodernity calls for a re-look at traditional sources to re-think or go beyond modern assumptions". Turning concretely to the present essays, this impetus for retrieving medieval mystical theological sources, for both Steven DeLay and Phillip Gonzales, is framed in relation to the onto-theological critique of metaphysics (DeLay) as well as to renewed pleas for reconsidering a more philosophically and theologically dynamic understanding of analogy (Gonzales).

For DeLay, the Christian mystical tradition is contemporaneously relevant in its shared refusal of onto-theology, seen as subjugating the divine to calculative-representational thinking. While describing onto-theology as effacing the "infinitely qualitative distinction between humanity and the divine", DeLay gives a strong, voluntarist reading of Eckhartian themes of *Gelassenheit* as the "functional equivalent" of Søren Kierkegaard's view of "resignation." These figures, DeLay argues, bypass the thinking strategies of onto-theology's totalizing, conceptual mastery, while responding to "the infinity of God in the context of love and devotion." DeLay turns to a courageous, prophetic voice in advocating that Eckhart and Kierkegaard's

enduring relevance is seen in teaching us how to meaningfully live a life of self-resignation towards God, "regardless of whether one believes in God or not", amid "the prevailing spirit of [our] ... times — an ethos of instrumental reason, consumerism, and ultimately nihilism."

While sharing this sociocultural reading, Gonzales similarly notes that postmodern thinkers of *différance* have often turned to figures within the mystical theological canon as allies in thinking alterity. Nevertheless, by isolating religion's more apophatic moments away from its equally cataphatic particularity, Gonzales argues that this results not only in an even greater loss of genuine religious difference, but furthermore achieves a banal triumph — the "univocalization of difference which obliterates all difference" — the very sameness they had initially sought to deconstruct. By contrast, Gonzales sees an opening for retrieving Erich Przywara's more dynamic analogia entis as preserving alterity and dissimilarity between nature and grace as a "creaturely metaphysics". He then boldly suggests an explicit Marian integration of metaphysics, theology, and spirituality to equally show its creaturely mutual orientation and redeemed fulfillment. "Mary shows the always already intended co-belonging of being and grace in a harmonious analogical unity-in-difference", Gonzales will argue." Likewise, in terms of the relationship between philosophy and theology, not only can nature not be independent of grace, but furthermore, in terms of spirituality, "Mary's life and person shows that created being is analogical difference, response, relation, doxological service and always already related to grace."

Retrieval of medieval mystical sources is likewise pursued in view of its (theo)anthropological basis in reconfiguring (Fisher) and recovering (Cooper) distinct visions of the self, relationality, and its view of the world, as seen in the essays of Jeffrey Fisher and Patrick Cooper.

For Fisher, the "medieval mystical discourse provides a vast resource not only for postmodern religiosity, construed narrowly, but for ways of refiguring the self and its relationship to the world." This position is clearly exemplified by Fisher as he highlights competing yet mutually compatible

'symbolic' readings of Meister Eckhart by John Milbank and Slavoj Žižek. Not only do medieval mystical texts offer an alternative emphasis upon historical factuality and the instrumentality of reason, but more substantially, they also facilitate the 'integrative power of the symbolic'. Herein, Fisher substantially draws upon the Belgian-American philosopher of religion, Louis Dupré, in noting that in a world absent of the symbolic, "religious believers share the fundamental atheism of their broader culture". Countering such absence thus entails the appreciation of interiority and theological immanence as a narrow, necessary mode of reflexivity, in an otherwise encroaching immanence of a vastly univocal, secularized world. "When the world loses its symbolism, we have only ourselves to turn to," writes Fisher, yet this self is by no means an autonomous, modern self. Rather, it is a volatile view of the self, without grounding and mediated as an absent-presence.

For Cooper, retrieval of the Brabantine contemplative Jan van Ruusbroec centers upon a Christian humanist relational anthropology and the primacy of such relationality, such that "the more one grows in union and likeness to the otherness of God, the more one becomes distinctly human in all of their created particularity." Those attempting to retrieve sources from the mystical theological tradition, Cooper points out, must primarily be attentive to ad intra issues of 'theological relevance and accountability', as well as ad extra instances of 'cultural plausibility' in order for such a retrieval to be fundamentally meaningful. Constructively, Cooper argues that Ruusbroec's theological relevance can be found in the mystic's provocative openness to (re)thinking the primacy of our relationality to God and others as fundamentally natural. This relationality in turn recasts an understanding of religious desire as defined not in terms of scarcity or lack, "but rather mirrors an abysmal fullness that cannot be encompassed." Similarly, the cultural plausibility of retrieving Ruusbroec is demonstrated by an aesthetic reflection on contemporary depictions of immanent, erotic love and its violent perversion as none other than the collapse of a certain "Romantic idealism [that] holds out for and optimistically aims to secure love as a natural, human end, an end marked by promise and hope, which likewise

secures the very source of love's meaningfulness." Cooper regards such divided views as opening onto a 'ripe opportunity' to restore a distinctly theological understanding of love's dynamic unity of caritas and eros, both in the "utter gratuitousness of love with the mutuality of its desirous exchange and reciprocal demand. For Ruusbroec ... mine not only immediately confronts current divisions surrounding love, yet it also intelligibly and provocatively challenges many of its normative presuppositions."

Moving away from the Brabantine contemplative to cross over the Rhine, we now encounter two distinct treatments that reflect the evolving yet sustained interest in the works of the German Dominican, Meister Eckhart, by Marie-Anne Vannier and Dietmar Mieth.

In her comprehensive overview of the reception and the enduring relevance of Eckhart, Vannier remarks that in terms of scholarship, we are increasingly able to have a much fuller sense of this famous Dominican theologian, one that increasingly no longer divides his Latin works from his German vernacular writings. In turn, Vannier contends, Eckhart's "influence will be greater and sharper", while equally noting that the "direct reading of his work ... still calls for some improvements." Despite ongoing scholarly progress, there remains a certain ineluctable dimension with Eckhart, a 'paradoxical tension' between particularity and universality, such that the enduring, contemporary relevance of Eckhart's thought (i.e. Gelassenheit), Vannier attests, secures his status as a "classic". Drawing heavily from David Tracy's own definition, Vannier argues that such "criteria can entirely be applied to Eckhart, as his experience relates directly to eternity." Vannier argues that although Eckhart's texts possess an "excess of meaning, which generates infinite interpretation", such texts are undoubtedly grounded upon his "Easter experience." Providing a compelling panorama of Eckhart's contemporary relevance, Vannier stresses its theological basis, exemplified in her reading of Eckhart's Trinitarian thought of the begetting of the Son, or "bullitio" as the "precondition for the birth of God in the soul."

Eckhart's classic texts and the generation of "infinite interpretation" are likewise supported by Dietmar

Mieth. As an ethicist and President of the German-based Meister Eckhart Gesellschaft with its strong background in historical studies on Eckhart, Mieth begins with an apologetic overview for a subjective approach to 'experiential' ethics, while relating its mutual convergence with his studies of the great Dominican from Erfurt. While recognizing their thoroughly social contextual nature, Mieth goes on to describe the utter particularity of religious experiences that "cannot be reduced one to another." And yet, by noting their distinctly "archeological" character "based upon our origins, while also entailing our destinations," the commonality of such religious experiences is rooted in the autonomous, "transcending self." However, unlike Vannier's reading of the theologically normative content of Eckhart's religious experiences as inexhaustibly "speaking from eternity", Mieth instead insists upon the Dominican's reduction of revelation's normative primacy in view of a more "practical intention in faith." Herein, religious experience for Eckhart is none other than the experience of contingency. "Contingency is absolutely necessary, because all being is a gift. But this gift does not constitute an absolute dependency (Friedrich Schleiermacher) but an unconditional acceptance." Such a praxis account, Mieth argues, in turn characterizes Eckhart's understanding of mysticism itself as a "kind of exchange about experiences, a communication about divine life in an expressive but self-controlled way." Which in turn, Mieth notes, helps explain Eckhart's continuing relevance and appeal as an interreligious figure amid Western Europe's de-traditionalized, pluralistic contexts.

Part Three

As we have seen in the previous essays in Part Two, various manners of retrieving medieval mystical texts can in part be attributed to ongoing debates involving socio-cultural hermeneutics and the unavoidable reflexivity that 'late' or post-modernity has since inaugurated. While certainly attentive to the historicity of such texts, the specific retrieval of mystical writings can be said to give greater emphasis to these writings' contemporaneous appeal and relevance in helping navigate contemporary issues such as reflexivity and the contingency of religious identity.

In Part Three, while sharing similar concerns and overlap with the previous essays, the following essays more generally place a greater emphasis upon the historicity of the distinct medieval character of these mystical texts as keys to their interpretation. Herein, we encounter a familiar appeal made in several essays in this volume in defense of the historically based, ongoing relevance of such medieval mystical writings: that is, their status as 'classic' texts. While citing various well-known figures from the mystical theological canon, at first glance, such an argument can appear somewhat banal. And yet, from diverse methodological angles, the strong historical competencies in the following essays largely attest that the classic stature of many medieval mystical texts — most especially those from the vernacular tradition — is, historically speaking, not at all an uncontested assertion. Rather, it is precisely the reception history of many of these vernacular mystical theological texts which attests, in various societal and ecclesial contexts, to a greater emphasis upon the interrupted nature of their often-limited reception, dissemination, and readership. Such discontinuity is certainly evident regarding several vernacular mystical texts and their authors treated not just in this present section, yet in these essays currently gathered. This is well-attested by various influential intellectual developments and canonical events such as: the late-medieval rise of nominalism and with it, the 'great divorce' between theology and spirituality; the condemnation and questionable status of certain theses of Meister Eckhart in Pope John XXII's bull, *In agro dominico*; charges of heretical pantheism or fusion in the writings of Jan van Ruusbroec as a result of his theological exemplarism and subsequent view of union with God as "without difference" (*sonder differencie*) and "without distinction" (*sonder onderscheet*) by the influential Parisian chancellor Jean Gerson; the heretical burning of Marguerite Porete; and the later rise of 'quietism' in the mystical tradition that resulted in the supposed incredulity of 'mysticism' itself. Contrary to the presumption that mystical texts are exclusively oriented towards monastic religious, historical analysis of (especially vernacular) mystical texts continues to suggest a greater 'network' of those mystical authors at that time in which the mutual

influence of themes in mystical literature was at work. However, while such intellectual and canonical discontinuities dramatically reduced the reception of many mystical theological texts in the later centuries, they also contributed to reinforcing the theme of the 'extraordinary nature' of 'mystics' and their texts as the concern of a spiritual elite, rather than of common and universal relevance. Therefore, attention to the historically-situated character of such medieval mystical texts, as elaborated upon in the following essays, invigorates us to question yet again why such texts have regained their appeal — over against several centuries of limited reception — as once again 'classics' for us today.

Rob Faesen underscores various institutional as well as personally formative influences that characterize ongoing historical research of mystical literature of the Low Countries. As member of the Ruusbroec Institute (Ruusbroecgenootschap), as well as professor and director of Leuven's Institute for the Study of Spirituality, Faesen charts his own formation in continuing the admirable tradition of Jesuit research — both into the doctor admirabilis himself, as well as mystical literature of the Low Countries more generally — by way of his own teacher, the late Albert Deblaere. Faesen recounts the institutional and formative influence Deblaere had upon many distinguished scholars of mysticism, noting his methodological insistence of close textual analysis of the primary texts themselves — "analysing and commenting upon them as they are" — as "stimulating" reading practices that well-endure in Leuven scholarship today. Similarly, Faesen links Deblaere's 'providential blindness' that interrupted his art historical research into the Flemish Primitive Rogier van der Weyden as introducing another wellknown theme, that of Christian humanism, that equally accents the continuing study of the Low Countries' mystical literature today. Faesen recounts that while studying with Deblaere at the Gregorian in Rome, "this is what greatly inspired me: a vision that fully valorises the human person as a person, God as God, and the genuine encounter between the two." Faesen then introduces how such a Christian humanism lay at the heart of Jan van Ruusbroec's writings, most notably in the understanding of the "common person" (ghemeyne mensch), and its

Christological foundations: "in Christ, humanity is intimately united to divinity without fusion: inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter. In this way, humanity is deified, but not dehumanized — an implicit corrective to the earlier charges of 'fusion' with God made against Ruusbroec by Jean Gerson. And yet, such a view of the human person as capax dei, is equally contrasted by the "problematic history" of Christian mystical literature that testifies to a growing reluctance in considering "humanity as such ... inadequate for an encounter with God." Therefore, Faesen credits such historical discontinuities as principally a matter of a diminished anthropology, while noting the continuing relevance of a Christian humanistic vision that invites a new encounter.

Similarly, conversant with Faesen's essay are the constructive reflections offered by Rik Van Nieuwenhove. He begins by defending the heritage of medieval mystical texts as historical "classics", while equally noting certain unforeseen yet undeniable limitations with more historical-critical approaches to textual analysis. Specifically, he points to the frequent and implicit reduction of such texts "as merely historical products" that are inexorably isolated from us today. Van Nieuwenhove thus argues that often, giving primacy to issues of contextuality clumsily avoids the impact of "classic" texts that continuously defy such historical isolation. Rather, classics are argued as overcoming historical distance, not because of their supposed a-historical character (contra Marie-Anne Vannier's description of Eckhart's experience as "speaking from eternity". See her essay in Part Two), yet precisely because of their historicity and commitment to historical particularity itself. This commitment in turn demonstrates a more universalizing function, "disclosing something of our world (positively or negatively), and challenging us at our most profound level." For Van Nieuwenhove, this disclosure negatively announces the fracturing of the great medieval synthesis of Christian neoplatonist exemplarism with the emergence of nominalism, which in part resulted in severing the mutual dependency between theology and spirituality. While laying out a thematic presentation of various avenues of the relevance of medieval mystical theology, Van Nieuwenhove regards such classics as positively challenging

certain foundational presuppositions of late modernity and its "instrumentalist-rational mindset". Instead, by their radical theo-centric character, mystical theological classics offer a viable alternative in opening up to us a "realm of gratuity and contemplative openness which challenges the notion that all that matters is what we can produce (from material things to the construction of our identities and meaning)."

While for both Faesen and Van Nieuwenhove, emphasizing the historical character and thick textual readings grounds a renewed encounter with medieval mystical texts for us today, in the following two essays by Sergi Sancho Fibla and John Arblaster, the direction of historical commitments moves somewhat in the opposite direction. Namely, fostering attitudes of contemporary openness towards medieval mystical texts leads more towards their distinct historicity as exemplary and of unique cultural value.

For Sancho Fibla, attention to the visual character of medieval mystical texts offers a primary hermeneutic in both the historical reception and devotional "usages of the text" — a methodological approach that extends from the Spanish research group *Bibliotheca Mystica et Philosophica* Alois Maria Haas. For his current essay, he focuses upon the thirteenth-century French Carthusian Marguerite d'Onigt's *Speculum*, with specific concentration upon its "sensorial symbolism", while arguing against contemporary readings of the "visionary" or mystical experiential character of these texts. Instead, such "visions" underlie the performative nature of such texts, which in turn evidence the birth of a medieval "visual literature ... a taxonomic system thought to facilitate memorization and the different usages of the text". Sancho Fibla's detailed analysis of the "colored books" in Marguerite's *Speculum* unveils specific devotional reading habits such that "Jesus Christ's life, being the mnemonic key represented in the *Speculum* by the colors, not only underlies the order of the study, but could even structure the whole process of meditation along the day and the year." Thus, by cultivating an appreciation for the intrinsically visual character of medieval mystical texts, he argues that heeding a greater historical commitment to these texts allows for their greater

originality to emerge far more clearly than by immediately appropriating them within our own contemporary contexts.

Focusing upon various medieval mystical figures from the Low Countries such as Beatrice of Nazareth, Marguerite Porete, and Pseudo-Hadewijch, Arblaster in part aims to correct the often widespread yet historically mistaken view that themes of deification are solely the heritage of Eastern Orthodoxy and thus are largely absent from Western Christian sources. Herein, Arblaster underlines the "vital and inextricable linkage" between deification and the well-known theme of "common life" (*ghemeyne leven*), especially pronounced in Ruusbroec's writings, while dually noting Ruusbroec's earlier, female vernacular sources views on "common love" (*gemeene minnen*) (Beatrice of Nazareth and Marguerite Porete) as a likely origin of such views. And yet more than just sources, Arblaster argues that such female vernacular figures themselves "merit research on their own terms" so as to better uncover the historical and theological contexts surrounding discussions of deification. However, at closer look — for these female vernacular figures' theological consistency in forming the "same spiritual school" — the historical inconsistency, Arblaster argues, is "quite remarkable ... [as] Beatrice was venerated as blessed almost immediately after her death, whereas Marguerite was branded a contumacious heretic and consigned to the flames by the Inquisition." For Beatrice, "common love" is regarded as the utter fulfillment of a mystical life lived in likeness to Christ, one in which is drawn up in the eternal bond of Trinitarian love and thus renders the soul "dei-form". While "simultaneously" such a common love is equally "common to all" and thus directed towards others in a very "concrete way". Although Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls* does indeed show at times heterodox, "auto-theistic" language, Arblaster argues instead that for Porete, deification is best interpreted as "being God by the condition of love", which, in terms of common love, similarly demonstrates this "simultaneity" or common movement, as seen in Beatrice. Similarly, Arblaster draws the same conclusions in an interesting discussion over "Far-Near" (*Loingprés/Verrebi*) as shielding figures such as Porete from the accusation of pantheism. Thus,

as scholarship begins to rediscover the tradition of deification in the West, Arblaster argues that first engaging in a historical-corrective analysis of such female vernacular figures can thus likewise be of service for renewed, contemporary theological interest in this theme.

Part Four

The last century has witnessed the growing interest in Christian medieval mysticism from scholars in the field of comparative religions. Those scholars were fascinated by the similarities that they discovered in the testimonies from Christian mystics with those in the mystical traditions in other religions. Since the pioneer study of Rudolf Otto on Meister Eckhart and Shankara, psychological approaches to the religious feeling have provided a ground for the comparativist theories for the study of mysticisms. Such approaches gave significant attention to the experience of individual believers, which they consider prior to the doctrinal or institutional aspects of religions. In their promotion of comparativism, it is likely that critical reflections on the absolutism of Christianity over other religions played a definite role.

Meanwhile, recent scholarship of Christian medieval mysticism has pointed out the difficulties in dealing with the religious feelings or experience. Often it remains ambiguous whether "experience" refers to extraordinary manifestations of divinity which authors witnessed and aimed to communicate in texts (visions or prophecy); or, more broadly, to the relationality with God which all Christians have to some extent; or, more specifically, to the practice of sacraments which are initially meant as a participation in the divine mystery. In the latter cases, these "experiences" should be regarded as particular to Christianity. In this respect, it should also be reconsidered whether such psychological approaches to mysticism undermine the uniqueness of doctrines and institutions of each religion, which emerged from a certain "experience" of the founders and gave form to believers' spiritual life throughout the tradition.

Thus, today's pluralistic society continues to invite scholars to provide renewed approaches to mysticism which may be able to offer a suitable attitude toward uniqueness and similarities in different mystical traditions, on the experiential as

well as on the doctrinal level. Such scholarly attempts require also critical self-reflection to determine from which position and with what presuppositions one is looking at a mystical tradition. The essays in Part Four by authors from East Asian backgrounds intend to contribute to the ongoing debates over mysticism from such pluralistic perspectives.

Having witnessed the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami which took place in Japan in 2011, Yoshihiko Abe brings an innovative insight into our modern understanding of "death" through his reading of Henry Suso's writings. Abe suggests that, in the tradition of Western philosophy, death has been regarded primarily as the death of the self, which is absolutely separated from others in terms of its irreplaceable nature. Meanwhile, the great sorrow of an immense number of people who have lost loved ones because of the disaster turned Abe's attention to another aspect of death, namely, the relation of the living to the death of others.

This renewed attention allowed the author to discover a new way of approaching the work of Suso. In narrating his visions, Suso describes interactions with dead people during his spiritual growth. The climax is his reunion with his late teacher, Meister Eckhart, who had passed away a few years before amid the inquisitorial process against his doctrines. In this vision Eckhart teaches Suso, who was in distress over the death of his master in such a disgraceful situation, the mystical theme of "detachment" as a perfect state of the union with God even amid "wolfish people". Eckhart's death helped his disciple to complete his spiritual growth. In this way of reading, Abe reflects on the death of "others" in Suso's texts, which is unique among medieval Christian mystics. Such a "border-crossing" reading from a different cultural background not only sheds light on the distinct feature of Suso's mysticism, but also makes us conscious of today's pluralistic context, which enables medieval mystical writings to open themselves to diverse interpretations.

Siu Ping Chan addresses the issue of the growing number of Chinese Christians in search of a positive, constructive way to coexist with traditional Chinese religions. Chan tries to respond to their needs with a comparative study of mystical

discourses in Christianity and Daoism, focusing on their testimonies of "mystical experience". The author believes that such testimonies can offer a common ground for deeper sharing between the different religions. Although such reliance on the ambiguous concept of "mystical experience" is debatable (as is suggested above, as well as in some of the essays in this volume), Chan's position is justified through his practical (and even urgent) aim to provide a solution for the actual dilemma among Chinese Christians.

Chan selects two representative mystics from Christianity and Daoism, one of the traditional Chinese religions, Jan van Ruusbroec and Zhuangzi, for both share a similar prosaic style and a systematic description of a mystical anthropology. Chan argues that, even though human reason cannot comprehend the divine, both authors highlight union with the divinity as the ultimate goal of human life. Yet, for Ruusbroec such union can be attained in the "mutual love" between the triune God and the human person, while for Zhuangzi the union can be realized when the human "consciousness" is enlightened by Dao. This categorization of "love" mysticism and "consciousness" mysticism is in a way comparable to the medieval discussion over whether the human "will" or "intellect" is best suited for accessing the divinity. This can help contemporary Chinese Christians to clarify where the core of their problems with Chinese religions consists.

By investigating the tension between medieval Christian mysticism and the institution of the Church, Satoshi Kikuchi aims to understand the incongruences that exists between Christianity and other religions in a contemporary pluralistic context. He focuses on Meister Eckhart's Christology, which was condemned by the papal court during such tensions between mysticism and the Church. In Christian tradition, the role of Christ for the salvation of humankind has been found in the once-and-for-all nature of the incarnation. Eckhart, however, proclaims that the most significant relevance of Christ's incarnation consists in his revelation of the possibility of the incarnation for every human person. Such incarnation is individual, yet also universal insofar as every incarnation has the same once-and-for-all nature.

From this observation, Kikuchi infers what underlies the disagreement between Christianity and other religions. Christian soteriology, which relies entirely on the absoluteness of Christ as the only God-man, can hardly be compatible with other soteriologies. Kikuchi further tries to understand Eckhart's Christology as a key for reconciling Christianity with other religions without losing its identity. Eckhart finds the essence of Christian faith in the unique — rather than absolute — relationship of Christ with God as an example for the unique relationship of every human person with God. In like manner, Kikuchi argues that, the greater the extent that Christianity admits the unique value of every religion, the greater the unique value of Christianity itself will be with its strong attention to the unique relationship of the person, Jesus Christ, with God. <>

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volumes 1](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 1, ISBN 9789004356191]

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volumes 2](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 2, ISBN 9789004356207]

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volume 3](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: Volume: 3, ISBN 9789004356214]

Three Volume set:

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation in Three Volumes](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 1, ISBN 9789004356191; Volume: 2, ISBN 9789004356207; Volume: 3, ISBN

9789004356214; 3 Volume set: ISBN
9789004356085]

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya`qūbī, a three volume set](#), contains a fully annotated translation of the extant writings of Abū al-`Abbās al-Ya`qūbī, a Muslim imperial official and polymath of the third/ninth century, along with an introduction to these works and a biographical sketch of their author. The most important of the works are the History (Ta`riḵh) and his Geography (Kitāb al-buldan). The works also contains a new translation of al-Ya`qūbī's political essay (Mushakalat al-nas) and a set of fragmentary texts drawn from other Arabic medieval works. Al-Ya`qūbī's writings are among the earliest surviving Arabic-language works of the Islamic period, and thus offer an invaluable body of evidence on patterns of early Islamic history, social and economic organization, and cultural production.

Contributors: Laila Asser, Paul Cobb, Lawrence I. Conrad, Elton Daniel, Fred Donner, Michael Fishbein, Matthew S. Gordon, Sidney H. Griffith, Wadad Kadi (al-Qāḍī), Lutz Richter-Bernberg, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson

Contents	
VOLUME 1:	
Acknowledgements	
List of Contributors	
Introduction by Matthew S. Gordon	
Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya`qūbī: A Biographical Sketch by Sean Anthony and Matthew S. Gordon	
Manuscripts, Printed Editions, and Translations of al-Ya`qūbī's Works by Everett K. Rowson	
The Book of the Adaptation of Men to Their Time and Their Dominant Characteristics in Every Age (Mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim wa-mā yaglibu `alayhim fī kull `aṣr)	
The Geography (Kitāb al-Buldān)	
Fragments	
a	Fragments from the Lost Part of the Geography
b	Fragments from Other Works
c	New Fragments

d Passages Attributed to al-Ya`qūbī in Ibn al-Dāya, Kitāb al-Mukāfa`a wa-Ḥusn al-`Uqbā
General Bibliography
VOLUME 2: The History (Ta`riḵh) Adam to Pre-Islamic Arabia
VOLUME 3: The History (Ta`riḵh) The Rise of Islam to the Reign of al-Mu`tamid
Indices
Index of Persons, Tribes, Religious and Philosophical Groups, Events
Index of Geographical Names

Excerpt:

The Ya`qūbī Translation Project by Matthew S. Gordon

Given the early date of the works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya`qūbī (fl. late third/ninth century) and their remarkable historiographic value, the decision to translate them came easily. The execution of the project, however, has been over two decades in the making. It is with relief, gratitude, and a bit of wonder that we bring it to fruition.

The Ya`qūbī Translation Project began as correspondence in 1994 with Lawrence (Larry) Conrad, then at the Wellcome Institute in London. To my innocent proposal to translate al-Ya`qūbī's Ta`riḵh (History), Dr. Conrad gently responded that even a seasoned Arabist would find it a daunting task. We soon decided to invite a small group of colleagues to take part in a collaborative project to translate all that survived of al-Ya`qūbī's oeuvre. This includes not only the Ta`riḵh, but also his work of geography, the Kitāb al-Buldān (The Book of Countries), a short political essay, the Mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim (The Book of Adaptation of Men to Their Time), and a set of short fragments scattered across various later medieval Arabic-language works. Dr. Conrad and I divided the texts into manageable sections and assigned them to our collaborators.

Changes in editorial leadership occurred thereafter. Dr. Chase Robinson, who first joined the project as a contributor, agreed to become a co-editor in 2000. Following the departure of Dr. Conrad from the project in 2006, Dr. Everett Rowson agreed to replace him. Finally, in 2008, Dr. Michael Fishbein accepted our invitation to serve as

copy editor, and subsequently assumed responsibility for the final draft of three sections of the *Taʾrīkh* as well as a new translation of the *Mushākala*. The completion of the project is due in largest measure to the contributions of Drs. Rowson and Fishbein in this later phase of the project.

The aim of the project was clearly stated from the start, that is, to serve two groups of readers. In the first group are scholars in related fields who, in most cases, are unable to read *al-Yaʿqūbī* in the original Arabic. These include historians of Late Antiquity; scholars whose work treats regions neighboring the premodern Islamic world (for example, Armenia and the Caucasus region, Central Asia, India, Saharan Africa, and southern Europe); and world historians, concerned as they are with broad, hemispheric trends. We also hope that the translation will benefit historians and other scholars conducting comparative study from outside the fields of Arabic and Islamic studies—for example, on the formation of dominant religious communities; the shaping and decline of empire; or the role played by complex urban centers in premodern history. *Al-Yaʿqūbī*'s interests being so broad, we do not doubt that historians will find much to draw on from his writings.

The second group of readers consists of students of early Near Eastern and Islamic history. An increasing number of colleges and universities offer degree programs in Middle East and Islamic studies at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Many more offer courses in these areas within departments of history, political science, religious studies, and other fields. Those of us who teach Middle Eastern, Arab, and Islamic history rely on texts in translation (from Arabic as well as the many other languages of the Near East and Islamic worlds), but are often faced with the difficulty of locating material that is both compelling and accessible. Students often struggle with the ornate and intricate styles that are characteristic of much of early Arabic/Islamic prose. A virtue of *al-Yaʿqūbī*'s writing is his direct, unadorned language; a well-annotated translation of his works should find a ready audience in our students.

Interest in the translation of *al-Yaʿqūbī*'s writings was sparked in part by the eager welcome met by

the translation of *al-Ṭabarī*'s *History*, which was completed in 2007 and has become an invaluable resource for scholars and students alike. We trust that the works of *al-Yaʿqūbī*—a slightly earlier contemporary whose approach and background contrast with those of *al-Ṭabarī*—will prove a useful complement.

Al-Yaʿqūbī and His Writings

Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī appears only rarely in the Islamic biographical literature: a detailed account of his life cannot be written. Although no secure death date can be established, it seems likely that he died shortly after 295/908. The biographical essay contained in this volume treats the available information, including invaluable references by *Ibn Wāḍiḥ* himself. Here it suffices to point out that *al-Yaʿqūbī* was of notable Iraqi birth and education, and that he spent much of his professional life in the employment of provincial governing families of the late third/ninth-century ʿAbbāsīd empire. His own statements indicate that he worked in Armenia, perhaps at an early point in his career, and that he took up subsequently with the Ṭāhirid family in the Iranian province of Khurāsān. We have no direct evidence, but it seems that *Ibn Wāḍiḥ* then made his way to Egypt following the fall of the Ṭāhirids around 258/872. There he lent his skills to the administration of the Ṭūlūnid state (254–292/868–905), which was among the first autonomous regional dynasties to challenge the ʿAbbāsīd state, founded roughly a century earlier.

The content and style of the *Taʾrīkh* and the *Kitāb al-Buldān* bespeak a busy life of travel and service on the part of a cosmopolitan scholar and imperial bureaucrat, an impression that is strengthened by indirect evidence contained in what was apparently an independent work on fragrances (the fragments of which are included in our translation). The two major works provide exceptional detail on matters provincial (for example, his accounts on late first/seventh and early second/eighth-century Armenia and third/ninth-century Egypt) and metropolitan (for example, his descriptions of early Baghdad and Samarra, the two capitals of the ʿAbbāsīd empire). Our sense of the physical and

socio-political fabric of the early Islamic Near East is enhanced immeasurably by his writings.

That later Muslim biographers say little about al-Ya`qūbī likely relates to the early fate of his books: while scholars of subsequent generations made use of the *Buldān*—Ibn al-`Adīm in the seventh/thirteenth century is a case in point—Ibn Wāḍih's *History* appears to have mostly fallen into oblivion; the meager manuscript tradition is discussed in the accompanying essay. This may have had to do with his sectarian identity. Al-Ya`qūbī's religious views were clearly Shī'ite, but they seem to conform neither to the Imāmi Shī'ite tradition that would prevail later, nor to what would become the Zaydī Shī'ite tradition. Sean Anthony, in an essay published in *al-`Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* (2016), argues convincingly that Ibn Wāḍih likely held to a relatively hard-line theological view that was in conflict with a quietist, proto-Imāmi viewpoint then predominant in Iraqi cities. Writing as he did before 'classical' Shī'ism crystallized, al-Ya`qūbī held religious views that later Muslims likely found difficult to categorize.

Because his *History* is a digest that only rarely contains unique information, it may also be the case that it was considered expendable by scholars and scribes of the Arabic/Islamic historiographical tradition. Paradoxically, the limited circulation of his work may also have been a function of his cosmopolitanism: his geographical and historical coverage is as wide as his accounts of Islamic history can be selective and succinct. The breadth of his vision is clear from the *History* and *Geography*, as it is from his minor works, both preserved (the likely volume on fragrances and aromatics) and lost (a history of the Byzantines and an account of the Arab conquest of North Africa).

The *Ta`rīkh* (History)

The text, of which we possess two manuscripts, is a universal chronicle consisting of two parts: a pre-Islamic section covering a variety of empires and peoples that is primarily sequential in organization, and an Islamic-era section that tracks the history of the Islamic polity from the prophet Muḥammad's day until roughly 259/872–873.

Dr. Rowson discusses the two closely related manuscripts in the essay contained in this volume. Each—one from Cambridge, the other from Manchester—is missing the title page and introductory material; in its present form, each begins with Adam and Eve already on the scene, but it is safe to assume that the text originally began with Creation. It then treats the Patriarchs and Prophets of ancient Israel, followed by an account of Jesus and the Apostles. (Previous translations of the sections dealing with ancient Israel and Jesus are now obsolete in several respects.) Subsequent portions of the *History* treat Assyria, Babylon, and India; the Greek and Persian Empires, including valuable comments on the transmission of Greek philosophical, medical, and other texts; various other regions and their dominant communities (Turks, Chinese, Egyptians, Berbers, and Abyssinians); and, finally, a portion on the pre-Islamic Arabs that includes comments on the Arabs as the progeny of Abraham's son Ismā'īl (Ishmael).

The presence of this material underscores the value of Ibn Wāḍih's work to historians working in a variety of fields. For one thing, al-Ya`qūbī does preserve unique material; for example, the Biblical passages appear to have come directly from then available Syriac texts. For another, the *History* reflects an ambitious cosmopolitan view of history. Nothing in what survives of the contemporaneous Christian world approaches the *History* in its command of ancient and late antique history; the quantity of direct quotations from Jewish, Christian and Greek texts is striking. And, from early medieval Islamic letters, only the work of `Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mas`ūdī (d. c. 345/956), the well-known Baghdadi polymath, compares favorably with that of al-Ya`qūbī in this regard.

The second half of the *History* contains a concise narrative of Islamic and Middle Eastern history, beginning with a biography of the Prophet Muḥammad and proceeding with his immediate successors (the so-called 'Rāshidūn' caliphs, a designation that does not occur, however, anywhere in these texts), followed by the Umayyad and `Abbāsīd rulers to about 259/873. Throughout, al-Ya`qūbī follows a fairly consistent

scheme: he begins with each ruler's accession and (often) the horoscope for the date of accession, then provides a brief narrative of the major events of his reign; the circumstances of the caliph's death; a list of the major officials and religious scholars active during his reign; and a brief assessment of his character and male progeny. Ibn Wāḍiḥ's employment of horoscopes ought not be viewed as a bow to superstition; instead, it reflects—and, perhaps, champions—the broad cultural tastes of his still Late Antique readership.

As an example of caliphal history, there is nothing extraordinary about the work, although the author was certainly a gifted digester. But compared to those who followed him in this form—such later authors as Ibn al-ʿImrānī (d. 580/1184) and ʿAlī ibn Anḡab ibn al-Sāʿī (d. 674/1276) can be cited among other medieval and premodern writers—he succeeds in covering an astonishing amount of political history. This is why the text ought to be so useful for students with little background in Islamic and Arab history: within a historiographic tradition that was frequently prolix and complex, the History delivers a coherent and concise narrative of the early Islamic period.

Ibn Wāḍiḥ distinguishes himself from other historians in a number of respects. As already suggested, he proposes a Shiʿite reading of Islamic history, which is made clear in his accounts of the Prophet's life and the First Civil War of 656–661, and especially so in his generous obituaries of the descendants of the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. History here, as elsewhere, both describes and prescribes. And, unlike most contemporaneous historians, al-Yaʿqūbī also dispenses with the chains of transmission and the multiple, overlapping and/or inconsistent accounts that are so characteristic of the prevailing traditionalist historiography, exemplified by al-Ṭabarī himself. The only gesture towards expertise and indication of his Islamic source material comes in a brief bibliography, which stands at the beginning of the Islamic section of the Taʾrīkh. The result is an altogether clearer authorial voice. Finally, we have already noted his broad vision of history and culture. A single example suffices: premodern Muslim learned men were no more

comfortable with astronomy than were premodern rabbis, and thus al-Yaʿqūbī's inclusion of the caliphs' horoscopes suggests a readership beyond the religious elite. Topics such as these—the author's Shiʿite sympathies, his method, and intended audience—deserve further investigation.

The Kitāb al-Buldān (Geography)

As indicated by the available Arabic editions (Leiden, 1892, and Beirut, 1988), and a partial French translation by Gaston Wiet (Cairo, 1937), we possess only an incomplete version of the work. S. Maqbul Ahmad and André Miquel have situated the text in the formative period of Arabic geographical scholarship. Arab/Islamic geography, as a body of knowledge and praxis, emerged in the second/eighth century, and retained its vitality from that point on in all languages of the Islamic realm into the premodern period. The rise of geographical writing in Arabic is to be situated against the backdrop of the multivalent transmission of ancient Greek, Pahlavi, and Sanskrit writings. That process probably began, in the case of the Sanskrit texts, through Pahlavi, and in the case of the Greek, through Syriac. It did so in the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsīd period—the middle decades of the second/eighth century—in large measure through patronage offered by the caliphal court.

Mathematical geography likely appeared first, with the translation and adaptation of Ptolemy's Geography. The development of a more practical or applied “administrative geography” can be tied to the concerns of ʿAbbāsīd imperial governance. Ibn Wāḍiḥ's text is among the exemplars of this trend, along with the works of Ibn Khurdādhbih, al-Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥawqal, and al-Maqqasī (Muqaddasī). Of particular concern to Ibn Wāḍiḥ would have been to provide his fellow regional functionaries with the kind of information required to carry out their administrative duties. In this sense, the Buldān is properly described as an ‘imperial’ digest. Composed perhaps in the final decade or so of the third/ninth century, by which time the author may have been in residence in Egypt, it provides detailed (if formulaic) descriptions of the major towns and cities of the contemporary ʿAbbāsīd Empire and the chief features of the principal

routes linking one population center to the next. The text comments on distances; agricultural infrastructure, production, and yield; local crafts and products; and the religious and ethnic composition of local populations.

The *Buldān* thus offers much practical data, and Ibn Wāḍih's eye for detail is impressive. To cite one example, his description of Samarra (the 'Abbāsīd capital for much of the third/ninth century) reads as if one were led by its author on a walking tour of the city, this at a fairly late point in its history as the imperial hub (and at a point when the ruling dynasty was facing crushing fiscal and political challenges). He provides a brief history of the city's foundation and comments on the distribution and recipients of land grants that gave rise to its military and urban character. He also identifies the location of the houses of Samarra's elite families; the size and location of its major cantonments; the city's main markets, bathhouses, and mosques; and, finally, its annual tax yield. Several generations of archaeologists who have worked on the ruins of 'Abbāsīd Samarra testify to the value of al-Ya'qūbī's account. The *Buldān* begins with a no less valuable description of Baghdad, the original 'Abbāsīd center, and, within a few years of its founding, the cultural and commercial axis of the early Islamic world.

Three manuscripts of the *Buldān* are known, as Dr. Rowson points out. The work was translated into French by Gaston Wiet in 1937 as *Les Pays*, but a new translation is in order. Wiet's version of the text is occasionally inaccurate, and, published early in the previous century, the volume is difficult to find. It is also out of date: seventy years of research on Islamic urbanism are behind us and the archaeological record alone sheds new light on the text. The version proposed here will provide the full text in English translation, additional fragments discovered in other early Arabic texts, and a more complete annotation than provided by Wiet. Because the *Geography* sets the scene for some of the events narrated by the *History*, the two texts are complementary.

The *Mushākala* (The Adaptation of Men)

The title of the essay, the shortest of al-Ya'qūbī's extant works, suggests a work of socio-political

theory. It consists, in fact, of a collection of pithy anecdotes arranged chronologically by caliphal reign. The intent seems to be to highlight the conduct and tastes of the caliphs, beginning with Abū Bakr, as a model for their clients and followers, and, indeed, the wider Islamic community—for the better, when people adopted their virtues, and for the worse, when people embraced their vices.

In some sense, it is a work of panegyric: the dynasts set the style and tone for imperial society. William Millward, in his treatment of the work, noted its resemblance to the type of early Arab/Islamic letters known as the *Awā'il* literature, that is, a genre that concerns itself with 'firsts'—archetypal or prototypical examples of deeds and conduct. Millward's full and still useful translation appeared in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1964). The decision to retranslate the essay here was informed principally by the wish to provide a more accessible translation consistent with the style and level of annotation of the other works of al-Ya'qūbī included in this project.

1 Textual Example:

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

... against Adam. Nothing of what God created complied with him except the snake. When Adam saw the delight to be found in the Garden he said, "Would that there were a way to dwell here forever!" When Iblīs heard this from him, he set his hopes on him and began to weep. Adam and Eve looked at him weeping, and said to him, "What is making you weep?" He said: "Because the two of you will be leaving all of this. Your Lord has only prohibited you from this tree lest you become angels, or lest you become immortals." And he swore to them, "Truly, I am for you a sincere adviser."

The clothing of Adam and Eve was garments of light. When they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them. The People of the Book maintain that Adam's stay on the earth, before entering the garden, was for three hours, and for three hours he and Eve lived in happiness and dignity, before they ate of the tree and their private parts became apparent to them. When his

private parts became apparent to Adam, he took a leaf from the tree and put it on himself. Then he cried out, "Here I am, O Lord, naked, having eaten from the tree which You forbade me." God said: "Return to the earth from which you were created. I will subject to you and to your offspring the birds of the heavens and the fish of the seas."

God expelled Adam and Eve from where they had been, according to the People | of the Book, at the ninth hour on Friday. They fell down to the earth, sad and weeping. Their fall was onto the nearest of the earth's mountains to the Garden. It was in the land of India. Some people, however, say it was onto Abū Qubays, a mountain in Mecca. Adam settled in a cave in that mountain, which he named the Cave of the Treasure, and he prayed to God to sanctify it.

Some report that when Adam fell, his weeping became great and his sadness over leaving the Garden persisted. Thereupon, God inspired him to say: "There is no God except You. Glory and praise to You! I have done evil and have wronged myself. Forgive me, for You are the All-forgiving, the All-compassionate." Then Adam received words from his Lord, and He turned toward him and chose him. He sent down to him the Black Stone from the Garden in which it was, and He commanded him to convey it to Mecca and build a house for it. So he went to Mecca and built the house, and he circumambulated it. Next, God ordered him to sacrifice to Him, then to pray to Him and glorify Him. Gabriel went out with him, until he stood at 'Arafāt. Gabriel said to him, "At this place your Lord has commanded you to stand for Him." Then he went on with him to Mecca. When Iblīs blocked his way, Gabriel said, "Pelt him." So Adam pelted him with stones. Then he reached the valley of Mecca, and the angels received him and said to him: "O Adam, your pilgrimage went well! We have made the pilgrimage to this house before you for two thousand years."

Then God sent down wheat to Adam and commanded him to eat of his toil. So he plowed and planted. Then he harvested, threshed, ground, kneaded, and baked. When he finished, his brow was bathed in sweat. Then he ate. When he was full, what was in his belly weighed heavily. So Gabriel came down to him and spread his legs.

When what was in his belly came out, Adam sensed an odor that was disgusting. "What is this?" he asked. Gabriel said to him, "The odor of the wheat."

Adam had intercourse with Eve; she conceived and gave birth to | a boy and a girl. He named the boy Cain and the girl Lūbidhā. Then she conceived again and gave birth to a boy and a girl. He named the boy Abel and the girl Iqlīmā. When his children grew up and reached marriage age, Adam said to Eve, "Command Cain to marry Iqlīmā, who was born with Abel, and command Abel to marry Lūbidhā, who was born with Cain." Then Cain became envious of him (that is, Abel), because he was marrying his sister, who had been born with him.

Some have reported that God sent down a Houri from Paradise to Abel and married him to her, and He brought out a female Jinn to Cain and married him to her. So Cain was jealous of his brother on account of the Houri. Adam then told both of them to make an offering. Abel offered some figs from his crop; Cain offered God the best ram among his sheep. God accepted Abel's offering, but He did not accept Cain's offering, and so he grew more ill-willed and jealous. Satan made the murder of his brother appear attractive to him, so he crushed him to death with stones. God therefore became angry with Cain and cursed him. He sent him down off the Holy Mountain to a land called Nod.

Adam and Eve remained in mourning for Abel for a very long time, until it was said that a veritable river emerged from their tears. After he had become one hundred and thirty years old, Adam had intercourse with Eve and she conceived and gave birth to a boy. He named him Seth, and of Adam's sons he was the one who most closely resembled Adam. Then Adam married Seth off, and a boy was born to him when he was a hundred and sixty-five years old; he named him Enosh. Then a boy was born to Enosh, and he named him Kenan. Then a boy was born to Kenan and he named him Mahalalel. These were born during Adam's life and in his time.

When it came time for Adam's demise, his son Seth, together with his son and his son's son, came to him, and he prayed over them and asked a blessing for

them. He entrusted his last will and testament to Seth, and he commanded him to preserve his body and put it, when he died, in the Cave of the Treasure. Furthermore, he (that is, Seth) should give charge to his sons and sons' sons, and each one should pass it on at his own demise: that when they came down from their mountain, they should take his body and put it in the middle of the earth. He commanded his son Seth to take charge after him among their progeny, command them to fear God and worship Him aright, and forbid them to mingle with the accursed Cain and his offspring. Then he prayed over those sons of his and their wives and children. He died on the sixth of Nīsān, a Friday, at the very hour when he was created. He was, as it is agreed, nine hundred and thirty years old.

Seth, the Son of Adam

After the death of Adam, his son Seth arose. He used to bid his people to fear God and to do good works. They, along with their wives and children, used to praise God and to hallow Him. There was no enmity among them, nor any envy, hatred, recrimination, lying, or breaking of promises. When one of them wanted to swear, he said, "No, by the blood of Abel."

When Seth's death was imminent, his sons and the sons of his sons came to him. They were at that time: Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, and Enoch, with their wives and their sons. He prayed over them and invoked a blessing upon them. He ordered them and made them swear by the blood of Abel that none of them would go down from the holy mountain, that they would not allow any of their children to go down from it, and that they would not mingle with the children of the accursed Cain. He gave his testament to his son Enosh and commanded him to take custody of the body of Adam, fear God, and command his people to fear God and to worship aright. Then he died on Tuesday, the twenty-seventh of Āb, at the third hour of the day. He was nine hundred and twelve years old.

Enosh, the Son of Seth

After the death of his father, Enosh, the son of Seth, undertook to keep the testament of his father and grandfather. He worshipped God aright, and

commanded his people to worship aright. In his days the accursed Cain was killed.

The blind Lamech threw a stone at him and crushed his head, and so he died. After Enosh was ninety years old, Kenan was born to him. When the death of Enosh was imminent, his sons and his sons' sons gathered around him: Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, along with their wives and their sons. He prayed over them and invoked a blessing upon them. He forbade them to go down from their holy mountain, or to let any of their sons mingle with the offspring of the accursed Cain. He put Kenan in charge of the body of Adam. He ordered them to pray in his presence and to hallow God frequently. He died on the third of Tishrīn i, at sunset. He was nine hundred and sixty-five years old.

Kenan, the Son of Enosh

Kenan, the son of Enosh, arose. He was a gentle, god-fearing, and holy man. He undertook among his people to obey God, worship aright, and follow the testament of Adam and Seth. Mahalalel had been born to him after he was seventy years old. When his death drew near, his sons and the sons of his sons, Mahalalel, Jared, Methuselah, Lamech, and their wives and children, assembled around him. He prayed over them and invoked a blessing upon them. He made them swear by the blood of Abel that none of them would go down from their holy mountain to the offspring of the accursed Cain. He made his testament to Mahalalel and commanded him to take charge of the body of Adam. Kenan died; he was nine hundred and twenty years old.

Mahalalel, the Son of Kenan

After the death of Kenan, Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, arose. He undertook among his people to obey God and follow the testament of his father. Jared was born to him when he was sixty-five years old. When Mahalalel's death drew near, he made his testament to his son Jared and gave him charge of the body of Adam. Mahalalel died on Sunday, the second of Nīsān, at the third hour of the day. He was eight hundred and ninety-five years old.

Jared, the Son of Mahalalel

After the death of Mahalalel, Jared arose. He was a believing man, perfect in his works and worship of God, praying frequently by night and by day, and therefore God increased his lifespan. Enoch was born to him when he was sixty-two years old. In Jared's fortieth year, the first millennium was completed.

When five hundred years of Jared's life had passed, the sons of Seth broke the covenant and pacts that had existed among them, and they started going down to the land where the sons of Cain were. Their going down began when Satan took to himself two devils from among mankind—one was named Jubal, the other Tubal-cain—and taught them the arts of singing and playing instruments. Jubal fashioned flutes, lutes, guitars, and horns; Tubal-cain fashioned drums, tambourines, and cymbals. The sons of Cain had no work to occupy them, and they made no remembrance except before Satan. They used to do forbidden and sinful things and would come together for depravity. Their old

men and women were even keener for it than the youths. They would | gather to play flutes, drums, tambourines, guitars, and cymbals, shouting and laughing, until the people of the mountain, the sons of Seth, heard their voices. A hundred of their men decided to go down to the sons of Cain, to see what these sounds were. When Jared received word of this, he went to them and implored them by God. He reminded them of the testament of their fathers, and swore against them by the blood of Abel. Enoch, the son of Jared, rose up among them and said, "Know that if any of you disobeys our father Jared, breaks the covenants of our fathers, and goes down from our mountain, we will never let him come up again." But they insisted on going down; and when they went down, they commingled with the daughters of Cain, having first engaged in depravities.

When the death of Jared drew near, his sons and the sons of his sons, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah, gathered around him. He prayed over them and invoked a blessing upon them. He forbade them to go down from the holy mountain, and he said: "Inevitably you will go down to the lowland. Whoever of you is the last to go down, let him take

with him the body of our father Adam and let him put it in the midst of the earth as he ordered us." He commanded his son Enoch not to cease praying in the Cave of Treasure. Then he died on Friday, the first of Adhār, at sunset. He was nine hundred and sixty-two years old.

2 Textual Examples from Volume 2: Arab Divination

The Arabs used to resort to divination with arrows (azlām) in all their affairs; these were also called qidāḥ. [Note: The general term for such divination is istiḡsām. As al-Ya`qūbī will explain, the arrows used (zalam, plural azlām) were a set of seven headless and featherless arrows, each bearing an inscription that was expected to resolve the problem for which the arrows were being cast.] They resorted to divining arrows in every case of moving or staying put, of marriage, or of any kind of information. The arrows were seven. On one was (written), "God, may He be praised and exalted" (Allāh `azza wa-jalla); on another, "For you" (lakum); on another, "Against you" (`alaykum); on another, "Yes" (na`am); on another, "Of you" (minkum); on another "Of others" (minghayrikum); and on another, "The promise" (al-wa`d). Whenever they wished to do something, they would resort to the arrows, cast them, and then act as the arrows came out, neither going beyond it nor falling short of it. They had people who were responsible for the arrows, and they would trust no one else with them.

If the Arabs found themselves stricken by drought in winter and their camels gave little milk, they engaged in maysir. [Note: As opposed to the preceding procedure, maysir was not a process of divination associated with shrines or idols, but a game of chance in which one or more slaughtered camels were divided by lot among the participants. The most detailed discussion of the game, including a commentary on this section of al-Ya`qūbī, can be found in Anton Huber, *Über das 'Meisir' genannte Spiel der heidnischen Araber*.] This consisted of arrows with which they gambled with each other. They cast these arrows. The maysir arrows were ten: seven of them stood for | shares and three did not. Of the seven that 1:301 stood for shares, one

was called al-Fadhḥ (“the Single”) and stood for one share; al-Taw’ām (“the Twin”) stood for two shares; al-Raqīb (“the Supervisor”) stood for three shares; al-Ḥils (“the Saddlecloth”) stood for four shares; al-Nāfis (“the Precious”) stood for five shares; al-Musbil (“the Elongated”) stood for six shares; and al-Mu’allā (“the Superior”) stood for seven shares. The three that did not stand for shares were unmarked, having no names on them. They were called al-Manīḥ (“the Generous”), al-Safīḥ (“the Profitless”), and al-Waghd (“the Scoundrel”). [Note: Probable English equivalents have been given for the names of the arrows, but the reader should be aware that the Arabic sources give various and conflicting explanations for the names.] A camel for slaughter would be purchased for its price, but the money would not be paid. The butcher would be summoned, and he would divide the camel into ten portions. When the portions had been divided equally, the butcher would take his portion, consisting of the head and the feet. The ten arrows would be brought out, and the young men of the tribe would gather. [Note: Arabic fityān, which carries overtones of nobility, generosity, and chivalry—that is, young men willing to gamble for potential gain or loss, as opposed to the overseer of the game, who will be characterized as “more lowly” (akḥass) in the sense of being less willing (or able) to put his wealth at risk.] Each team would take (an arrow) according to its condition, its affluence, and what it could afford. The first would take al-Fadhḥ, which stood for one share out of the ten: if it came out for him, [Note: The singular pronoun is inconsistent. Apparently, each team had one leader who “owned” its arrow.] he would take one portion of the slaughtered camel; if it did not come out, he would have to pay for one portion of the camel. The second would take al-Taw’ām, which stood for two shares of the slaughtered camel: if it came out, he would take two portions of the camel; if it did not, he would have to pay for two portions. And the rest of the arrows were similar to those we have just named: when one came out, its owner would take what it stood for; when it did not come out, he would have to pay for the number of portions it stood for. When each man had put a mark on his arrow, they gave the arrows to another man, more lowly than they, someone who would not

look at them and who was known never to eat meat for a price—he was called al-Ḥurḍa (“the Useless”). Then the mijwal—a very white cloth—was brought out and put on his hand. Then someone would 1:302 take | the sulfa—this was a piece of skin with which his hand was bound so that he could not find by touch an arrow for whose owner he had a liking and then take it out. A man would come and sit behind the Ḥurḍa—he was called the Raqīb (“the Observer”). The Ḥurḍa then shook the arrows. When one of them protruded, the Ḥurḍa would pull it out and, without looking at it, give it to the Raqīb, who would look to see whose it was and hand it to its owner. The latter would take of the portions of the slaughtered camel according to his share of them. If any of the three arrows that did not stand for shares emerged, it would be put back immediately. If al-Fadhḥ emerged as the first of the arrows, its owner would take his share, and they would play, using the remaining arrows, for the nine other portions. If al-Taw’ām [came out next], its owner would take two portions, and they would play, using the remaining arrows, for the seven 1 663 other portions. If al-Mu’allā came out (next), its owner would take his share—the seven remaining portions—and they would depart immediately; the price of the camel would be paid by the four whose arrows had not come out: the owners of al-Raqīb, al-Ḥils, al-Nāfis, and al-Musbil. Because these arrows stood for eighteen shares, the price would be divided into eighteen parts, and each individual would pay of the price the like of what his share of meat would have been if his arrow had come out. If al-Mu’allā came out as the first of the arrows, its owner would take seven portions of the camel; the owners of the arrows that had not come out had to pay, and they would need to slaughter another camel. This was because among their arrows was al-Musbil, which stood for six portions, while only three portions of meat remained. It was unfitting for anyone whose arrow had not come out in the play for the first camel to eat any of it; it would be disgraceful for him. If they slaughtered the second camel and cast | arrows for it and al-Musbil came out, its owner 1:303 would take six portions of the camel: the three remaining portions of the first camel and three portions of the second camel. He had to pay

for the first camel, but he did not have to pay anything for the second, because his arrow had won. Seven portions of the second camel remained; they would be played for with the arrows of the remaining players. If al-Nāfis came out, its owner would take five portions, and he would not have to pay anything toward the price of the second camel, because his arrow had won, though he would have to pay toward the first camel. Two portions of meat remained; however, inasmuch as one of the remaining arrows was al-Ḥils, which stood for four portions, they needed to slaughter another camel in order to complete the four. It was unfitting for anyone whose arrow had not come out in the play for the second camel to eat any of it [Note: “If no one else had entered the game, which was allowed, these would be the owners of al-Ḥils, al-Raqīb, al-Taw’ am, and al-Fadhdh, who would have to pay for the second camel $(4+3+2+1)/10$, as well as $(4+3+2+1)/21$ for the first camel.”]; it would be disgraceful for him. If they slaughtered the third camel and it (i.e., al-Ḥils) came out, its owner would take four portions: two portions from the second camel and two portions from the third camel. He did not have to pay for any of the third camel, because his arrow had won. Eight portions of the third camel remained, and they would play, using the remaining arrows, for them, until their arrows came out in agreement with the portions of the camel. Their payment toward the price was computed as I have described. Sometimes the portions of meat coincided with the portions for which the arrows stood, and so they did not need to slaughter anything else. Another camel was slaughtered only when the portions of meat were too few for some of the arrows. If someone who had won returned his arrow to be played again and lost, he had to pay toward the price of the camel for which his arrow had lost, according to this computation. If any portions of the meat were left over when all the arrows had come out, those portions were for the poor of the tribe.

3 Textual Examples from Volume 3: The History (Ta’rīkh): The Rise of Islam to the Reign of al-Mu’tamid

The Birth and Horoscope of Mohammad In the Name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate

Praise be to God, the granter of success. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds. May God bless Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets, and the goodly and pure members of his family.

When our first book was finished, wherein we gave a brief account of the beginning of the world’s existence and the history of the early peoples—the ancient nations, separate kingdoms, and divided tribes—we composed this present book of ours according to what earlier authorities—scholars, transmitters, and authors of biographies, histories, and chronicles—transmitted. We did not set out to compile by ourselves a book in which we would undertake to retell what others had said before us. Rather, we set out to gather things that had been said and transmitted, for we discovered that men differed in their accounts and in their chronologies. Some added things and some omitted things. We wished to gather together what has come down to us from what each of them produced; for one person cannot encompass all knowledge. The Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, said, “Knowledge is more than one can retain, so take from each knower the best things he has to offer.” Ja’far b. Ḥarb al-Ashajj said: “I have found knowledge to be like wealth: every human being possesses a bit of it; and if a man holds a quantity of it he is called well-off, while someone else holds something more and is also called well-off. Similarly with knowledge: anyone who possesses something of it is called a knower, even if someone else knows more than he. If we did not call a scholar ‘scholar’ until he comprehended all knowledge, the name would apply to no human being.” A wise man has said, “My pursuit of knowledge is not from hope to reach its remotest point and master its farthest end, but rather to seek something of which one must not be ignorant and which no rational person should act contrary to.” Another wise man has said: “If you are not learned, learn; and if you are not wise, become wise; for

rarely does a man come to resemble others but that he is on the verge of becoming one of them.” Someone has said: “Knowledge is a spirit and action is a body. Knowledge is the root, and action is a branch. Knowledge is a begetter, and action is a child. One acts because one knows; one does not know because one acts.” Another has said: “Whoever seeks knowledge from desire or fear, or from emulation or covetousness, his share of it will be in accordance with his fear; but anyone who pursues knowledge for the honor of knowledge and seeks it for the merit of understanding, his share of it will be in accordance with its honor, and his benefit from it will be in accordance with its merit.” Someone has said: “Everything needs intellect, and the intellect needs knowledge.”

This book of ours begins with the birth of the Messenger of God and the reports of him from one stage to another and from one time to another, until God took him to Himself. Then I mention the reports of the caliphs after him: the biography of one caliph after another, the conquests of each, what each did, what was done in his days, and the years of his reign.

The people from whom we have transmitted what is in this book are: Ishāq b. Sulaymān b. `Alī al-Hāshimī, who transmitted from the elders of the Banū Hāshim; Abū I-Bakhtarī Wahb b. Wahb al-Qurashī, who transmitted from Ja`far b. Muḥammad and other men; Abān b. `Uthmān, who transmitted from Ja`far b. Muḥammad; Muḥammad b. `Umar al-Wāqidī, who transmitted from Mūsā b. `Uqba and other men; `Abd al-Malik b. Hishām, who transmitted from Ziyād b. `Abdallāh al-Bakkā`ī, who transmitted from Muḥammad b. | Ishāq al-Muṭṭalibī; Abū Ḥassān al-Ziyādī, who transmitted from Abū I-Mundhir al-Kalbī and other men; `Isā b. Yazīd b. Da`b; al-Haytham b. `Adī al-Ṭā`ī, who transmitted from `Abdallāh b. `Abbās al-Hamdānī; Muḥammad b. Kathīr al-Qurashī, who transmitted from Abū Ṣāliḥ and other men; `Alī b. Muḥammad b. [`Abdallāh b. Abī Sayf al-Madā`inī; Abū Ma`shar al-Madanī; Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārazmī al-Munaḥijim; and Māshā`allāh al-Ḥāsib concerning the ascendants of years and times. We have written down, on the authority of men other

than those we have named, certain items—biographies and accounts of caliphs—that others recorded and transmitted and that we have learned. We have made it a brief book, suppressing poems and lengthy accounts. In God lie help, success, power, and strength.

The Birth of the Messenger of God

The birth of the Messenger of God took place in the Year of the Elephant [Note: According to the accepted chronology of Muḥammad's life, this would be around 570 CE. Concerning the historicity of the reputed attack on the Ka`ba by the Yemenite king Abrahā, whose army was said to have included an elephant, see the article by A. F. L. Beeston in ei2, s.v. al-Fil. No attempt to convert the date into an exact Western date has been made due to uncertainty about the pre-Islamic calendar.]. Between his birth and the elephant there were fifty nights. According to what some have transmitted, it took place on Monday, the 2nd of the month of Rabī` i. It was also said to have taken place on the eve of Tuesday, the 8th of the month of Rabī` i. Those who transmitted from Ja`far b. Muḥammad say that it was on Friday at daybreak on the 12th of the month of Ramaḍān.

According to what experts in astronomical computations have said, he was born in the conjunction of Scorpio. [Note: That is, the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Scorpio. Al-Ya`qūbī is following the astrological system of Māshā`allāh, who followed a Sasanian theory “that important religious and political changes are indicated by conjunctions of the planets Saturn and Jupiter, which recur at intervals of about twenty years. Successive conjunctions tend to stay in the same astrological triplicity. After a long time, however, over two centuries, they move along into another triplicity. Any such ‘shift’ of triplicity indicates changes of more sweeping nature than a simple conjunction—the rise of a new nation or dynasty. The advent of a major prophet, an event most portentous of all, is heralded by the completion of a cycle of shifts through all four triplicities. Predictions are made by casting the horoscope for the instant of the vernal equinox (taḥwīl al-sana, year transfer) of the year in which this conjunction or shift occurs.” E. S. Kennedy and

David Pingree, *The Astrological History of Māshā'allāh*, vi, 48ff., 98ff. The margin of M contains a schematic diagram of this horoscope.] According to the astrologer Māshā'allāh: The ascendant of the year in which the conjunction took place that indicated the birth of the Messenger of God was Libra, 22°, the term and house of Venus, 2:5 Jupiter was in Scorpio, 3° 23'. Saturn was in Scorpio, | 6° 23', retrograde. The two were in the second of the ascendants. The Sun was in the sign opposite the ascendant, in Aries, the 1st minute. Venus was in Aries, 1° 56'. Mercury was in Aries, 18° 16', retrograde. Mars was in Gemini, 12° 15'. The Moon was in midheaven in Cancer, 1° 20'.

According to al-Khwārazmī: On the day the Messenger of God was born, the Sun was in Taurus, 1°. The Moon was in Leo, 18° 10'. Saturn was in Scorpio, 9° 40', retrograde. Jupiter was in Scorpio, 2° 10', retrograde. Mars was in Cancer, 2° 50'. Venus was in Taurus, 12° 10'.

The Quraysh used to date the years by the death of Quṣayy b. Kilāb because of Quṣayy's greatness. When the Year of the Elephant came, they dated by it because of the renown of that year, and so their dating was from the birth of the Messenger of God.

When the Messenger of God was born, devils were pelted and stars fell. When the Quraysh saw it, not knowing what to make of the falling stars, they said, "This can be for no other reason than the coming of the Last Hour." An earthquake encompassing the entire world struck mankind, so that synagogues and churches collapsed, and everything that was worshipped other than God removed from its place. The magicians and soothsayers were at a loss; their familiar spirits were restrained [from speaking]. Stars never seen before rose, such that the soothsayers of the Jews did not know what to make of them. The Palace of Kisrā was shaken, so that thirteen pinnacles fell from atop the building.

The fire of Persia went out; it had never gone out for a thousand years before that. The chief scholar and wise man of the Persians, | whom the 2:6 Persians call mōbadhān mōbadh, who was in charge of the rites of their religion, had a vision of

Arabian camels leading intractable horses which, having crossed the Tigris, spread throughout the country. This frightened and alarmed Kisrā Anūshirwān. He sent to al-Nu'mān, asking whether any of the soothsayers of the Arabs remained. Al-Nu'mān replied that yes, there was Saṭīḥ al-Ghassānī in Damascus in the land of Syria. "Bring me an elder of the Arabs," he said, "one who has intelligence and knowledge, whom I can send to him." He brought him 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Buqayla, and he sent him to him. 'Abd al-Masīḥ set out on a camel and, having arrived in Damascus, inquired about the man and was directed to him. He dwelt at the Jābiya Gate, and 'Abd al-Masīḥ found him about to expire. So he called into his ear at the top of his voice:

Are you deaf, or can you hear?—O nobleman of Yemen, who can relieve an anxiety that has defied the greatest men, Who can pronounce judgment on a matter concealed: the tribe's elder from the people of Yazan has come to you.

<>

Bibliography

[The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in The Book of Exodus](#) by Jan Assmann, translated by Robert Savage [Princeton University Press, 9780691157085]

[Through Hermopolitan Lenses: Studies on the So-called Book of Two Ways in Ancient Egypt](#) by Wael Sherbiny [Probleme Der Agyptologie, Brill, 9789004336711]

[Hittite Landscape and Geography](#) edited by Mark Weeden and Lee Z. Ullmann with maps by Zenobia Homan [Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 the Near and Middle East, Brill Academic, 9789004341746]

[The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic](#) edited by Daniel S. Richter and William A. Johnson [Oxford Handbooks, Oxford University Press, 9780199837472]

[Hadrian's Wall](#) by Adrian Goldsworthy [Basic Books, 9781541644427]

[New Perspectives on Late Antiquity](#) edited by David Hernández de la Fuente [Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 9781443827188]

[Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan](#) edited by Matthew Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano [Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Mohr Siebeck, 978316154531]

[The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary](#) by Loren T. Stuckenbruck [Texte Und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum, 978316146720] (English and Hebrew Edition)

[The Book of the Giants: The Manichean and The Dead Sea Scroll Apocryphal Versions](#) by W. B. Henning, Fabio R. Araujo [International Alliance Pro-Publishing, 9781609420048]

[The Books of Enoch: The Angels, The Watchers and The Nephilim: With Extensive Commentary on the Three Books of Enoch, the Fallen Angels, the Calendar of Enoch, and Daniel's Prophecy](#) by Joseph Lumpkin [Fifth Estate, 9781936533664]

[Medieval Textual Cultures: Agents of Transmission, Translation and Transformation](#) edited by Faith Wallis and Robert Wisnovsky [Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Tension, Transmission, Transformation De Gruyter, 9783110465464]

[The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium](#) edited by Anthony Kaldellis, Niketas Siniosoglou [Cambridge University Press, 9781107041813]

[The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492](#) edited by Jonathan Shepard [Cambridge University Press, 9780521832311]

[Byzantine Culture in Translation](#) edited by Amelia Brown and Bronwen Neil [Byzantina Australiensia, Brill, 9789004348868]

[Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase, Notes and Remarks on Education and Culture in Byzantium from Its Origins to the 10th Century](#) by Paul Lemerle, translated from the French by Lindsay Helen & Ann Moffatt [Byzantina Australiensia, Brill 9780959362633]

[Commitments to Medieval Mysticism within Contemporary Contexts](#) edited by Patrick Cooper,

Satoshi Kikuchi [Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, Peeters Publishers, 9789042934474]

[Gospel of John](#) by Edward W. Klink III [Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Zondervan, 9780310243601]

[The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John](#) by Edward W. Klink III [Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, Cambridge University Press, 9780521130448]

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volumes 1](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 1, ISBN 9789004356191]

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volumes 2](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 2, ISBN 9789004356207]

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation Volume 3](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: Volume: 3, ISBN 9789004356214]

Three Volume set:

[The Works of Ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation in Three Volumes](#) edited by Matthew S. Gordon, Chase F. Robinson, Everett K. Rowson, Michael Fishbein [Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, Brill, Volume: 1, ISBN 9789004356191; Volume: 2, ISBN 9789004356207; Volume: 3, ISBN 9789004356214; 3 Volume set: ISBN 9789004356085]