

# **Preliminary Program**

and

## **Extended abstracts**

(arranged in alphabetical order according to the speakers' surnames)  
for

# **Retelling the Bible**

Workshop at the Center for Theoretical Study  
September 10-12, 2008  
Jilská 1 / Husova 4, Prague, Czech Republic

**Preliminary program**  
Interdisciplinary workshop  
organised by the Center for Theoretical Study  
with the support of the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague  
Prague, September 10-12, 2008

## **Retelling the Bible**

### **September 10**

9:30-11:10

Opening remarks: Ivan Chvatík, co-director of CTS, and Lucie Doležalová  
Udo Kühne (Uni. Kiel, Inst. für Klassische Altertumskunde, Mittel- und Neulat. Phil., Germany)

*The Bible in Medieval Literary Theory*

Johanne Cornelia Linde (Warburg Institute, London)

*Some Observations on Nicola Maniacutia's 'Suffraganeus Bibliotheca'*

[coffee break]

11:40-13:00

Pavel Soukup (Center for Medieval Studies, Prague)

*Nothing But the Word of God: Did Hussite Preachers Abstain from Telling Stories?*

Lydie Ducolomb (Univ. de Lyon, France)

*Du récit biblique à l'exemplum biblique : le 'Liber de exemplis Sacre Scripture' de Nicolas de Hanapes*

[lunch break]

14:30-16:30

Dan Batovici (Bucharest, Romania)

*The Gospel of John in the Apostolic Fathers: a Second Century Reading*

Sabrina Corbellini (Department of Medieval Dutch Lit. of Univ. of Groningen, The Netherlands)

*The Italian Quattuor Unum: Holy Writ and Lay Readers. An analysis of Tuscan Gospel Harmonies*

Cristian Daniel (Department of Medieval Studies, CEU, Budapest, Hungary)

*The Bible as a Tool in Reforming the Orthodox:*

*the case of the 1567-1568 Tâlcuț Evangheliilor (The Interpretation of the Gospels)*

[coffee break]

17:00-19:00

Sabine Tiedje (Universität zu Köln, Mittellateinische Abt., Germany)

*Petrus of Rosenheim: Roseum memoriale divinatorum eloquiorum*

Hiram Kümper (Historisches Institut, Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

*The Bible as Universal History. Biblical Narratives in History Teaching from Humanism through*

*Enlightenment*

Lucie Doležalová (Center for Theoretical Study, Prague)

*God's Dining Room*

### **September 11**

10:00-12:00 [part of CTS seminars]

Brian Britt (Dept. of Religious Studies, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA)

*Friend's Balaam as Retelling and Model of Biblical Tradition*

David C. Tollerton (University of Bristol, UK)

*Tradition and innovation in post-Holocaust retellings of Job*

Leslie King-Hammond (Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, the U.S.A.)

*Biblical Imagery in the African American Experience*

[lunch break]

13:30-15:30

Francesco Stella (University of Siena, Arezzo, Italy)

*A Repressed Beauty: Biblical Poetics and the Legitimation of Poetry in Medieval Culture*

Farkas Gábor Kiss (Dept. of Hungarian, ELTE Budapest, Hungary)

*Satan's will and God's glory. The logic of glorious defeat in the Biblical epic of the Renaissance (Baptista Mantuan, Vida, Marino)*

Gerhard Jaritz (Inst. für Realienkunde des Mittelalt. und der frühen Neuzeit, Krems, Austria and Dept. of Medieval Studies, CEU, Budapest)

*The Development of Biblical Architecture: Solomon's Temple Revisited*

[coffee break]

16:00-18:00

Martin Bažil (Dept. of Greek and Latin Studies, Charles University, Prague)

*Juvenius et Proba – deux types différents de l'épopée biblique au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle*

Marianne Sághy (CEU Medieval Studies Department, Budapest, Hungary)

*"You urge me to make a new work from the old:" Social Networks, Intellectual Role Play, and the Revision of the Latin Bible*

Bonna Devora Haberman (Lafer Center for Gender Studies & RISGS, Hebrew Univ., Israel)

*Unmasking the Scroll of Esther through Activist Performance*

## **September 12**

8:30-9:50

Cass Fisher (Religious Studies, University of South Florida, USA)

*Reading for perfection: theological reflection and religious practice in the Exodus commentary of Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*

Alen Novalija (Dept. of Medieval Studies, CEU, Budapest, Hungary)

*The Story of Original Sin in the 'Interpretative Paley'*

[coffee break]

10:20-12:20

Maria Diemling (Canterbury Christ Church University, UK)

*"Adam Raised a Cain": Bruce Springsteen retells the Bible*

Justyna Łukaszewska-Haberkowa (Univ. School of Phil. and of Education, Krakow, Poland)

*The Book of Genesis in Scivias of Hildegard of Bingen*

Goce Naumov (University of Skopje, Republic of Macedonia)

*Man Made of Clay: Prehistoric background of a religious concept*

[lunch break]

13:30-15:30

Kayko Driedger Hesslein (Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, USA)

*Supersessionist Presentations of Luke's Child Jesus in the Temple in Children's Bibles*

Jackie du Toit (Dept. of Afroasiatic Studies, Uni. of the Free State, South Africa)

*"Translated but improved": translating the bible for children*

Nancy Tolson (Mitchell College, New London, Connecticut, the USA)

*Understanding the Trickster in Jacob: A Caribbean Rendition*

[coffee break]

16:00-18:00

Åslaug Ommundsen (CMS Bergen, Norway)

*St. Hallvard as the new Tobias – the Book of Tobit retold in a Norwegian legend*

David Movrin (University of Ljubljana, Department of Classics, Slovenia)

*Christiana vita, Christi scriptura. Early Christian Lives and their Retelling of the Bible*

Final discussion, closing remarks

Dan Batovici (*Bucharest*)

## **The Gospel of John in the Apostolic Fathers: a Second Century Reading**

Most of the writings from the collection of texts known to us as the Apostolic Fathers are contemporary with the largest part of the New Testament. Some of them might even antedate a number of texts from what we have today within the New Testament. There are, however, some rather interesting particularities emerging from the simple fact that both corpora are written in the first two centuries; among them perhaps the most intriguing is that in the Apostolic Fathers we may have a witness of an earlier version of the New Testament – and therefore potentially different – than that we can presently reconstruct by the means of textual criticism in today's Greek editions of the text.

My paper aims to reassess the question of the reception of John's Gospel in the Apostolic Fathers, since significant recent works reached different conclusions on this count. In order to achieve such a goal it would firstly present some more general considerations from the reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers: similarities in the transmission history of both corpora and the difficulties of establishing certain use of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, with a focus on the frequently invoked reasons when taking into account the differences in comparable fragments. Considering subsequently the use of the Fourth Gospel in the Apostolic Fathers I intend to present parts from the discussion involved as well as to describe a number of parallels while developing the particulars of the inherent differences. Should we have some good reason to establish the use of John in the Apostolic Fathers, it is only fair to say this is one the earliest lectures of the Fourth Gospel, that is one contemporary with John's text.

The main focus of the paper moves however on a methodological issue: plainly, what can be said to constitute *the use* of the Fourth Gospel in a fairly later text? The principles of investigating this specific matter differed considerably in past scholarship and, in order to properly answer to the above question, the paper will offer an extended reappraisal of the methodology employed in the bibliography treating the presence of the Johannine writings in the second century, both older (Sanders 1943, Braun 1959) and recent (Hill 2004, Gregory & Tuckett 2005). Finally, a number of examples will be presented in order to illustrate the whole discussion.

Martin Bažil (*Prague*)

## Juvenius and Proba – Two Types of 4<sup>th</sup> Century Biblical Epic

While the Christian prose written in Latin reached one of its first summits as soon as at the turn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries CE and its emergence involved a continuous development from the so-called “second sophistry”, Christian poetry went through a significantly more complex evolution, not least because the classical poetic forms were held in suspicion by the first patristic authors including Tertullianus. Poems were considered at best empty vessels, at worst vehicles for lies and fabricated fables about false gods.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> century is thus a period of searching and experimenting for Christian-Latin poets. *Psalmus responsorius*, written on papyrus and discovered in Egypt in 1965, is the only extant early attempt at the liturgical hymn in Latin inspired by Greek models. It is not clear how popular it might have been but there is no further evidence of Latin hymnody to be found until the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Commodianus’ poems (written around 260 CE) represent a unique formal experiment that rejects the poetic convention taught at schools and seeks to replace it with a new, highly original idiom based on contemporary phonetic features of Latin. At the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, first two works to have adopted the classical Vergilian poetics came to being: Lactantius’ strophic poem *De ave Phoenix* (“Phoenix”, 304 CE), whose Christian meaning is encoded in a mythological story of the immortal bird, and the first attempt at a Christian epic poem, the *Laudes Domini* legend (“Praises of the Lord”, between 317 and 326 CE) composed in hexameter.

Also the first Bible epic in the Latin language, *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* (“Four Books of Gospels”, around 330 CE), is experimental. Its author, Juvenius, resuscitated the Roman epic tradition which has fallen out of use nearly two centuries prior to his time and substituted the fictitious mythological plot with the story of Jesus. The text entirely absorbs the sophisticated form of the Roman poetic tradition: its regular hexameter, vocabulary, the habit of dividing the subject matter into books and episodes, frequent allusions to classics. The subject is drawn from the Synoptic Gospels, or more accurately, from Mathew whose introductory account of Jesus’ childhood Juvenius enriched by motives from Luke. A series of pericopes from John (two miracles in Cana of Galilee, raising of Lazarus, Jesus’ encounter with a woman of Samaria and his response to the accusations brought against him by the Jews) is also added. Juvenius adhered to the source, respected the succession of the episodes and occasionally attempted a verbatim quotation. His experiment, combining the characteristic un-Christian form with the central narrative of Christianity, can be regarded as the first major achievement in the progress of the Christian-Latin poetry. Highly praised by Jerome in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* were read, widely emulated and sometimes even quoted in place of the biblical text. In the Middle Ages, the epic was frequently analyzed by students as a preferable alternative to the “heathen” Roman poetry.

A quite different fate was met by *Cento Probae* (also called *Cento Vergilianus*, written around 360 CE) whose author, Christian poetess Proba, took Juvenius’ experiment even further, nearly *ad absurdum*. On the formal level, *Cento Probae* differs from Juvenius’ epic by the use of the cento technique, i.e., it is wholly composed of verses and half-lines quoted from Vergil. In the new context, these building blocks gain a new, Christian meaning. Proba thus appropriates for Christian purposes not only the epic form, but also the verbal material of the traditional poetry. It is evident that this method of writing must have been extremely challenging, all the more so as Proba chose to render into verse not only the Gospels but also the events of Genesis. She understandably must have approached her sources more freely than Juvenius; having selected characteristic episodes (four from the Old Testament and ten from the Gospels), she reassembled them into a new whole.

It is the theme of war that Proba identifies as the key to the Old Testament part of the poem. In her view, however, this theme is linked with heathen poetry (represented by Lucanus in the Prologue). Consequently, she takes pains to avoid it in her poem. Departing from the order of events in the Gospels, the episodes recounting the life of Jesus are organized into a new, original sequence. At the same time, the individual episodes usually refer to more than one location in the source text. For instance, motifs from the calling of the first disciples (Luke 5:1-11), from calming the storm during the passage from Kafarnaum do Gadara (Luke 8:22-25 et al.) and from the scene in which Jesus walks on the water (Mathew 14:22-32 et al.) are pieced together into one coherent image.

Proba's reading of the biblical text – whether necessitated by the challenging technique or a result of her own choice – can be called “typological”, as opposed to the “historical” one represented by Juvencus. Unconfined by the linear progression of the source text, she understands it as a rich fabric of internal relations. Although the typological interpretation of the Bible became relatively common in the theological literature of Late Antiquity, Proba's experiment with the form as well as the subject-matter evidently went too far. Jerome rejects her cento, calling the author *garrula anus* (“garrulous old woman”), while the so-called *Decretum pseudo-Gelasianum*, a tool for distinguishing between reading suitable and unsuitable for a Christian, lists it among *apocrypha*. But although Proba's name never made it on the list of recommended authors, there is evidence pointing to popularity of *Cento Probae* among readers: it is extant in a relatively high number of manuscripts.

Brian Britt (*Blacksburg, Virginia*)

## **Freud's Balaam as Retelling and Model of Biblical Tradition**

Freud's case study of the "Rat Man" ("Notes on a Case of Obsessional Neurosis," 1909) contains what looks like an incidental biblical reference to his patient as an "inverted Balaam" (ein umgekehrter Bileam) who cursed when he wished to bless. During a religious phase when the patient resumed the practice of private prayer, he discovered that he needed to pray for over an hour at a time because "like an inverted Balaam, something always inserted itself into his pious phrases and turned them into their opposite. For instance, if he said, 'May God protect him,' an evil spirit would hurriedly insinuate a 'not.'" With this parallel to the biblical story of Balaam, a prophet who blesses Israel when ordered to curse them, the patient considers trying to curse in order to see whether a blessing would follow. This paper explores Freud's reference as a retelling of the Balaam story through a discussion of the biblical text, its reception, and its appropriation by Freud.

While some biblical texts regard Balaam as a foreigner who respects divine authority, others condemn him as a fool or corrupter of Israelites. Taken together, the different biblical texts about Balaam suggest a variety of traditions about the foreign prophet, depicting him alternately as foolish, pious, and corrupt. What all of these texts share is a concern for the central biblical issue of Israel's relation to its neighbors. Balaam's reception history bears out both sides of this polarity, often focusing on Balaam's non-Israelite identity. A brief survey of the biblical texts and reception history of Balaam will show how Freud's reference belongs to a tradition of debates and ambivalence about powerful words.

Freud's reference to the text implies a negative portrait of Balaam, but it points to a larger pattern of displacement and ambivalence within biblical tradition. In the case of the Rat Man, I will suggest that Freud and his patient betray complex attitudes toward religious tradition that Freud himself overlooked. For Freud, whose father quoted the Balaam story in a Hebrew inscription to his son in Sigmund's copy of the Philippon Bible, the unintended inversion of words is central not only in the case of the "Rat Man" but in psychoanalysis generally. The "inverted Balaam" reference also amplifies Freud's preoccupation with his patient's "superstitious" religious tendencies. Freud's secularism led him to overlook more complex operations of displacement already encoded in biblical texts and traditions which debated and never resolved a number of fascinating questions about powerful speech, human agency, identity, and tradition. In this way, Freud's reference to Balaam leads beyond Freud's work to a discussion of inversion and ambivalence in modern forms of biblical tradition. Critics of "secularization" theory, including Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, Michel de Certeau, and Talal Asad, offer ways to reconfigure Freud's analysis as an alternative to secularization, but such a shift requires the study of biblical texts and their reception in the development of biblical tradition as a model of displacement. The figure of Balaam becomes a figure for Freud's ambivalence toward biblical tradition and religion itself, and a model for theorizing the dynamics of biblical tradition.

Sabrina Corbellini (*Groningen*)

## **The Italian ‘Quattuor Unum’: Holy Writ and Lay Readers. An analysis of Tuscan Gospel Harmonies**

This paper aims at describing the diffusion of Tuscan Gospel harmonies, also known as the Tuscan *Quattuor Unum* or diatessaron, a text where the story of the life of Jesus is given as a coherent narrative from birth to death and resurrection. After a short introduction on the tradition of *Quattuor Unum*, the manuscripts will be analyzed to reconstruct their use and function in circles of medieval devout laymen and laywomen in Central Italy.

The tradition of the *Quattuor Unum* dates back to the second century, when Tatian composed in Syriac a text containing a harmonization of the four canonical Gospel. The text was soon translated into Greek and Latin and successively into vernacular languages. The diffusion in Western Europe is traditionally linked to the so-called Codex Fuldensis (a manuscript approved by Victor, bishop of Capua, in 547 and now at the Fulda Library), containing a complete New Testament where the four Gospels were substituted by a Diatessaron. The Diatessaron was translated twice into Italian: in Tuscan (30 manuscripts), and in Venetian (1 manuscript). Manuscripts containing the Tuscan version date from the second half of 14<sup>th</sup> to the third quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Venetian manuscript was copied in second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

An analysis of Tuscan manuscripts containing clear references to scribes and owners reveals that Tuscan harmonies circulated in a lay milieu. Ownership of religious communities (e.g. San Marco and SS. Annunziata in Florence) can be explained as gift of wealthy citizens to town-convents. This result is corroborated by general palaeographical characteristics of the manuscripts, which are written in *mercantesca* or in a gothic hybrida, in one or two columns. The *mercantesca*, in particular, can easily be localised (Tuscany and Florence in particular) and was exclusively used by Tuscan merchants and artisans for writing texts in vernacular with a personal or an unofficial status. A vast majority of the manuscripts were written on paper, which is a further reference to use by lay people.

Next to private ownership of manuscripts another use of the manuscripts can be assumed. In the list of books of the Compagnia dei Disciplinati di Santa Maria della Scala di Siena, dated 1492, the following entry can be found: ‘a vernacular book called the harmony of the four evangelists of the gospel of Jesus Christ’. This book is mentioned in the booklist together with, among others, ‘a handwritten vernacular manuscript containing a Bible, not complete’ and ‘a book of the Gospels in vernacular, handwritten on parchment, bound in wood and red cloth’. These manuscripts were fixed to the portable wood lectern by iron chains, and at disposal of all members of the confraternity, artisans and members of the civic bourgeoisie. The confraternities were a privileged place of cultural transmission and education and they participated actively in the oral and written transmission of devotional texts and of biblical material, such as Gospel harmonies, by organizing religious activities for the members of the community and, in particular, cycles of sermons during Lent. Moreover, confraternities gave the opportunity to their members to copy the books belonging to confraternity library, by lending them for a certain period.

Of great relevance for a better understanding of the function of the Italian Diatessaron is a study of the contents of the manuscripts. First of all, it is important to notice that the Diatessaron is exclusively combined with other vernacular religious-didactic treatises, concerning the explanation of the principles of Christian faith, of the Our Father and of the Ten Commandments, of the sacraments and of sins. Lives of Saints or Lives of the Holy Fathers, prayers, penitential psalms and treatises on themes of Marian devotion are also linked to the Gospel harmony.

Manuscripts containing the combination with apocryphal books, the *Epistula Lentuli*, the *La pistola nostro signore Jhesu Christo* (Hi19), the Gospel of Nicodemo, *Dell' avvenimento di Gesù Christo nostro signore* and the *Revenge of Christ* were also found in the corpus. The Italian translation of the *Epistula Lentuli* is of particular interest. In four manuscripts, this physical description of Christ, described as a light brown haired handsome man, is fused together with the Diatessaron as an appendix to the text. By the addition of this text, presenting Christ in his human and physical dimension, readers could feel his vicinity and an emotional link between the reader and the person of Christ was created. It is remarkable that the presence of the Italian translation of the *Epistola Lentuli* is registered in one of the oldest dated manuscripts of the Diatessaron (10 February 1372). In fact, the original Latin text of this apocryphal book was probably composed in Italy in the first half of the fourteenth century and the combination Diatessaron-*Epistula Lentuli* could have already originated in Latin source text.

In three manuscripts a combination with other vernacular new-testamentic writings occurs. These manuscripts, which carry on a tradition started by the codex Fuldensis, can be considered a new kind of New Testament, where the Gospel harmony is followed or preceded by the Epistles, the Book of Revelation and the Acts of the Apostles. The replacement of the four Gospels with a Gospel harmony indicates that the Diatessaron was considered a fully-fledged and a valuable substitute for the four canonical Gospels in this new kind of lay New Testaments.

Cristian Daniel (*Budapest*)

**The Bible as a tool in Reforming the Orthodox: The case of the 1567-1568  
*Tâlcu* *Evangheliilor* (The Interpretation of the Gospels)**

The second half of the sixteenth century witnessed the development of a unique confessional landscape in the realm of Transylvania. Four legally recognized confessions (Calvinist, Lutheran, Catholic, Unitarian) and a fifth tolerated one (Orthodox) shared between them the souls of the inhabitants of the principality. Transylvania was also the first country that legally gave religious freedom to its inhabitants, though proselytism was never hindered by this fact. It also witnessed the growth of a little known Orthodox Reformed church.

My paper addresses one of the rare books used as a tool for this unusual Reformation, namely *Tâlcu* *Evangheliilor* (The Interpretation of the Gospel), which was published in 1567-1568. A tool itself the book makes use of the Bible, as a mean to explain and back up the reformation of clergy, laity, rituals and other. It is an exegetic-homiletic text that wants to interpret, to solve the scriptural message, to be a mediator between the latter and the auditory, to decide which its message is. The exegesis becomes interesting because it does not only talk about the Scripture but replaces, volens nolens, the Scripture. This becomes possible as the exegesis reaches the auditory much easier, first of all because it does not have a sacred character such as the scriptural text, and thus it is received as essence and not as form. The Reformation tried to bring the Scripture closer to the faithful by translating it in the vernacular. Still, this did not put aside the need to have proper exegetes of the sacred text, which, though made available in the vernacular, remains necessary hidden.

The author of the homilies in this book has to face the problem of the relation between Scripture and Tradition. This problem it is discussed several times and accompanies other theological themes. The author justifies its own interpretation by using alternatively (or sometimes even together) scriptural verses and quotations from the Eastern Fathers. I believe that he has an original stance, trying to bring together Scripture and the appeal to the interpretative tradition of the Eastern Church. Otherwise the entire collection of homilies is punctuated from one end to the other by biblical quotations.

Maria Diemling (*Canterbury*)

## **American Midrash: Bruce Springsteen retells the Bible**

Bruce Springsteen (\* 1949), regarded by some as the most thoughtful American singer-songwriter today, may be an unlikely subject for a workshop about interpretations of the Bible. Having sold more than 65 millions albums in the US alone, which have earned him 18 Grammy awards, he is best known for a distinctive type of American heartland rock that is often strongly influenced by folk song traditions. His songs are fundamentally American. He describes a world where you pass "Sal's grocery" ("Long Walk Home"), the "streetlights shine down on Blessing Avenue" and at "Frankie's diner, an old friend/ on the edge of town/ The neon sign [is] spinning round" and at "Pop's Grill/ Shaniqua brings the coffee" ("Girls in their Summer Clothes"). This small-town America, however, has a much darker side. This is also a world where "[y]ou can't sleep at night/ You can't dream your dream/ Your fingerprints on file/ Left clumsily at the scene." ("Your Own Worst Enemy") and where people, desperately trying to live the American dream, find themselves all too often sidelined.

However, Springsteen's lyrics often contain powerful religious motifs. Raised as a Roman Catholic by American parents with an Italian and Irish-Dutch background, Springsteen appears to have distanced himself from any formal attachment with the Church, but the strong cultural influence of his Catholic upbringing is very prominent in his songs. The richly layered poetry is infused with evocative religious images and biblical stories from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament form the backbone of many of his songs and can be traced back to his very first album, which came out in 1973. A love song, expressing desire for a woman called Theresa, can therefore speak about "watch[ing] the bones in your back/ Like the Stations of the Cross. ... The pages of Revelation/ Lie open in your empty eyes of blue. ... Your tears, they fill the rosary/ At your feet, my temple of bones/ Here in this perdition we go on and on// Now our city of peace has crumbled/ Our book of faith's been tossed/ And I'm just out here searchin'/ For my own piece of the cross." ("I'll work for your love", *Magic*, 2007).

In my contribution, I wish to focus on three aspects of Springsteen's retelling of biblical stories. I will be looking at notions of the "Promised Land", examine father-son relationships and explore Springsteen's use of biblical images in his response to 9/11.

For many of his fans, Springsteen epitomizes the American experience, voicing the experiences and hopes, difficulties and failures of the American working classes. The visionary dream of America as "The Promised Land" (also the title of a song) is a motif reworked in several songs from different periods, reflecting the hopes and the disappointment of a disillusioned class. The insistent chorus "Mister I ain't a boy, no I'm a man/ And I believe in a promised land" does not relieve the pain of seeing the "dark cloud rising from the desert floor" which is going to "[b]low away the dreams that tear you apart/ Blow away the dreams that break your heart/ Blow away the lies that leave you nothing but lost and brokenhearted." ("The Promised Land"). "The Promised Land" is letting its people down: "Well my daddy come on the Ohio works/ When he come home from World War Two/ Now the yard's just scrap and rubble/ He said 'Them big boys did what Hitler couldn't do./ These mills they built the tanks and bombs/ That won this country's wars/ We sent our sons to Korea and Vietnam/ Now we're wondering what they were dyin' for.'" ("Youngstown", *The Ghost of Tom Joad*).

A powerful topic in many of Springsteen's songs is the difficult relationship between fathers and sons. He laments a generation of fathers only too willing to sacrifice their sons on the altars of misguided ideals, echoing Abraham's disturbing response to God's request. In the angry "Adam raised a Cain", he seems to suggest that "[w]ith the same hot blood burning in our veins", the murderous heritage of a father has been passed on, despite the son's tears on the day of his christening.

In Springsteen's artistic response to 9/11, he drew heavily on religious imagery and allusions to biblical figures and terminology. The trauma experienced by many Americans is reworked by powerful and sophisticated use of biblical myth. The title song of the album, "The Rising", evokes the Passion of Christ in the mind of a fireman: "Left the house this morning/ Bells ringing filled the air/ Wearin' the cross of my calling/ On wheels of fire I come/ rollin' down here". The motifs used in this song and the title hint to a painful precarious death and the hope of resurrection and redemption.

I shall argue that Springsteen's poetry can be read as "American midrash" with a distinctively Catholic flavour. He creatively re-imagines biblical stories, explores the gaps and contradictions in the narratives and makes them relevant to the contemporary American experience.

### **Short biographical note:**

Dr Maria Diemling is Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University, having previously been Lecturer in Jewish Studies at Trinity College Dublin and a research fellow at the Franz Rosenzweig Centre at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Lucie Doležalová (*Prague*)

## God's Dining Room

Peter Comestor (d. ca. 1178), in his introduction to *Historia Scholastica*, the most widespread and popular medieval “retelling of the Bible,” speaks of the Bible as the dining room of God – a space where God distributes food and where he makes his adherents drunk in order to return them sober:

*Imperatoriae majestatis est, in palatio tres habere mansiones: auditorium vel consistorium in quo jura decernit: coenaculum, in quo cibaria distribuit; thalamum, in quo quiescit. Ad hunc modum Imperator noster, qui imperat ventis et mari, mundum hunc habet pro auditorio: ubi ad nutum ejus omnia disponuntur... Animam justi habet pro thalamo, quia deliciae sunt ei ibi quiescere, et esse cum filiis hominum (Prov. VIII)... Sacram Scripturam habet pro coenaculo, in qua sic suos inebriat, ut sobrios reddat.*

Dining room is a place where food is consumed. This paper explores the ways the parallel between approaching the Scripture and eating was developed in the Middle Ages concentrating especially on the ways the scriptural food was “served” to common medieval believers.

The parallel between reading and eating was popular already in the Antiquity and was further developed during the Middle Ages in many different ways – talking about the sweetness or bitterness of a text, chewing and efforts its consumption requires, nutrition it provides, etc. The same variety of imagery is applied in the case of the Bible. In addition, given the difficulty of its interpretation and the number of senses it had, it is often elaborated that one should approach it slowly, first as a drink (referring to 1 Cor 3:2 where Paul speaks of the new converts as infants getting first the milk and only after proper food). Another recurring image is that of a big feast which Christ prepared for the converts and where he is serving them various delicacies. The metaphor of getting drunk with God in order to become truly sober also reappears but is a trickier one.

All the imagery used shows nicely that medieval exegetes were well aware that attention and care has to be devoted to presenting the Bible to common people. Thus, although, on the one hand, the Bible was considered a sacred text which should not be altered, it was quite commonly “retold” in order to be more easily approachable, memorable, and enjoyable: condensed in verse, accompanied by pictures, the gist of the stories retold and the geographical details omitted, etc. As a result, the Bible of the common people was quite different from the Bible of the theologians and clerics during the Middle Ages.

By discussing specific examples of the medieval Bible retellings (especially the already mentioned *Historia scholastica* by Peter Comestor, rhymed *Aurora* by Peter Riga (1160-1109), and the so-called *Summarium Bible* ascribed to Alexander de Villa Dei (ca. (1175-1240)), the paper aims at specifying the strategies retelling for this particular purpose: the use of the Bible by common people. How was the Bible really retold for them? What parts of the Bible are retold most frequently and in most detail? What are the ideas stressed – the correspondence of the two testaments, the ethical and moral dimension, practical advice? How are the Christian dogmas presented and explained?

By providing a closer look at these texts and the ways in which they are structured, the paper hopes to present the ways in which the Bible which was known, approached and understood by the common people. It is in a way, a different Bible – denser with stories, and examples, and often limited or even simply wrong from the theological point of view.

Lydie Ducolomb (*Lyon*)

**From biblical stories to biblical *exempla*:  
Nicholas of Hanapes' *Liber de exemplis Sacre Scripture***

The Bible is the founding book for the medieval West. It is the referent authority upon which are based social practices, and the medieval civilization in many respects is influenced by it. Clerics have an intimate knowledge of it through the offices and the study of the sacred texts. Although lay people hardly have a direct access to the biblical text, it is in fact more widely spread in the society especially through liturgy, which commemorates each year the same story.

However, biblical stories are easily spread through the medieval society by predication. Particularly from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, predication to the faithful expands in a spectacular way, instigated by new religious orders whose vocation is to preach: the mendicant orders.

Among literary devices favoured by preachers for their efficiency is the *exemplum*, which can be defined as “a brief story given as true, intended to be included in a speech (generally a sermon) in order to convince an audience by a salutary lesson” (J. Le Goff, 1982). These exemplary stories associated with a moral lesson are of various natures, depending on the preachers' scholarly culture (lives of the Fathers, examples from ancient history...) as well as on their audiences' popular culture (fabliaux, popular tales, folklore...) Curiously enough, very few biblical stories are found among all these stories. The Bible is constantly invoked within the sermon though, supplying authoritative quotations or images developed in an allegorical mode. Some biblical figures or episodes, associated with a model of good or bad behaviour, seem to be well known by the faithful: thus women are induced to lock themselves at home, as the “good widow” Judith did, to escape Dinah's lot, who was carried off and raped while going out for a walk.

Thus, among different kinds of uses of the biblical text, the use of biblical stories as exemplary stories in pastoralia is well attested. The existence of the *Liber de exemplis Sacre Scripture*, written by a Dominican, Nicholas of Hanapes, in the 1280s, shows it well. This work belongs to the *exempla* collection genre; so it is one of these numerous tools that preachers have elaborated to help them with their task from the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. However, this collection is very original; it is indeed the only *exempla* collection to include biblical stories exclusively. Besides, the author presents it as such in his prologue, laying the stress on the higher truth and authority of biblical stories – which is a commonplace. And yet, its diffusion was wide and long-standing (about 150 manuscripts and 40 editions), this success showing that it responded to the expectations of the preachers.

Nicholas of Hanapes' collection shows a practical and pragmatic approach of the biblical stories. Indeed, the book is organized into chapters dealing with moral issues (relationships between God and men, life in society, vices and virtues), so that the preacher in the act of writing a sermon can find quickly the story that fits to illustrate the subject he is dealing with. In each chapter are given brief summaries of biblical stories, following their order of appearance in the Bible. They are presented in a terse form, most of the time without any comment, the edifying lesson being obvious. Indeed, Nicholas is talking to his preaching fellows, who have as precise a knowledge of the Bible as he has; which is why he does not need to develop his story.

The author strictly sticks to the biblical text, putting aside apocryphal stories some of his contemporaries are fond of (such as Iacopo of Varazze in his famous *Legenda aurea*) and which gave rise to debate at that time. Similarly, he keeps distant from techniques of a scholarly exegesis, which examines very carefully stories and narration in a literal analysis;

but then it goes further this first reading level and endeavours to give interpretations of the allegoric kind. Nicholas' purpose also is different, since it is clearly pastoral.

Thus, in the *Liber de exemplis Sacre Scripture*, biblical stories are read through a reading grid, the grid of the christian moral code. Their role is to supply the faithful with behaviour models to imitate, or on the contrary counter-examples to avoid. While doing this, Nicholas breaks up with the continuity of the story, dividing it into many examples scattered in different chapters. Indeed, he does not hesitate to use the same story several times, viewed from different angles. He explains this himself in his prologue, taking the example of the story of Joseph and Putiphar's wife; this story, he says, fits to illustrate at least five different subjects: young people's chastity, servants' loyalty, masters' excessive cruelty, women's deceptions, divine Providence. In fact, this story is used not less than ten times in ten different chapters of the book.

Nicholas of Hanapes' work introduces us to a very specific and original kind of "re-telling" of the biblical stories.

Jaqueline S. du Toit (*Bloemfontein, South Africa*)

## **“Translated but improved”: translating the bible for children**

The pages of children’s Bibles communicated more than a simple redaction of Bible stories; they also incorporated class-specific social values in a godly context that rendered them virtually unassailable. Children’s Bibles are powerfully persuasive handbooks for inculcating social responses. Unlike the explicit directions of worldly manuals of courtesy, the social directives of children’s Bibles are, and have long been, embedded in holy language from, as their editors assure the child reader, the Holy Penman himself (Bottigheimer 1996: 51-52).

Central to this paper is the dubious status quo of children’s bibles as neither “children’s literature” nor “theology”. As a result, this corpus of material has historically suffered from neglect in the scholarly discourse until the advent of the work of Ruth Bottigheimer, quoted above. Hence, the centrality of Bottigheimer’s suggestion of children’s bibles’ importance to an understanding of society by means of the moral and ethical values such a society deems most important for transfer to the next generation:

Children’s bibles published for lap readers are colourful representations of dour (traditionally clad in black/white leather) adult translations of ancient Hebrew and Greek source texts. This contrasting sensory description is indicative of the disjunctive knowledge transfer between the black-and-white revered, standardized, “adult” translation, and the informal, almost irreverent childhood renderings. Nevertheless, children’s bibles are still presumed divinely inspired in Judaeo-Christian tradition, if not directly derived from God. Legitimacy is thus imparted on the translations despite vast adaptation from source to target text and the implicit inclusion of visual language despite professions to aniconism in Judaeo-Christian tradition. The presumption is that children’s bibles are “true”, “accurate” and “faithful”, albeit simplified, renditions of the original source text and within the parameters of the canon. Hence these translations often presume (but rarely imply) a literal, functionally equivalent rendering of the original.

The emphasis on visual language in this context as inextricable from the verbal has to be emphasized as illustrations have accompanied children’s bibles from the first and should be considered essential to the transfer of message for children’s bibles. This approach is clearly different from the much later inclusion of the visual in adult renderings of bible translation. As far as this paper is concerned, the visual element is not additional to, but inherently part of the translation for children’s bibles. This includes canonical meaning assigned to colour, form and texture both in visual and verbal language.

Furthermore, Shavit (2006:25) mentions that the translation process, for children, takes place on two levels: “translations of texts from one language to another, but also the translations of texts from one system to another – for example, translations from the adult system into the children’s.” For religious literature it is even more complex: as for secular picture books, an adult intermediary is required to read/interpret/translate text and image to the child audience, enhancing the experience by including their own interpretation/translation in the performance thereof (Oittinen 2006:93). But for religious texts, this intermediary is not an adjunct, but a necessity to assist in the transfer of difficult moral/ethical material, as the primary function of the stories is didactic and not entertainment.

This paper is part of a project on the status quo of translation of religious literature for

children into the indigenous languages of South Africa. As legacy of the country's missionary past, this is the one text that may be presumed translated, at least in adult version, in the eleven official languages of the country. Under consideration is the presumption of authority of a given intermediary "adult" (English, for South Africa) source text and the often open negotiation of the role of the translator/illustrator in the end product as a result of claims to divine inspiration. Hence, faithfulness, or the preservation of "purity" in translation, or the successful claim thereto, is vital to bible translation for the religious tradition. This paper will consider how children's bibles circumvent the normative in religious tradition as it pertains to matters such as canon; authority; medium and faithfulness with specific cognition of the interplay of text and pictures. For South Africa, little data exists for the status of these publications in the industry and a significant part of the publication/translation activity occurs outside the sphere of traditional publishing houses, in the realms of church and synagogue. Often, as for the rising evangelical churches, the resultant publications are directly linked to American versions of the same. Hence, many of the observations on children's bibles in South Africa, are universally applicable to children's translations all over the world.

### **Short Bibliography**

- Bottigheimer, Ruth. 1996. *The Bible for Children: From the Age of Gutenberg to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University.
- Du Toit, Jaqueline S. & Luna Beard. 2007. The Publication of Children's Bibles in Indigenous South African Languages: an Investigation into the Current State of Affairs. *Journal for Semitics* 16/2: in publication.
- Oittinen, Riitta. 2006. The Verbal and the Visual: On the Carnivalism and Dialogics of Translating for Children. Pages 84-97 in *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*. Edited by Gillian Lathey. Topics in Translation 31. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Shavit, Zohar. 2006. Translation of Children's Literature. Pages 25-40 in *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*. Edited by Gillian Lathey. Topics in Translation 31. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Cass Fisher (*Tampa*)

## **Reading for perfection: theological reflection and religious practice in the exodus commentary of *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael***

Among the many possible motivations for the rabbis to engage in their own retelling of the bible, one motivation that receives scant attention from scholars is the rabbis' desire to assert God's greatness. While the tannaitic and amoraic rabbis do not reflect systematically on divine perfection nor do they typically take up the philosophical conundrums associated with attributes such as omnipotence and omniscience, they do frequently affirm the fact that God has maximal power, knowledge and goodness. Scholarly disinterest in rabbinic notions of divine perfection is ultimately a symptom of the marginalization of theology within Jewish studies. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century until the present, historians and Jewish thinkers have argued that Judaism contains no dogma. Depicting Judaism as a theologically austere form of ethical monotheism helped to advance the goal of political emancipation for the Jews and was consonant with the philosophical commitments of the German cultural horizon. Contemporary Jewish studies has retained these anti-theological views by defining itself as a historical rather than a constructive discipline and by drawing its philosophical resources from branches of continental philosophy that are committed to the rejection of metaphysics (and thus theology as well).

As part of a larger project in which I seek to defend the place of theology within Jewish studies, in this paper I explore how rabbinic concern for divine perfection informs the discussion of the exodus in *Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael*, an early rabbinic commentary on the book of Exodus. The paper begins by arguing that previous scholarly characterizations of rabbinic aggadah as homiletic fail to capture the tight connection between theological reflection and religious practice. Unlike rabbinic parables, the figurative and anthropomorphic nature of which lends credence to the criticism of being homiletic, claims about divine perfection arise out of a reasoned reflection on God's attributes. In the paper I will explore the concern for divine perfection in the *Mekhilta* from three perspectives. The first cases that I will look at are exegetical in nature. Through the rabbis' efforts to fill in narrative gaps and resolve contradictions in the Torah, they are presented with an opportunity to conceptualize and articulate their understandings of God's greatness. This first set of passages is significant because the theological claims are essentially gratuitous; the textual features of scripture become the vehicle for the rabbis' theological expression. In this case, reflection on divine perfection is rooted in an exegetical practice which seeks to make scripture self-coherent. A second form of theological reflection is more hermeneutic in character. In these instances the rabbis reinterpret scripture so as to preserve and defend their own ideas of divine perfection. Here theological reflection arises from a different type of reading practice, one which seeks to apply scripture to the intellectual and cultural horizon of the rabbis. The third form of reflection on divine perfection in the *Mekhilta* is foundational to the other two forms. These texts make a direct connection between thinking about divine perfection and offering God praise.

This approach to Jewish theological language is advantageous for several reasons. First, it resists the tendency to deny rabbinic thought about God its claim to truth. Second, it seeks to uncover the complexity of rabbinic theological discourse by identifying the different forms of reason and practice that produce theological claims. Third, it defends the place of theology in Jewish studies by arguing that rabbinic theology is not simply homiletic or speculative, rather it is a complex form of discourse grounded in religious practices. In conclusion, part of what motivates the rabbinic retelling of scripture is the desire to conceptualize and articulate God's greatness, an endeavor that is at once both theoretical and practical.

Bonna Devora Haberman (*Jerusalem*)

## **Unmasking the Scroll of Esther through Activist Performance**

In Nov. 2000, I gave a paper in the Ethics Section at the American Academy of Religion Meeting interpreting the biblical Book of Esther with sensitivity to the intersections of gender and power. I “unmasked” the dark theme of sexual trafficking in the text, pointing to how Esther along with other “beautiful virgin girls” from throughout 127 states of the Persian Empire are taken into the harem of King Ahashverosh in Shushan, the capitol. I juxtaposed primary biblical and rabbinic texts with NGO reports, and biographic excerpts to inform my analysis of deep cultural roots of contemporary oppressions. I interpreted implications of this reading of the Scroll of Esther for our society and began to formulate strategies for social change. Having published the paper, I was still looking for ways to experiment with the potential of my method to mobilize leaders and communities to work to alleviate gender-based oppression. With French post-structuralists, theater of the oppressed, and social critics such as the Vietnamese Trinh minh-Ha as my models, I began to explore performance as a method for transmitting the force of activist biblical scholarship to communities. This paper reflects critically on one outcome of these efforts—a full-length performance event, “Unmasking Esther”. I made the script and supporting documents available in Russian through a collaboration with an NGO in the CIS where Unmasking was used to mobilize communities to work against trafficking locally, immunizing vulnerable young women against predators through work in schools, local government etc.

I ground this work in one of the profound philosophic conundra of humanity, one that hinders feminist change and all ethical progress alike. An abyss separates knowledge about a desirable action from the fulfilment of it. We often know what we ought to do, but fail to do it. Western philosophers and theologians as ancient as Aristotle and as recent as Hélène Cixous have struggled to mend the disconnection between knowledge and action. Jewish text tradition claims that there is a necessary connection between knowledge and deed. A rabbinic axiom declares, “Study is great when it brings forth action” (Kiddushin 40b), that is, study is not valuable only in its own right, but insofar as it inspires concomitant behavior. While feminist theory has asserted the necessity for the academic enterprise to address injustice, the efficacy of our scholarship to bring forth social change remains tenuous. Meanwhile, unconscionable abuses are perpetrated by people who know what they ought to do, but fail to do what they know is right. Often our knowledge is inert.

Committed to the efficacy of feminist work to bring about improvement in the quality of human experience, I have grown to relate this inertia to attributes of our knowledge, its methods, and the texts that record it. While texts often refer to multi-dimensional forms and domains, to events that transpire over time and characters that move through space, texts are flat and motionless. Feminist scholarship in the academy and beyond usually uses words, discourse, written and oral. I began to look for more life-like media as vehicles for increasing the efficacy of our knowledge by engaging people more fully. I locate performance in an intermediate zone between the page and the activity of life, the realm of social activism. Performance enables embodied experimentation, creative and innovative approaches to traditional texts and their gender problems. Dramatic forms resemble action more closely than written interpretation. The multi-dimensionality of drama, the use of movement, visual symbols, and spatial relationships have the potential to arouse emotional and spiritual experience in addition to cognition, aspiring to bridge the text – action gap. By the classical traditions of the East and West, I have been convinced that theater has the power to arouse passion, the foundation of the commitment required to engage meaningfully in the kind of activism required to make change happen. Unmasking aspires not only to transmit feminist interpretation, but also to enable a participatory exegetic process in communities. I

sought opportunities, hooks, for connecting with communities through performance. The accepted practice of publicly reading the Scroll of Esther in Jewish communities during the celebration of Purim, the Jewish festival of masquerade is an invitation to perform. Furthermore, there is a tradition to stage spoof plays that mock ourselves, each other, God, and the sacred literatures on Purim.

A creator and performer of Unmasking, I interpose the Scroll of Esther and the Book of Lamentations with talmudic sources and contemporary NGO reports. This paper reflects about this experimental form of “retelling” the biblical text, how to propel texts from the printed page to the community stage. Unmasking analyzes relationships of war and exile and resulting violations-- from standards of body image to sex trafficking. Visual slides and short audience participation segments are included in the paper presentation.

Kayko D. Hesslein (*Berkeley*)

## **Supersessionist Presentations of Luke's Child Jesus in the Temple in Children's Bibles**

Children's Bibles often include Luke's story of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52): during the time of Passover, a twelve-year-old boy Jesus is discovered by his parents in the Temple, listening to and asking questions of the teachers there. While this story is fairly straightforward, in order to make the story understandable to children, the Lucan story must be interpreted by both children's Bibles' writers and illustrators. These interpretations, through simple words and pictures, provides the lens through which children, and sometimes their parents, come to understand the theological meaning of Jesus' interaction with the teachers of the Temple. Unfortunately, the interpretations of this particular pericope can lead to troubling understandings of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. My presentation will review several popular English children's bibles' presentations of the Lucan story in order to determine how this story is interpreted. It will demonstrate that children's Bibles run the risk of teaching children supersessionism in its most simple form, that Christianity, embodied by Jesus, supersedes Judaism, embodied by the Temple teachers.

By examining the simplified language and naive illustrations, my presentation will argue that interpretations are often put forward that exceed the meaning of the Lucan text, which is itself not supersessionist, and promote a hierarchical understanding of Christianity over and against Judaism. The neutrality of Jesus' conversation with the teachers is often textually and visually interpreted in such a way that Jesus is portrayed as knowing more than the learned adults around him, an unreasonable portrayal given Jesus' young age and the tone of the pericope, and Gospel, itself.

Since children come to texts and pictures with a less critical eye than adults, they are vulnerable to the interpretations presented in their bibles. For that reason, a greater deal of attention must be paid to the theological beliefs that inform those interpretations since, once impressed, those beliefs are very difficult to change. The education that children receive, either formally or informally, often comes to an end once they reach adulthood, leaving people with the uncritically formed images from their youth, supersessionism among them. For that reason, supersessionist interpretations in children's Bibles are an important area for study and the focus of this presentation.

Gerhard Jaritz (*Budapest and Krems*)

## **The Development of Biblical Architecture: Solomon's Temple Revisited**

Seeing pictures and their contents has been connected with 'reading' images. This reading may be supported by written texts or spoken words on which the images were more or less directly based, and/or by such backgrounds that the beholders had received in other contexts. Seeing, perceiving, and describing pictures, therefore, has to be considered as a complex issue following or being influenced by various patterns of intention and perception. This is true for today's art historians and researchers into visual culture as well as for medieval believers having been confronted with visual images in religious space. Such a situation certainly also has to lead to different messages of the images, and also to different reactions and responses to them.

This also has to be acknowledged for any visual representations of the word of the Bible which always represent various kinds of *retelling*; *retelling* that may have been meant as a method to strengthen the message, to get it closer to its beholder, to make it easier understandable, to emotionalize, to remember it better, and so on – one knows all this aspects very well already from the medieval defences of pictures in churches, mainly in the Latin Christian West.

Out of the often strong effects of images on their beholders having been particularly important in religious space, it has to be emphasized that *Retelling the Bible* with the help of visual images also has to play a relevant role in analysing the topic generally. In my contribution, I would like to offer a number of examples of the varieties of, mainly late medieval, *retelling* via images and try to analyse them with regard to their religious, social and cultural contexts. I will start this presentation with some remarks on the, in some aspects very well researched, visual images of Solomon's Temple and use this example as the starting point for a number of other instances and, finally, some general reflections on *Visually Retelling the Bible*.

Leslie King-Hammond (*Baltimore, Maryland*)

## **FEAR NOT: Biblical Imagery and the African-American Experience**

The Bible, as the sacred text and primary moral guide for Christian theological beliefs and practices, became a powerful force in the artistic imagination of African American artists. The earliest works reveal new modalities and genres of expression that also acted as strategies of resistance to slavery and expressed their longing for freedom and independence in the New World. Denied membership and participation in the Christian church and its Sunday services, these disenfranchised Africans and African Americans observed Christian behaviors, witnessed outside the windows and entrances of the church. The visual response to this theological experience manifested new narratives and genres. The tenacity of this cultural dynamic becomes even more complex when combined with African beliefs that prevailed through what Africanist Robert Ferris describes in *Flash of the Spirit* (1983), as “cultural camouflage”. The Bible under these conditions became a catalytic signifier and strategy to create expressions of sanctuary, resistance, salvation and transformation. The bondsmen (*re*)told and (*re*)visioned the biblical narratives in accordance with their own unique worldview.

These exceptional works of art speak to the reality, humanity, spirituality and intellect of African and African American bondsmen, who, responding to racial segregation within the Christian church, helped to foster the rise of the Black Church which today remains a dynamic foundation of the American Black community. Between the late 1790’s and into present times, a vast range of artists have been inspired by the narratives, moral ethics and philosophies of the Bible. Among these artists to be included in this exhibition are Joshua Johnston, Harriet Powers, Aaron Douglas, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, William Henry Johnson, James Hampton to more current contemporary art makers like Kahinde Wiley, Betye Saar, Kara Walker, Joyce Scott, Renee Cox and David Hammons. The work of these artists reflect conceptual, innovative and improvisational modalities to the more formal, conical Beaux Arts traditions. In most cases it was not until the later half of the twentieth century that these artists and art makers could obtain formal educational opportunities and thus had to rely on their own genius to articulate the passion of their vision. The artists selected for this presentation demonstrate a range of aesthetic strategies which speak directly to the issues of “retelling” the Bible’s narratives and parables.

Farkas Gábor Kiss (*Budapest*)

## **Satan's will and God's glory. The logic of glorious defeat in the Biblical epic of the Renaissance (Baptista Mantuan, Vida, Marino)**

Ancient epic poetry left a serious problem unsolved for Christian poets of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The deeds of ancient epic heroes were as much teleological as the Christian conception of history, thus epic storytelling fitted the framework of Christian history, but the adventures of Achilles, Jason or Aeneas were not theologically or morally justifiable. As the positive morality of epic actions became a necessity for the Christian heroes of the poem, the enemy had to be looked upon with a negative bias, and the traditional impartiality of epic narration was discharged in favour of sympathies and antipathies directly predisposed for the reader. However, impartial narration freed the ancient epic author from dealing with the morality of Gods, the real directors of events, while Christian poets, losing the ground of neutrality, had to turn their attention to the reasons why God, the *primum movens* of all events made their heroes act this way or another. In my paper, I will analyse three responses given to this problem within a century. Baptista Mantuanus, a Latin poet of the late 15th century comprised the life of Virgin Mary and Saint Catherine in a series of epic poems imitating Vergil from 1489. Marco Girolamo Vida wrote the *Christiad*, the life of Christ rewritten as an epic poem of six books in 1526 (published in 1535).

Giambattista Marino wrote an epic of four books about the Massacre of the Innocents between 1600-1625 (published in 1632). Do Satan and his fellow devils in their Infernal Council have their own free will? Is God necessarily the final cause of all events? Baptista Mantuanus, Vida and Marino gave three different answers to these questions.

Udo Kühne (*Kiel*)

## **The Bible in Medieval Literary Theory**

At all times the Bible has been primarily regarded and respected as authoritative, even sacred book of a great traditional religion. To concede this role to the book its authors, being favoured by divine inspiration to represent the true author God, had to use human languages, which could (and still can) be translated into other languages. Consequently the Bible is not only firmly connected (and thus restricted) to the (grammatical) rules or structures of such languages (a condition that actually leads to many inadequacies), but equally to literary forms that are common in those languages. In other words: The great and most important book contains the fundamental documents of Christian faith, but thereby forms a collection of literary texts. Hence the Bible, being of interest first and foremost to theologians, furthermore offers a highly recommended *corpus* or anthology of 'Weltliteratur' to readers or authors as producers of new texts. And even theological analysis (exegesis) of the Bible is more or less founded on principles of literary criticism (hermeneutics).

Generally spoken, in the Middle Ages *literati* were provided with two canonical *corpora* of books: the Bible and the heritage of the (mainly Roman) antiquity. As soon as medieval authors (*moderni*) reflect on their own relationship to precursors (the *antiqui*) in the history of thought, the venerable old texts become a reference point for the purposes of literary theory. My paper will deal with selected characteristic features of the theoretical status of the Bible as seen in Latin texts of the Middle Ages. The following subject matters will be under discussion: (a) How do medieval authors determine biblical authorship? Are biblical authors criticizable? (b) Is it possible to describe the literary reception of the Bible in terms of the traditional concepts of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*? (c) What do biblical texts contribute to the appreciation of literary genres and forms? (d) Does biblical allegory offer a model for figurative expression to secular literature?

Hiram Kümper (*Bochum*)

## **The Bible as Universal History. Biblical Narratives in History Teaching from Humanism through Enlightenment**

The secularization of history is said to be one of the specific characteristics of modern thinking. From the beginning of Christian historiography until the late 18th century secular history has always been inscribed into the broader scope of salvific history promised by God's New Covenant. This has often led scholars to dismiss these intrinsic parts of pre-modern history. Underlying might be the assumption of a fixed canonical ground of narratives with little to no modifications being made to it. Yet, this proves wrong by a closer look. My paper strives to take pre-modern historiography a little more serious in respect to its biblical narratives and asks for the selection, presentation, and after all the function of those narratives for the historiographic composition. As the genre broadens immensely during the 17th and 18th century, I restrain myself to books being used for historical tuition (among other possible uses). Looking at the function of biblical narratives in the exposure of universal history shall not only lead to a more holistic understanding of pre-modern historiography, but to that of the secular – and to a good extent popular – embodiment of a yet somehow “fluid” canon as well.

In doing so, I will raise and try to answer two fairly simple questions. First: Which where the books that were considered adequate for teaching historical knowledge? And: What role does biblical history play in them? After a short glance at late medieval world chronicles and the medieval concept of world history as salvific history we will dive right into the sources looking at historiographic works of three centuries. Due to my own narrow focus in textbook research this will to the biggest part be sources from the German-speaking lands, hence including specifically German authors, but to a good extent Latin works as well.

For the sixteenth century, our tour de force will include rather “medieval” works, such as Johannes Sleidan's *De quattuor monarchiis* (1556) and get especially exciting when historical interpretation crossed confessional boundaries, such as in Johann Carion's *Chronicon* (1532), which was based on the chronicle of the same name written by provost Burchard of Ursberg in the early 13th century. It will also have to consider first contemporary accounts to the philosophy and theory of history, such as Melanchton's or Jean Bodin's. During the following centuries historical tuition, be it in public schooling or in private lessons, mainly followed two branches: One the one hand, the tradition grasped from the *Antiquioribus rerum Scriptoris*, such as Carion, Tacitus or others, and *tanquam authenticis documentis*, primary sources from the past, we would say. The later is a very special idea of the early 17th century, which goes hand in hand with a newly blossoming interest in the *antiquitates Germanicis*. On the other hand, a branch of dialogic teaching of question-and-answer inspired from catechesis emerged to large extent, primarily in elementary tuition. This remained in practice until far into the 19th century.

While this “catechetic” branch stayed fairly traditional and pinned its focus on drumming authoritative sources (including historians as well as the Scriptures) into the pupils, more and more new textbooks for secondary education or the more privileged, often privately educated pupils were gripped by the new ideas and trends of historiography, including its paradox isochronic rise of both national and universal history. Some tried to incorporate biblical history, others, such as Johann Weise's *Kluger Hoffmeister* (1682), restricted themselves to national histories, but recommended a parallel reading of the Scriptures for most “everything which lies before”.

Still, the emergence of such new secular concept cannot be understood without considering its close connection with the rise of historically critical biblical exegesis and the

destruction of the eschatological organization of universal history. So we will have to ask in how far famous names in the early history of critical exegesis, such as Richard Simon, gained recognition among historians and history teaching.

I will end at a point, when some claim just the beginning of modern history: with Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (1740). Getting there, I hope to have made up my point that the dichotomy between modern-secular and traditional-Christian historiography is not as monolithic as it is supposed to be – even when it comes to the heart of Christian historiography, the biblical tradition. Voltaire is, as Klaus Scholder has put it in 1966, not historiography's Kopernikus, he is its Newton. The same proofs true in what from our contemporary viewpoint is all too quickly considered the weaker half of historiography: its textbooks.

J. Cornelia Linde (*London*)

## **Some Observations on Nicola Maniacutia's 'Suffraganeus Bibliotheca'**

Around the middle of the twelfth century, the Cistercian monk Nicola Maniacutia (or Maniacoria) composed several text-critical works. In them, he approached the corrupt Latin translation of the Old Testament, and especially the Psalms, in a remarkably progressive way. Contravening the convictions of many of his contemporaries, he intervened in the transmitted text of Sacred Scripture with hardly any hesitation and took into consideration not only the Latin manuscript tradition, but, so he tells us, also the original Hebrew. In addition, Maniacutia also described in great detail how corruption of medieval manuscripts of the Bible came about.

My paper will discuss his earliest text-critical writing, entitled *Suffraganeus Bibliotheca*; the exact date of its composition is unknown. Dedicated to a canon of St Peter in Rome, it contains an extensive preface in which Maniacutia explains the various ways by which corruption of the Latin Bible came about and lays out and justifies his methods of emendation. The main body of the work is an odd mixture of very brief commentary on selected passages and emendations of the Old Testament.

I shall specifically focus on two aspects of the *Suffraganeus Bibliotheca*. First, I shall examine the author's position towards the status of Hebrew and Latin manuscripts for the emendation of the Latin Old Testament. With the help of a learned Jew with whom he discussed exegetical and textual problems, Maniacutia made heavy use of the Hebrew tradition which he describes as more reliable than the corrupt Latin transmission. Yet at the same time, he was also aware of the potential accusations this stance could lead to: since the times of the Church Fathers, Christian authors considered the possibility that the Jews had corrupted their own manuscripts, especially in passages that were regarded as foreshadowing Christ. Which arguments did Maniacutia bring up to defend his use of the original Hebrew and his collaboration with a Jew for the emendation of Latin Scripture? Is there a point when even he rejected the Hebrew and gave preference to the deplorably corrupt Latin tradition?

Secondly, I shall provide a short look at Maniacutia's view of the canon and the order of the biblical books, both of the Old and New Testament. His position betrays some oddities. For instance, his catalogue of the Old Testament books, for most of which he also provides the Hebrew names transliterated into Latin, is lacking the Book of Ruth which is usually mentioned in Christian lists of the canon and whose canonical status had not been doubted. Yet in the main body of the text, Maniacutia devotes a chapter to the Book of Ruth.

Furthermore, he mentions the works of the Church Fathers as part of the New Testament. Unfortunately, he did not provide any explanation for this inclusion, nor did he identify the Fathers and their works.

Although I shall reveal Maniacutia's source for both his omission of the Book of Ruth and the inclusion of the Church Fathers in the New Testament, some questions remain to be discussed. Was the omission of the Book of Ruth in the list of Old Testament books a mere negligence? Why did he – and even more so his source – regard the works of the Church Fathers as an integral part of the New Testament?

Justyna Łukaszewska-Haberkowa (*Crakow*)

## **The Book of Genesis in *Scivias* of Hildegard of Bingen**

In her two visions from *Scivias* Hildegard of Bingen refers to the most known Story of Genesis - the creation of the Heaven and the Earth. The second vision from the first book of *Scivias* presents a short allegorical story of the fall of Lucifer and of other fallen angels. The original sin of Adam and Eve has been caused by this fall. Hildegard of Bingen presents angels as stars, which gradually lost their brightness, while the white cloud symbolizes Eve – the Mother of all Creation. Only Adam is described as having human body. Children of Adam and Eve are to take the place of fallen angels in their abandoned seats. The first vision of the second book of *Scivias* refers to the same chapter – the first of Genesis. Also here Hildegard describes the creation and fall of Adam, but this time she emphasizes Adam and his redeemer Christ, she focuses on Jesus. The forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is portrayed as a flower, which invites the man to pick it. In this vision Hildegard teaches that sin is a kind of dereliction of human duty and that obedience is beneficial. In her opinion the Biblical “knowledge of Good and Evil” is a gift from God for people, not an effect of a devil’s trap.

As in every book of revelations, the written part of the vision is closely joined with illumination. It is an integral part of the vision, in which the author has presented her revelation as a picture. Illuminations in both described visions show the figure of Adam. However, in the second picture Adam is presented in three ways: as a lump of mud, a young man and an old human being redeemed by Christ. Other objects and beings are depicted in a symbolic form. Although both visions relate to the Story of Creation from Genesis, only in the second one the six days of Creation are also illustrated.

David Movrin (*Ljubljana*)

## ‘Christiana vita, Christi scriptura’:

### Early Christian Lives and their Retelling of the Bible

The appearance of Christian hagiography in the fourth century AD provided a new technique for retelling the Bible, namely the *biblical typology*. Various authors of Christian *lives* used parts of the Bible to establish a solid connection—between the career of their saint on one side and the accepted models of the Scriptures on the other.

Among the most conspicuous examples of such an approach is the Greek *Life of Antony*, probably written by Saint Athanasius of Alexandria; this highly influential text is considered to be one of the principal models for the entire hagiographic genre. Saint Antony, a monk from the Egyptian desert, is portrayed—in astounding detail—as the new Elijah, then again the new Elisha, the new Moses, Jacob, and Paul, to mention just a few examples. These examples are indeed spread widely; the typological message thrives in its omnipresence, its transparency and unconcealed evidence. The retelling, however, is not done at the expense of the historical dimension; Jean Daniélou pointed out that typology is rooted in history - as opposed to *allegory*, which elides history.

A prime case in point of this new, Christian sort of intertextuality is the accord between Antony and the prophet Elijah, to pick one out of many. Such is the power of the Old-Testament role model that the ascetic does not hesitate to make its significance explicit, albeit only “to himself,” on the very beginning of his spiritual journey: “He used to say to himself: ‘It is necessary for the ascetic to learn from the way of life of the great Elijah always to examine closely his own life, as in a mirror.’”<sup>1</sup> The mirror of his own life had a lot to show. His food— “bread and salt, and his drink was water alone”<sup>2</sup> —was much like the food Elijah was given by the angel,<sup>3</sup> his haircloth dress— “the clothing he wore consisted of haircloth on the inside while the outside was made of animal skin”<sup>4</sup> —much like the clothing Elijah wore,<sup>5</sup> his place of dwelling much like the one of the prophet.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes this similarity is pointed out in a pregnant phrase; Antony is constantly depicted as “sitting on the mountain,”<sup>7</sup> evoking the picture of Elijah.<sup>8</sup> When God talks to him, the questions are framed in a manner reminiscent of the one in the Old Testament; the one Antony has to answer on the way to withdrawing to his mountain, “Antony, where are you going, and why,”<sup>9</sup> seems to echo the one put to Elijah, having reached his, waiting on the Lord on mount Horeb.<sup>10</sup> In fact, as Basilus Steidle has shown in his treatise of the “Man of God” in the late antiquity, the very opponents of the two bear a striking resemblance in their adherence to the false gods, be it Elijah’s Baal<sup>11</sup> or Antony’s “mehrgestaltige dämonische Front der Irrlehre, des Heidentums

---

<sup>1</sup> *Vita Antonii* 7,13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 7,6.

<sup>3</sup> *Regn* iii 19,6.

<sup>4</sup> *Vita Antonii* 47,2.

<sup>5</sup> *Regn* iv 1,8.

<sup>6</sup> *Regn* iii 18,4 and *Vita Antonii* 8,2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 59,2; 60,1; 66,1; 84,2; 93,5.

<sup>8</sup> *Regn* iv 1,9.

<sup>9</sup> *Vita Antonii* 49,2.

<sup>10</sup> *Regn* iii 19,9.

<sup>11</sup> *Regn* iii 18-20; *Regn* iv 1.

und der Philosophie.”<sup>12</sup> The author tries to push the identification further by fashioning even his very source in this biblical manner. He had learned the details from a person “pouring water over Antony’s hands;”<sup>13</sup> originally, the image refers to Elisha, who was pouring the water over Elijah’s hands, thus acting as a servant and a favourite disciple.<sup>14</sup> Finally, this concept is repeated at the end of the text, where Antony orders the two monks, present at his hour of death, to give his worn out coat to Athanasius,<sup>15</sup> just like Elisha was the one to inherit the coat that Elijah has left behind after leaving the earth in a chariot of fire.<sup>16</sup> It might be noted that, while the *Life of Antony* stops at this point, its rival narrative by Saint Jerome forced the identification even further; there, Antony and his older host Paul the Theban are fed by a raven, the bird that saved Elijah in the wilderness.<sup>17</sup>

The interpretation of this and other examples will form the core of the paper, along with the crucial question that remains; what is the purpose of this scriptural retelling, why is it being done? An apparent possibility is the author’s quest for legitimacy; drawing parallels between the nascent hagiography and the *exempla maiorum* certainly supported the claim for candidate’s holiness. Still, there is another dimension, and this is where the fun actually begins; the *Life of Antony* was being written as a Christian experiment within an existing genre. Biography in antiquity was brimful with similar pagan references, as Ludwig Bieler has pointed out long ago; introducing a new, Biblical set of allusions signaled a redefinition of the genre and a conscious ambition of Saint Athanasius to reshape it in terms of his *canticum novum*.

---

<sup>12</sup> Basilius Steidle O.S.B., "Homo Dei Antonius: Zum Bild des 'Mannes Gottes' im alten Mönchtum," in *Antonius Magnus Eremita 356-1956*, ed. Basilius Steidle, Studia Anselmiana 38 (Rome: Editrice Anselmiana, 1956), 163.

<sup>13</sup> *Vita Antonii* prol. 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Regn* iv 3,11.

<sup>15</sup> *Vita Antonii* 91,8.

<sup>16</sup> *Regn* iv 2,13.

<sup>17</sup> *Regn* iii 17,6. Cf. *Vita sancti Pauli* 10,25.

Goce Naumov (*Skopje, Macedonia*)

## **Man Made of Clay: Prehistoric background of an religious concept**

The creation of the first human and human kind in general was observed and presented in many sacred books, myths, legends and folk stories. Thus, The Bible also speak of God who modeled the first man, therefore using clay as main substance for shaping the body. In this context the main interest is asserted on the cognitive aspect of clay and its purpose in modeling of the human body, also elaborated in some Macedonian folk stories, but also in the sacred books of Bogomilism. This idea as it seem date back to the Neolithic when human body was mostly represented on clay, although other materials were introduced in artistic production. In this period the main cognitive concentration was on human corporeality and variations of perceiving the body and its relations to objects explained by the essential functions of body itself. Regarding the clay as substance and corporality as main concept, this paper aims to present basic ontological relation between human body, clay and objects, which is reflected in The Bible, but also in numerous ethnographic data related to rituals among populations inhabiting the Balkans.

The corporeal concepts of modeling the body weren't only concentrated on simple representation of the body. Namely, the cognitive approach towards the explanation of the body and its symbolic potency, guided Neolithic populations to develop material culture through which body will be associated with several visual metaphors, thus involving symbolic hybridization. This corporeal concept considers the artifacts which are combination of human representation and an object, therefore asserting the semantic character of the artifact itself i.e. humanization of the object, or vice versa, incorporation of potent object features on the represented human or mythical character. Consequently Neolithic potters or craftsmen produced anthropomorphic: vessels, stamps, tables, ovens and houses. These were small objects or models which were probably used in domestic or communal ceremonies and rites.

Of main importance to Christian context, as well to Bible itself, are anthropomorphic vessels. On whole territory of South – East Europe, in the period of Neolithic, a huge amount of anthropomorphic vessels were produced. This practice, synchronically or in later periods of prehistory (Eneolithic, Bronze and Iron Age) was equally present all over European continent, but also in Near East. Human like vessels were also seldom present in Classical periods till the beginning of Middle Ages, when they almost completely disappear from the Europe. According to the analyses of visual semantics, anthropomorphic vessels bears representation of human like figure (individual or mythical character) which rarely depicts actual features of the human body. These vessels were mostly used for the storage of grains or other cereal and liquid products, but later were involved in burial rites when inhumated infants or cremated individuals were buried within the vessels. During the Bronze Age and Roman period this funerary ritual was practiced in pithoi (large vessels for storing the grains and vine which were buried inside the soil to keep the products cooler and long lasting). The ritual and everyday use of these vessels suggests that they were perceived as symbolically potent objects which were to intensify the regenerative character of the vessel (to accumulate and reborn the products or individuals), but also to assert the represented (modeled) figure which was capable to accumulate, reborn and share the inner components of its body.

The long lasting usage of these specific anthropomorphic objects also reflected certain aspects of the Bible, as well as some of the most crucial principles of understanding the Christ and his body. Probably they were produced and used during the 'writing' of the Bible, but also in the period when visual equivalents of this symbolic concepts was present within early Christian iconography. Namely, in Early Christian period (according to official declaration of Christianity) i.e. IV – VI century BC, on numerous basilicas there were floor

mosaics which depicts Garden of Eden, where in its center Christ as a vessel is positioned, joined by several animals or birds (interpreted as Christian believers and worshipers). On several iconographic variants water or grapevine vegetation emerge out of the vessel. This Early Christian scene is supported by the “41<sup>st</sup> David’s Psalm” in the Bible where Christ is equaled with the water or grapevine, consumed by the believers as means of baptizing.

The theological notion of Christ’s body as essence of blood (= wine or water) and body (= bread or cereals), is closely related to the symbolic and practical features of some vessels i.e. as containers of cereals and vine, as well as even an symbolic ‘womb’ for deceased. Considering this symbolic relation and Early Christian floor iconography based on non human ‘abstract symbols’, it can be pointed that such equalization of Christ with vessel was capable of asserting his virtue as maintainer of both material and spiritual life of the believers. That way it should be emphasized that archaic and prehistoric ritual practices were partly involved within complex Christian religion, thus allowing us to tracing further prehistoric implications preserved in the Bible or Christian iconography and liturgy.

Alen Novalija (*Ljubljana and Budapest*)

## **The Story of Original Sin in the *Interpretative Paleya***

The *Interpretative (Tolkovaya) Paleya* is a kind of exegetical writing with pretensions to encyclopaedic knowledge. It was compiled probably in 13<sup>th</sup>- or 14<sup>th</sup>-century Russia. It retells biblical history up to the reign of Solomon, but adding many apocryphal stories – most prominent among them are those about Satanael, Abraham (*The Revelation of Abraham* and an account of how Abraham destroyed his father's idol workshop), *Jacob's Ladder*, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and Moses (a few apocryphal details).

Numerous explanations of natural phenomena, in the spirit of ancient and medieval natural science, are inserted throughout the text. The author describes the structure and functions of the human body, the soul-body relation, some traits of real (octopus, cuckoo, eel, seal, lion, snake) and mythical (alconost, phoenix) animals, the elements, precious stones, and gives a table of connection between lunar and solar cycles.

The *Tolkovaya Paleya* is not only a descriptive, but also polemic writing. Besides some minor Christian theological disputes and a few attacks on the 'Muslim faith,' it constantly debates with Jews and Judaism, frequently calling the attention of a fictitious Jewish listener – "O, (poor) Jew" – to the fact of Christian truth and Jewish error.

The *Paleya* encompasses a variety of genres: vitae, chronicles, homilies, questions-and-answers (*erotapokriseis*), scientific treatises, *paschalia*...

The compiler in the beginning draws heavily on *Hexaemeron*s of John the Exarch (from which it probably took all the material from St. Basil's *Hexaemeron*) and Severian of Gabala, St. John Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Genesis*, and also resorts to Cosmas Indicopleustes' *Christian Topography*, St. Ephraem Syrus' *Exhortation (Parainesis)*, the *Revelation* of Pseudo-Methodius of Patara, and others.

He also handles material from the lives of the saints. In the chapter on the Fall it mentions several saints and gives an account of the discovery of the Holy Cross by Empress Helena, while in the section on the book of Judges it interpolates the story about St. George and the dragon.

The retelling of the Old Testament is constantly interrupted with exegetical sections, which regularly leads into peculiar details and slows down the narration considerably. In spite of interruptions and the very heterogeneous material it uses, the *Interpretative Paleya* maintains a remarkable degree of literary unity – unlike most early Slavic compilations – and is regarded a masterpiece of old East Slavic literature.

The conference paper, besides giving a general introduction into the *Interpretative Paleya*, will be the commentary on a chosen chapter of the writing (Chapter 24, *About the Deception of Adam and Eve by the Serpent*). It will try to define all the various genres and constituent parts that converge in this chapter: questions-and-answers, homily, praise, vitae, short dogmatic comments, addresses to the Jew. The participant will analyze how the author uses the Scriptures, why he insists on asking questions and then giving answers, how and why he mentions saints and why those exactly, what role St. John Chrysostom and the literature ascribed to him play, and why there are so many instances of praise.

After this he will connect the *Paleya's* handling of the story of original sin to the patristic tradition, and compare it to the corresponding accounts in other types of the *Paleya* (*Historic* and *Chronographic Paleyas*), with the special consideration given to their apocryphal sources.

Åslaug Ommundsen (*Bergen*)

## **St. Hallvard as the new Tobias – retelling the Bible in a local legend**

The Bible contains models for imitation which run as themes through many saints' lives of the Middle Ages. In the periphery the local saints' lives could represent the re-enactment of the Holy Writ in a still recent past, and provide a certain proximity to the universal holiness. In Norway St. Hallvard, the patron saint of Oslo, lived (and died) in the shadow of his older relative, St. Olaf. The models for their sainthood, however, were quite different. With Olaf as the warrior king, Hallvard was the obedient son, young and innocent, killed while using the law to argue against violence. In my paper I want to discuss whether or not the Old Testament's Book of Tobit (*Liber Tobiae*) is consciously applied, or "retold" if you will, in St. Hallvard's legend.

Hallvard Vebjørnson may well have been a real person, a young merchant living in the first half of the eleventh century. Icelandic annals report that he was killed in 1043. The oldest testimony to a saint's cult growing in connection with Hallvard is Adam of Bremen in the 1070's, who reports that miracles of healing happened by his grave (*Gesta Hammaburgensis...* 4, 53). In the first century of his cult the story of his life and death was probably transmitted orally. After some time it was put into writing in Latin, possibly not before the second half of the twelfth century. Only four sources to the Latin legend survive, and these all represent different versions. All sources contain the central part, St. Hallvard's *passio*: As he is about to set out in his boat to collect payment for some merchandise, he is approached by a pregnant woman who asks if he can take her with him. As they leave the shore, they see three men chasing after them, and the woman explains that they have falsely accused her of theft. The men catch up with them, but Hallvard tries to defend the woman and offers to pay damages to prevent them from harming the woman and her unborn child. The men can not be calmed and shoots Hallvard in the chest with an arrow. Then they sink his body in the water after tying a stone to his neck to weigh him down. The woman is also killed. Hallvard is later discovered floating on the water, and because he was still tied to the heavy stone this was perceived as a miracle.

In its longest form, preserved in a fragment in the National Archives in Stockholm (Fr. 7708), St. Hallvard's legend embraces the theme of the lost son deeply missed by his loving parents, who are finally given consolation through their son's unusual qualities. The Biblical character which may first spring to mind is the prodigal son in the parable from Luke (15, 11-32), but Hallvard as the lost son is not really comparable to him. I want to argue that the Bible provides another model for Hallvard, namely Tobias in the Book of Tobit, the son who is sent out by his parents to collect a debt, and who returns safely in the end, to their immense joy.

At first sight the narratives appear to be opposites. In the Book of Tobit the parents see Tobias returning home safely, while the parents of Hallvard receive the message that their son is found dead, murdered. After hearing about the miraculous events connected to the discovery of Hallvard, among them a blind man getting his eyesight back, one of the parents exclaims: "If it is as you say, that is enough for me and I shall no longer weep for him as dead, when I because of his illustrious merits can see that he is alive." In a narrative twist the story is lifted from the Old to the New Testament, where true life exists in death only. And in the medieval world of saints a man's death is his true birth, worthy of celebration.

The comparison of the two stories is challenged both by lacunae in the Stockholm fragment, and indications that although the version is close to the original, it is also reworked to some degree. In my discussion I will focus on three elements which the stories have in common: The worried parents, the healing of a blind man, and the common purpose of the young men's journeys. Finally, if Hallvard can indeed be interpreted as "the new Tobias", how would the Book of Tobit influence the interpretation or reception of St. Hallvard's legend?

Marianne Sághy (*Budapest*)

**“You urge me to make a new work from the old:”**

## **Social Networks, Intellectual Role Play, and the Revision of the Latin Bible**

Jerome's revision of the Latin Bible in the late fourth century A.D. is undoubtedly the greatest event in the history of biblical translation after the Septuagint. What made Jerome undertake such a difficult and perilous venture? Who “urged him to make a new work from the old”? Jerome never fails to emphatically ascribe the initiative of the Bible project to Pope Damasus (366-384), the reformer of Latin liturgy and the impresario of the Roman martyrs. This paper reviews other factors that might have also influenced Jerome's decision.

Jerome's intellectual heroes and his new circumstances in Rome had an unequivocal impact on his work. Upon his arrival to Rome, Jerome put on the persona of the great biblical scholar, Origen. As an exegetical expert, Jerome came to be invited to Bible-reading circles and became the spiritual director of senatorial ascetes. Jerome's revision of the biblical text should be seen against the social background of late antique Rome, where popes and clerics vied with learned aristocrats over the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures, and with pagan senators over the supremacy of the classical tradition.

Classicizing the Bible, rewriting the Gospels had a venerable tradition by the end of the fourth century: this has been brilliantly performed by Juvencus and Proba. What is remarkable in Jerome's enterprise is the determined refusal of classicism. Jerome's revision of the Gospels is a scholarly, not a literary emendation, and his work reflects scholarly, rather than literary concerns. The analysis of Jerome and of his circle's interests forms the core of this paper. Jerome's correspondence with Damasus and with his female friends will be the major sources of this examination that hopes to shed light on the ideals and expectations of the Catholic faction in Rome at the end of the century.

Jerome had sought to capture Damasus' attention with a series of flattering letters in the peak of the Arian crisis written from the Syrian desert in the 370s (*Epp.* 15, 16). In 382, Jerome attended the Roman synod convened by Damasus on the strength of his exegetical abilities (*Epp.* 19, 20, 21) and his historical interest (Jerome's *Chronicle* continued Eusebius up to 378). Exciting new encounters made Jerome stay on in Rome. His frequentation of theologically cultivated ladies, such as Paula and Marcella resulted in a series of allegorical explanations of the sacred text. The idea to go back to the Hebrew sources and to check the Latin versions against the Greek text might not have originated with Damasus, but with Jerome's female Bible-reading friends. Thus, the revision of the Bible did not stem from a purely intellectual inquiry of the scholar, an admirer of Origen, or from the pastoral concern of the bishop, but also from the spiritual quest of laywomen in a living, everyday contact with the Holy Scriptures.

At the same time, a muffled debate broke out in the Roman church about the superiority and the authority of the textual variants of the Bible. The Holy Scriptures started to matter and Jerome/Origen was eager to capture the moment. A defense of the *Vetus Latina*, the old Latin translation of the Holy Scriptures was forwarded by a Roman cleric known as Ambrosiaster. The defense of the old version was a defense of the traditional privileges of the clerical caste as against the exegetical efforts of upstart and self-appointed Bible experts and wealthy widows. Jerome deftly answered the challenge: between 382 and 384, he revised the Gospels against their original Greek text (and perhaps also the Psalms in their Septuagint version). Jerome knew that his revision will provoke criticism. This is why he put himself under papal patronage, stressing Damasus' commission of the work. But there was much more than a papal commission that led him to deal with the sacred text in the next

twenty-two years of his life: his own intellectual quest linked with the spiritual pursuit of those women with whom he daily delved into the Scriptures.

Sources:

Ambrosiaster, *Contre les païens. Sur le destin*. Ed. M. –P. Bussièrès. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007.

Ambrosiaster, *Commentarius in Epistulas Paulinas*. Ed. O. Faller. CSEL 81. Wien: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1968.

Damasi epistulae et carmina. *Patrologia Latina* 13.

*Epigrammata damasiana*. Ed. A. Ferrua. Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Sacra, 1942.

*Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*. Ed. I. Hilberg. CSEL 55, 56. Wien-Leipzig: F. Tempsky - G. Freytag, 1912.

*Saint Jerome, Lettres*. 8 vols. Tr. J. Labourt. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1949-1963.

*Select Letters of Saint Jerome*. Ed. F. A. Wright, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1933.

Literature:

*The Cambridge History of the Bible I. From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. P. R. Ackroyd – C. F. Evans, Cambridge: University Press, 1970.

Bell, A. A. "Jerome's Role in the Translation of the Vulgate New Testament," *New Testament Studies* 23 (1977): 230-233.

Cain, A. „In Ambrosiaster’s Shadow: A Critical Re-Evaluation of the Last Surviving Letter Exchange between Pope Damasus and Jerome.” *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 51 (2005), 257-277.

Harrison, R. R. *Jerome's Revision of the Gospels*, Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1986.

Hayward, C. T. R. *Saint Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Kamesar, A. *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Vessey, M. „Jerome’s Origen: The Making of a Christian Literary Persona.” *Studia Patristica* 28 (1993): 135-145.

Pavel Soukup (*Prague*)

## **Nothing But the Word of God:**

### **Did Hussite Preachers Abstain from Telling Stories?**

The emphasis of the so-called ‘Bohemian Reformation’ on the Word of God as contained in the Bible is far from being new to the scholarship. It becomes more and more obvious, that the impact of reform ideas on Czech society in the early fifteenth century owes much to the popular preaching. For it was necessary for the movement to cross the border from its academic birthplace to the unlearned population. From 1402, Master Jan Hus held the office of a vernacular preacher in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. He and his university fellows succeeded in spreading the message of Church reform from the academia to the people. After Hus’s death at stake in Constance in 1415, his friend and colleague Jakoubek of Stržbro (d. 1429) became the most respected authority and a spiritual leader of the reform party in Bohemia. His reintroduction of chalice for the laity gave to the Hussites a unifying symbol. In his authoritative position, he continued to address thousands of faithful in the Bethlehem Chapel. In next generation of Hussite theologians, Master Jan Rokycana (d. 1471), the Utraquist archbishop of Prague, advanced to the position of the most prominent preacher among the Bohemians. The preserved homiletical oeuvre of these three personages forms the bulk of sources for the examination of Hussite preachers’ treatment of the Scripture.

The Hussites inherited their respect for the biblical word from both the precedent Czech reform tradition and the Wycliffite thought, which are considered the main sources of inspiration for Hussite theologians. At the end of the fourteenth century, Matthew of Janov in his *Regulae Veteris et Novi testamenti* criticized adding human inventions and vain erudition to the text of the Scripture, contesting thus the achievements of medieval preaching technique. The same negative attitude towards the mendicant way of preaching (with its exempla and spectacular performance) expressed John Wyclif. The Hussites adopted these views. They agreed preaching was the main task of a priest. His only aim should be to spread the Word of God, not to tell stories. In the eyes of the reformists, amusing elements in a sermon distracted the attention of the faithful and promoted, after all, the cause of the devil rather than of God. The question however remains, what means Hussite preachers used for the successful popularization of their understanding of the Law of God. What kind of extra-biblical literature did they consider illicit and what did they hold acceptable for explaining the Scripture to their audience?

The paper compares Hussites’ theoretical positions on preaching with the extant sermon texts themselves. The way of transforming the text of the Bible into a homiletical text is examined. Considering the huge extent of manuscript transmission, the preaching in late medieval Bohemia is largely unknown to historians. Moreover, what remains obscure is the wording of actually delivered sermons. What can we learn from the surviving evidence about what the preacher really said? Recent studies in the field of fifteenth-century preaching point out the distance between record and performance. Nevertheless, the paper attempts to address some aspects of reworking biblical material into a sermon. One of them is the distinction (fundamental in the medieval preaching) between a homily and a sermon. The thesis of Hussite recurrence to the genre of patristic homily can be challenged by pointing out different ways of retelling the Bible according to different occasions. The same applies to the authorities quoted. Striking absence of scholastic citations in Hussite popular preaching can be illusive, for many sources are used silently. It seems that Hussite priests kept using certain kinds of secondary textbooks and preaching aids. The tools of biblical scholarship helped them to transform the Bible into an intended message. To what extent, then, their sources contained exemplary stories? We do not know exactly, and so we have to conclude: Hussite preacher assumedly did tell stories, but they were utmost cautious about recording them.

Francesco Stella (*Arezzo*)

## **A Repressed Beauty: Biblical Poetics and the Legitimation of Poetry in Medieval Culture**

The paper proposes some remarks about the position and the condemnation of poetry in the medieval theories of the arts, based on the fictional contents of traditional – i.e. pagan – poetry. Parallel to this assessment some theologians – such as John Scotus Eriugena, and later the Chartres school – develop an apofathical line of the “discourse about God” that defines theology as a way of expression similar to poetry as for the use of symbols and metaphors, the *parabolicus sermo*. On this basis some pre-humanistic writers elaborate the famous defense of poetry as a theological text, but still in this time the official philosophical schools confirm the traditional underestimation of the cultural value of poetry, always referring to its low rate of truth. In this frame very few documents take in account the only poetry based on the narrative of the accepted truth, the biblical poetry, though it was largely adopted in the school canon: very slowly this type of texts begins to be considered as a philosophical problem and appears in some theoretical elaborations.

Sabine Tiedje (*Köln*)

## **Peter of Rosenheim: *Roseum Memoriale Divinorum Eloquiorum*, A Bible Summary of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **Peter of Rosenheim**

Peter was born around 1380 near Rosenheim in Bavaria. Since 1398 he attended the University of Vienna.

In 1403 he accompanied Nikolaus Seyringer, the former rector of the university, to Italy in order to live as a Benedictine monk first in the monastery of Sacro Speco in Subiaco and thereafter in another monastery near Capua.

In 1416 he went back to Germany as member of a Benedictine delegation (once again led by Nikolaus Seyringer), to take part in the Council of Constance.

In 1418 Peter settled in the Abbey of Melk near Vienna together with a group of Benedictines who had previously lived like him in reformed monasteries of Italy. The goal was to reform monastic life in Benedictine monasteries in Austria and Bavaria and to introduce the *Consuetudines* they had adopted in Italy (Melk reform movement, Melker Klosterreform).

Since 1426 Peter worked as a *visitor* and stayed in several Benedictine monasteries in order to promote the reform movement.

1432 he represented the South German Benedictines at the Council of Basel, where he died in 1433.

### **Roseum Memoriale Divinorum Eloquiorum**

Peter wrote the *Roseum Memoriale*, a versification of the bible, between 1423 and 1426 in Melk. Except for the psalms the *Roseum Memoriale* comprises the whole bible, thereby converting every single bible chapter into an elegiac couplet.

Peter uses a metrical form and draws up more than 2000 verses, his text cannot be classified as bible epic, but as a bible summary. It follows the tradition of the “*libri pauperum*”, which gained wide popularity in the later middle ages<sup>18</sup>.

There existed a wide array of different types of bible summaries, commencing with the widespread version of “*Sex – prohibet – peccant*”, the so-called *Summarium biblicum* which dates from the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century. In this summary every single lemma represents a single bible chapter. In contrast to the very brief *Summarium biblicum* Peter’s text represents the opposite end of the range, probably one of the longest and most elaborated bible summaries.

Though his text is long, Peter’s goal has been neither to offer a poetic adaptation of certain biblical stories nor to develop the exegesis of biblical messages as this was customary to bible epics. Instead he wanted to assist the reader to memorize the content and order of all biblical books. He preferred verse to prose, not for esthetical but for didactical reasons as he explains in his foreword: “*quia (sc. metricus stilus) aptior sit fragili hominum memorie*” (*because verse is more suitable to men’s weak memory*).

The whole text is presented in a systematic and comprehensive way. The elegiac couplets comprising the content of each chapter are put in alphabetical order. These verses are supplemented by 73 hexameters each representing one biblical book. The book-

---

<sup>18</sup> For an overview over the genre see: F. J. Worstbrock, *Libri pauperum. Zu Entstehung, Struktur und Gebrauch einiger mittelalterlicher Buchformen der Wissensliteratur seit dem 12. Jahrhundert*, in: *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, edd. Ch. Meier et al., Munich 1997, p. 41-60.

hexameters encompass additional information about the length of the book concerned and where it can actually be found in the bible. Peter adds a prose instruction, in which he explains how to combine the initial letters of certain words in the book-hexameter with verses of the chapter-couplets in order to get all this information.

Even users, who were not capable of knowing all verses by heart may, by knowing the hexameters and a part of the couplets, have been able to use the system Peter invented.

Whilst the contents of the biblical texts remained pivotal, the memorization of the correct order of biblical books and the number and order of chapters within each book seems to have been of almost equal importance to Peter. This might show a new approach of presenting biblical texts in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Tradition and Impact of the text**

It is difficult to say if the text was really as useful a pattern, as Peter hoped it to be, because I have found no references to it in other sources yet. But from the tradition of the text one can defend that it must have been quite popular in Austria and Bavaria for some time. There exist around forty manuscripts mainly originating from Austrian and Bavarian monasteries and several printings, the latest dating from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Most of these texts represent carefully prepared copies of the entire Roseum. This might suggest that the text was effectively used as Peter had intended.

### **The Edition of the Text**

The edition will present the Roseum as an example of a way knowledge could be organized and memorized in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. For this purpose I will edit the text, translate the introducing prose chapter and analyze the literary techniques Peter uses to shape his verses. He summarizes texts by applying different techniques and might by switching between them guide his reader (or better the user of his work) to link the memorial couplet with the bible chapter it summarizes.

David C. Tollerton (*Bristol*)

## Midrashic Traditions and Innovations in Post-Holocaust Retellings of Job

As one of the archetypal figures of undeserved suffering in the Hebrew Bible, it is not surprising that many have appealed to Job as a character resonant for consideration of the Holocaust. A mural of Job was created in the Warsaw Ghetto, references to the book appear at memorials at the Belzec death camp and Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and a statue of this biblical figure stands at Yad Vashem (Israel's major site of Holocaust memory). Among Jewish theological writings on the event, the book is referred to with frequency.

Yet there are nonetheless difficulties in considering Job's resonance in this context. One of the most frequently cited, for example, relates to Job's restoration at the story's close. Can this restoration be likened to some manner of post-Holocaust recovery for the Jewish people? Or are the horrors of the mass murder of Europe's Jews too severe to allow such redemptive interpretations? Answers to these questions vary widely.

The problems posed by certain elements of the text in this context have not, however, prevented it from becoming one of the most oft-cited biblical books in Holocaust memory. This paper will not therefore attempt to provide a complete survey of Job's reception in this context. Rather, it will focus upon a more specific point of interest: the use of Jewish traditions of *midrashic* interpretation in several such retellings of Job.

The term '*midrash*', it will be noted, has itself been interpreted in quite varying ways, from reference to a specific mode of ancient rabbinic exegesis to more broad usages, such as its application to describe the use of biblical themes in modern Jewish poetry. This paper will consider four post-Holocaust receptions of Job which engage with the text by gesturing toward traditions of *midrash*.

The first of these is the theologian Joseph Soloveitchik, who in his 1956 essay *Kol Dodi Dofek* ('Hark, my beloved knocks') asserts the requirement for Jewish-Americans to show greater solidarity with the young State of Israel in the aftermath of the Holocaust. From the book of Job he draws a message of communal empathy specifically referring, in the midst of mid-twentieth century political concerns, to ancient rabbinic *midrashim* on the biblical text. For Soloveitchik, the rabbis' words are authoritative interpretations to be forcefully appropriated for consideration of the post-Holocaust world.

The survivor Elie Wiesel's relationship with the ancient rabbis in his 1976 work *Messengers of God* is somewhat different. While referring to their interpretations, his greater emphasis is upon the radicalism and creativity of their method. This allows him to legitimise a correspondingly radical retelling of Job of his own. Yet while his reading borrows the ancient rabbis' exegetical freedoms, it pushes the biblical text's theology in directions it is unlikely they would have been comfortable with by stressing the ultimate righteousness of Job even at the expense of emphasising God's injustice.

A further evolution in this appropriation of *midrash* is seen in Murray Haar's 2000 article "Job After Auschwitz." Here the traditions of *midrash* are appealed to as justification for a retelling of Job even more radical than Wiesel's. In Haar's interpretation the biblical protagonist is relocated into the twentieth century into a situation of direct witness to the atrocities of the Holocaust, and as with Wiesel's retelling it is Job's rebellion that is sided with against God.

The final text that will be considered is Joseph Freeman's 1996 memoir *Job: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*. This description of the author's life story, focusing particularly upon the Nazi era, is framed as a parallel to, and retelling of the book of Job. Though less explicitly linked to *midrashic* traditions than the other three examples, it will be suggested that Freeman's retelling also has resonances with this tradition of Jewish exegesis

and indeed, in certain aspects, is structurally more akin to rabbinic *midrash* than the other three case studies.

After consideration of these examples, three summarising proposals will be made: (1) that tensions within the biblical text of Job encourage its interpreters to be creative in their retellings of the story for contexts in the modern world, (2) that *midrash* provides one exegetical tradition through which such creativity may be manifested, but that (3) this tradition should itself be understood to be open to considerable interpretation. Out of this flux in both interpretation and interpretative tradition, it will be proposed, can come the vibrancy and imagination in retellings of the Bible necessary for a post-Holocaust context in which theological structures have been and are continuing to be radically questioned.

Nancy Tolson (*New London, Connecticut*)

### **Understanding the Trickster in Jacob: A Caribbean Rendition**

This presentation will discuss how Kwame Dawes' *Jacko Jacobus* (1996) is a woven poetic epic that details the maturation of Jacob (Jacko) through reading between biblical lines. Kwame Dawes created a Diasporic illumination that connects biblical trickster, Jacob to Jamaica's Spiderman Anancy. Dawes' biblical scenes paint sensual words instead of brushed oils, he erases the faces that have not been kissed by the sun and adds flesh tones of browns and blues that are familiar in such a Diasporic mix. This poet trickster disguises an old tale with new cloth to reach an audience that is now open to the eroticism found in an orthodox classic. His words are filled with a spirit that can only be imagined in color. This is a tale that many have not heard since childhood sitting in Sunday school class, yet Dawes quickly throws the reader forward to a more mature rendition that reveals various exotic threads; pleasures and pains; freedoms and guilts; falsehoods and desires; all in the name of inheritance.