language in Sophocles, with particular focus on *Antigone*. The book concludes with an appendix that traces a particular formulaic usage (\textit{megas sthenos}) through Homer, the Derveni Papyrus, and Sophocles. What sets this book apart is its attention to linguistic and metrical detail, made possible by the space dedicated to each ode discussed. Through his careful exploration, Rodighiero brings out the rich mixture of musical, cultic, and generic allusions in these odes, and demonstrates the sophistication with which Sophoclean lyric engages with multiple poetic forms. Scholars and graduate students working on these plays, or interested in choral poetry in general, will find much of interest.

Laura Swift  
The Open University

**THE EMPIRE OF THE SELF: SELF-COMMAND AND POLITICAL SPEECH IN SENeca AND PETRONIUS.**  

Drawing on much recent work done in English on Seneca and the self, Star explores the role of self-command and self-address in Seneca’s works across many genres, including the \textit{De Clementia}, the \textit{Letters}, the tragedies, and the \textit{Apocolocyntosis}. Moreover, Star proposes that Petronius too is deeply engaged in the project of self-fashioning and has a more nuanced relationship with Seneca’s writings than previously proposed. These are the book’s two prime contributions: 1) the goal of perfecting self-command unites many of Seneca’s works across genres, and 2) Petronius likewise is concerned with self-command. Star’s comparison of Seneca and Petronius also nicely highlights how concerned with the senses and the body even Seneca’s philosophical prose works are. Although this book makes original contributions, it also elicits serious reservations. Most crucial of these, Star: 1) ignores the often uncertain chronology of the works he discusses; and 2) pays little attention to the rhetorical context and internal developments of the prose philosophical works, especially the varied \textit{Letters}. Too often he treats without comment, the prose philosophical works as if they were all a synchronous, unchanging base text from which an ideal Senecan philosophy can easily be extracted. In what sense can the tragedies and the \textit{Satyricon}, the dates of which are uncertain, be said to react to, engage with, extend, or problematize an abstracted Senecan philosophy, often drawn from passages of the \textit{Letters}, a multifarious work written late in Seneca’s career?

David Hewett  
University of Virginia

**Christian Origins**


Whenever a book is written on NT exegesis, I am always curious as to how it compares to Gordon Fee’s very influential book, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Blomberg and Markley explain the differences in their introduction. Fee provides an excellent “introductory textbook,” with multiple “short, prescriptive instructions in each chapter but without an abundance of illustrations from Scripture elaborated in detail.” This handbook, however, offers “a work of more expansive prose than Fee’s.” Its distinctive feature is that each chapter contains more in-depth examples of the various tasks of exegesis applied to vital NT passages. In fact, each chapter represents a step in NT exegesis: textual criticism (ch. 1); translation and translations (ch. 2); historical-cultural context (ch. 3); literary context (ch. 4); word studies (ch. 5); grammar (ch. 6); interpretive problems (ch. 7); outlining (ch. 8); theology (ch. 9); and application (ch. 10). In the end, Blomberg and Markley succeed in distinguishing their handbook from Fee’s, with the result that its target audience are those who seek a more substantial expedition into NT exegesis.

David E. Briones  
Sterling College


The designation “Handbook,” which generally refers to a concise reference book, hardly does justice to the breadth and depth of this resource. Rather than attempt to capture all of the essay titles in each of the four volumes in this set, I will simply refer readers to the online listing for each at http://www.brill.nl/publications/reference-works/handbook-study-historical-jesus-4-vols, and focus here on the collection as a whole as a reference tool. In this regard, it is unsurpassed for its range of topics and the detail in which each author explores her or his subject. One hundred and ten essays by about one hundred authors are spread across four separate, hefty volumes. The authors range from well-established researches in the Historical Jesus arena to up-and-coming new scholars who are bringing fresh insights and new methods to the discourse. Although the Handbook attempts to be “international in scope” and is structured “so that multiple voices can be ably represented in the discussion,” most contributors are male (although there are some standout women authors), almost all contributors come from the Western hemisphere, and all but one essay are in English (the exception is German). As the editors freely admit, many voices are “under-represented or not represented at all.”

In Volume 1, the twenty-six essays focus on methodology under two separate headings, the first dealing with contemporary approaches but often raising ideological and philosophical issues. Essays in the second section tackle specific methods more directly (e.g., form criticism, criteria of authenticity, social-scientific approaches). Together, these
Handbook essays reflect the methodological diversity among those researching the historical Jesus. By collecting them here, the editors suggest that readers will be able to comprehend, compare, and analyze the major features of the methods. Unfortunately, no guidance is given for the reader in how to do so, and thus one must undertake the complicated sorting and sifting for oneself.

Volume 2 contains thirty essays that focus on contentious issues in past and present scholarly discourses on the Historical Jesus: foundational issues (e.g., Jesus of Nazareth vs. the Christ of faith), current propositions (e.g., Cynicism; Qumran; relation to Q), and ongoing topics of debate (apocalypticism; rabbinic writings; Josephus). The third, and longest, volume tackles the man himself, with thirty-five essays spread across three parts. The first part looks at ancient documentary evidence, with essays on the canonical and noncanonical Gospels, early patristic writings, and classical and Jewish writings. Some essays in the second part locate Jesus within geographic, sociopolitical, and literary contexts while others explore in detail features of Jesus's life and death (and resurrection), alongside his self-understanding and his message. All eleven essays in Part 3 link Jesus to the legacy of Israel, each beginning with “Jesus and...,” followed by topics such as “God,” “the Sabbath,” “the Shema,” and “Purity.”

The fourth and final volume contains nineteen “Individual Studies” by as many authors, which were solicited and submitted but “for which there was no other place” in the other three volumes. Although these essays are fine in and of themselves, there is little unity and the rationale for collecting them here is not entirely clear, other than they “warranted a position in a compendium of scholarship.” They might better have been published as separate journal articles, thus reducing the overall size (and cost!) of the Handbook.

Each volume of the handbook could stand alone, but unfortunately individual volumes seem not to be available for purchase, which would have made it somewhat more affordable for scholars interested primarily in the history of scholarship (Volume 1), methodology (Volume 2), or studies directly on the historical Jesus (Volume 3). The brief introductory essay by Holmén and Porter, along with the full table of contents for the set, is included in each volume. There is only a single set of indices, however, which is contained in Volume 4, and comprehensively (at 183 pages) covers ancient sources and modern authors but not subjects. Thus, if one wants to look at varying opinions on a particular topic (e.g., Jesus and Torah), one needs to work from the essay titles to determine whether or not an essay warrants reading.

That a historical figure who was publicly active only for one to (at most) three years can generate so much discussion and speculation perhaps speaks volumes about the modern fascination with the enigmatic figure of Jesus. The overall sense from the Handbook is that the Quest of the Historical Jesus continues to reveal as much (if not more) about us as scholars than about the historical man himself. Prohibitively expensive for most personal libraries, the Handbook should be added to every research library, where those who work closely on this topic can mine its details. Anyone wishing for an introductory overview, however, will be better served to begin elsewhere lest they be overwhelmed with the quantity of data and the complexity contained in the Handbook.

Richard S. Ascough
School of Religion, Queen’s University


Originally a PhD dissertation, Le Donne’s monograph follows the same trajectory as the work of his mentor, J. D. G. Dunn, as it moves beyond traditional historical Jesus research toward the remembered Jesus. His aim is not to reconstruct the Jesus of history but rather to uncover the earliest memories surrounding the person of Jesus. Utilizing social memory theory, he likens the remembering process to the refraction of an image through a telescope’s lens. In this way, “memory refracts the past to render it intelligible to the present.” The first half of the book covers his methodology, while the second half uses “Son of David” typology as a worktable to display his new historiographical model. Although the primary value of this monograph resides in Le Donne’s methodology, he makes significant contributions to “Son of David” research as well. As historical positivism continues to crumble, Le Donne paves a way forward for Jesus research. While building on previous work of Dunn and others, Le Donne proceeds to find his own voice and moves the conversation forward. Anyone involved with historical Jesus research should interact with this work on some level.

David Brack
Asbury Theological Seminary


Grindheim makes a sustained argument that the historical Jesus both believed and proclaimed himself to be the Son of God. According to Grindheim, the actions and the words of the historical Jesus—primarily as seen in the synoptic tradition—reveal that this person believed himself to be equal to Yahweh. Grindheim’s analysis is heavily dependent upon his assertions that the Son of Man language is authentic to Jesus and that this language reveals Jesus’s self-understanding as a heavenly messenger. Grindheim recognizes that his arguments regarding Jesus’s self-identity are inconsistent both with Jewish expectations in the first century and with most contemporary analyses. This volume
engages critical scholarship and it should not be dismissed as yet another uncritical (or precritical) projection of later Christian theology back into the Synoptic Gospels, but Grindheim's arguments are nonetheless unlikely to change many minds. No one who is not already convinced of Grindheim's conclusions before reading his arguments is likely to adopt those conclusions after reading his arguments. This volume is recommended for persons seeking a plausible defense of traditional christological affirmations.

Thomas E. Phillips
Arapahoe Community College


In this first volume of a three-part study, Oropeza traces the various ideas about and responses to the issue of apostasy in the communities that produced the gospels and connected literature. He addresses each gospel and any connected literature in turn. Each chapter begins with a discussion of the community addressed by the writings. Oropeza then surveys the causes of and the consequences of apostasy. A number of causes for apostasy emerge such as: obduracy, particularly from Jesus’s contemporary Jews; persecution; false teaching and leaders; and immoral behavior. The consequences are often eschatological in nature. One key feature of Oropeza’s argument is the diversity of views that emerge from the gospel writers about the nature and consequences of apostasy. The study is primarily exegetical and there is little theological reflection, which does have some drawbacks for the overall debate about perseverance and falling away. Nevertheless, the volume is an important and helpful discussion of the texts relevant to the issue of apostasy and how these early Christian communities responded to the issue.

Jason Maston
Highland Theological College UHI


In this revised doctoral thesis, Edwards traces the use of the ransom logion (Mk 10:45/Mt 20:28) from the first through third centuries CE exploring its meaning(s) and development in early Christian tradition. His endeavors turn up several significant patterns that shed light on these traditions within Mark and Matthew. For example, Edwards asserts that the scholarly assumption that the logion arose within a Eucharistic setting is deeply flawed and cannot be sustained. What can be ascertained, however, is that both Dan 7 and Isa 53 influenced the logion and contributed to the creation of a confessional/narrative pattern of Jesus’s preex-istence, service, voluntary death, and volitional coming. Edwards also concludes that while a “love motif” accompanied the ransom logion within the first century, it began gradually to fall out of use and over time the new phenomenon of an incarnational narrative became more prominent. Thus, at different points in time within early Christianity different aspects of the ransom logion took precedence in shaping the “collective memory” of believers. More research on “collective memory” throughout would have likely strengthened Edwards’s thesis. This volume is thorough in its engagement with both biblical and extra-biblical texts and perhaps most refreshingly, frequently offers healthy correctives to secondary sources. While this book is quite technical and contains much data, it will certainly be useful to postgraduates and seasoned researchers.

T. Michael W. Halcomb
Asbury Theological Seminary


Hartvigsen contends that the Gospel of Mark was an ancient performance piece, which was likely presented in a house church, perhaps before liturgical events. As such, the Markan drama would have evoked a host of emotions and culled a variety of audience responses. Hartvigsen’s unique contribution is approaching the entirety of Mark from the perspective(s) of ancient audience members. Drawing on a wide array of modern methods such as psychonarratology, mental space conception theory, cognitive poetics and much more, Hartvigsen displays great depth of research. At the same time, there is an overemphasis on theory resulting in the first 110 pages lacking flow and direction. Portions of this section seem to have little influence on the exegesis and interpretation that follow. By and large, however, Hartvigsen offers a discourse analysis commentary on Mark that brims with creative insights. In this regard, it is perplexing that the works of Stephen Levinsohn and Steve Runge were not referenced. Indeed, their discourse research has produced similar results (e.g., temporal frames, spatial frames, etc.). Nevertheless, the book’s many novel insights and results is a breath of fresh air in Markan studies and will be of great value to anyone at the graduate level or beyond.

T. Michael W. Halcomb
Asbury Theological Seminary

Stewart’s excellent revised dissertation is an application of critical spatial theory to the presentation of space in Mark. Stewart reviews the notion of space in Markan scholarship (from Lohmeyer to Malbon, Chapter 1), discusses critical spatial theory (Chapter 2), provides a close study of space in ancient texts focused on the notion of the inhabited world (Eratosthenes, Strabo, Josephus et al., Chapter 3), and discusses categories for understanding ancient space arising out of that study (Chapter 4). He then returns to the gospel to apply those categories and the methods of spatial theory to its presentation of space (Chapter 5). Drawing from the ancient notion of a person as a geographical center and in contrast to ancient conceptions of cities as centers of honor and civilization, Stewart argues that gathering around Jesus in Mark represents an alternative spatial practice. It is an alternative both to Roman spatial practice and Jewish spatial practice centered on Jerusalem and the Temple. The methods and categories of Chapters 2–4 are themselves a valuable contribution and make up the majority of Stewart’s material. Stewart’s work will be an important part of any future discussion of spatial practice and the NT.

Thomas M. Anderson
London School of Theology


Watson’s study is an important contribution to an enduring problem of Markan scholarship, namely, Wrede’s so-called “messianic secret.” It is erudite and lucid in claiming that the concealment texts in Mark should be understood in light of the ancient Mediterranean honor/shame system. The tools of cultural anthropology have been fruitfully applied to the NT (Malina, Rohrbaugh, Neyrey), and this study draws on and extends that work by carefully analyzing Jesus’s words and actions in light of ancient expectations. Watson displays extensive knowledge of Greco-Roman and Jewish sources throughout the study and draws from insights about ancient orality and “reader response” theory (Iser), to argue that the original audience would have been surprised by Jesus’s responses in the concealment passages, understanding them as a rejection of the conventions of honor. Jesus offers a revised version of honor for his followers which equates greatness with servitude and wherein “servants, children and the last are exalted.” For Watson, even though Jesus rejects the conventions of honor, he is shown throughout Mark to have authority and to be worthy of ascribed and acquired honor. Despite this, he chose the way of suffering and servanthood, something radically subversive in a culture dominated by honor and shame values. This book is noteworthy for Markan scholars and others.

Thomas M. Anderson
London School of Theology


This third and final volume of Bovon’s commentary on Luke’s Gospel (19:28–24:53) provides a capstone to Bovon’s truly monumental work on the third gospel (Bovon claims to have begun these commentaries in the seventies). As with the two previous volumes, this volume combines detailed critical work on the Lukan text with a robust engagement with the history of interpretation. Each unit of the commentary contains five sections: synchronic analysis (a literary and narrative approach to the text); diachronic analysis (source criticism and synoptic comparison); commentary (textual, lexical, grammatical, and historical criticism); history of interpretation (summary of key pre-modern interpretation); and conclusion (brief reflections on the function of the passage within Luke’s Gospel and Christian theological discourse). Bovon’s mastery of both modern European and ancient languages provides a breadth of scholarly review unmatched in any contemporary commentary. Bovon appears to be equally at ease with English, German, French, Italian, Greek and Latin. This now-completed set is an essential reference for every serious student of Luke. Both scholars of religious studies and ministers in the parish will find ample resources to enrich their interpretative work. This volume is the standard against which all subsequent commentaries on Luke’s Gospel will be judged.

Thomas E. Phillips
Arapahoe Community College


This revised dissertation (completed under Gerd Theißen at Heidelberg) examines the theme of joy in the third gospel, beginning with a redactional analysis, which demonstrates the emphasis which the third gospel—and particularly its uniquely Lukan material—places upon the theme of joy. Inselmann then argues that the characterization of joy in Luke stands within the Stoic tradition, which regarded joy as an emotion that was voluntarily chosen and consistently maintained. According to Inselmann, this Lukan emphasis upon joy served the author’s evangelistic interests and helped to make Christianity more attractive to Greco-Roman readers. Inselmann’s thesis is cogently and persuasively argued and this volume is clearly the most important of many such studies on the theme of joy in Luke’s Gospel. Some readers will, however, wonder if Inselmann has given enough attention to the Lukan characterization of joy as a divine gift rather than as a human attainment. Still, this study is highly recommended for advanced students of Luke’s Gospel and for those who study early Christianity’s interaction with the popular cultures of the Greco-Roman world.

Thomas E. Phillips
Arapahoe Community College

This volume, in keeping with the goals of the series, is a devotional commentary. The author, a distinguished professor of humanities at Baylor University, acknowledges that critical scholarship is “tertiary” to his comments. The gospel is presumed to have been written by the traveling companion of Paul in the mid-60s. The brief bibliography of contemporary scholarship is limited almost exclusively to works by white (almost exclusively conservative Protestant) males. The commentary is based on the KJV and the NKJV; text-critical issues are ignored. Although Jeffrey’s prose at times borders on eloquent, scholars who are familiar with the history of Lukan interpretation will find few original ideas in this volume. The commentary makes no effort to engage or address contemporary interpretative approaches to Luke’s Gospel. Jeffrey’s expositions are intentionally traditional and frequently align with Augustinian and pre-Augustinian interpretation; Ambrose, Augustine and the Venerable Bede are among Jeffrey’s most trusted dialogue partners. The volume will be most useful for pastors and preachers who are looking for homiletical inspiration. The volume is of negligible value to scholars who assume that critical scholarship is a prerequisite for contemporary theological reflection.

Thomas E. Phillips
Arapahoe Community College


At the climax of Jesus’s inaugural day of synagogue ministry, worshipers at his hometown in Nazareth fail in their attempt to throw him off a cliff; for he “passed through the midst of them and went on his way” (Luke 4:30). Though Luke gives no details regarding Jesus’s escape, interpretations are not wanting. After a short introduction to “gaps” as a literary convention, Longenecker devotes his full attention to this specific gap. His search though novels and films reveals four common escape approaches: 1) Jesus physically dodges his opponents; 2) Jesus disappears mysteriously; 3) sympathizers come to Jesus’s rescue; or 4) a creatively rewritten escape. Though Longenecker respects the artistic and cinematic attempts to fill the gap, he returns to the Lukan text. Jesus’s “miraculous escape” initiates Luke’s larger motif concerning the unstoppable progress of the Word of God and frequent escapes from persecution by his disciples often manifested in surprising and shocking ways (Acts 5, 12, 14, 27). For Jesus’s story to end in Nazareth would contravene the inevitable plan of God. Longenecker also “arcs” back to Satan’s final wilderness temptation and use of Psalm 91:11–12 in the attempt to cajole Jesus to throw himself down from the temple. Ironically, Satan’s promise that Jesus would be protected is realized in Luke 4:30 as part of Luke’s overall purpose that Jesus’s story would fulfill the Law, Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44, my emphasis). This is a playful and compelling interdisciplinary work by a renowned Lukan scholar.

Martin Mittelstadt
Evangel University


New translations of the seven “undisputed” letters of Paul comprise the bulk of this volume, produced under the auspices of the Westar Institute with the objective of countering “the cacophony of later voices that have attempted to speak in his name.” The introductions and annotations that accompany the letters, presented “in probable chronological order,” are somewhat uneven in terms of detail, documentation, and the degree to which the proposed readings enjoy the support of other scholars. The approach taken here by and large aligns with the “New Perspective” on Paul. Suspected interpolations (e.g., Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Cor. 11:2–16) are included as appendices to the letters, and letters often regarded as composite documents (2 Corinthians, Philippians) are printed in the form the editors believe they originally appeared. Scattered throughout are several “cameo essays” that throw light on key interpretive issues (e.g., Paul in Acts, the Christ hymn in Philippians, ancient rhetoric). A brief glossy helps readers navigate many of the intentionally iconoclastic renderings such as “corrupting seduction of power” for hamartia, “Creator and Benefactor” for pater, and “God’s presence and power” for pneuma. Anyone wanting to defamiliarize an author whose message is easy to take for granted will find here a useful resource.

Patrick Gray
Rhodes College


This little book is a collection of essays from the Westar Institute’s membership journal, The Fourth R, that appeared in print 1993–2008. They are therefore nonscholarly (though not unscholarly) introductions to some critical questions in the study of Paul: his influence over the shape of Christianity, his struggle to self-identify as Jewish or not, the reconstruction of Pauline history, and Paul and the Law. The essays are short, readable, and footnote free. They are thus meant for, and appropriate for, undergraduate classes and study groups. The book comes with a brief bibliography and discussion questions rather than works cited and scholarly endnotes.

Zeba Crook
Carleton University, Ottawa

This intriguing volume engages a central tenant of Pauline theology from the perspective of queer theory. The volume begins with the commonly noted observation that the two central dynamics of Pauline theology are creation and resurrection, dynamics that Paul sometimes expressed in terms of the first and second Adam, that is, in terms of two men. This Adam/Christ typology renders precarious the existence of women. This precariousness is sometimes addressed, but never fully overcome, by the attention given to Eve. Dunning moves beyond Paul and explores this problematic of the Adam/Christ typology through second and third century Christian thought, finding two strategies for dealing with the “irritant” of the feminine within an Adam/Christ typology of the created order. On the one hand, some thinkers, particularly those with Platonic tendencies, regarded “woman” as an incomplete male, as a de facto aberration within creation, which would be overcome in the eschaton. On the other hand, other thinkers regarded the feminine as a supplement to the masculine, as an incoherent but necessary appendage to the Adam/Christ typology. Dunning argues both that neither of these projects was—or ever could be—entirely successful and that this failure of Christian discourse illustrates the inappropriateness of creating any totalizing Christian anthropology, thus opening room for a queer reading of Christian anthropology.

Thomas E. Phillips
Arapahoe Community College


In contrast to scholars who find no concept of deification in Paul, on the one hand, and scholars who read Paul in light of patristic conceptions of deification, on the other, Litwa argues that when Paul’s writings are set within the historical and cultural context of the Greco-Roman world, both Jewish and non-Jewish, one can see that his soteriology is fundamentally related to deification. In Part I, Litwa examines the concept of deification in the Jewish and non-Jewish Greco-Roman world, providing ample evidence that it was widely believed that some people, at least, could undergo deification. The treatment of both Jewish and non-Jewish literature is a real methodological strength of this project. Turning to Paul’s letters in Part II, Litwa argues that the reception of Christ’s pneuma demonstrates believers’ participation in the life of Christ, and, consequently, a christological deification of believers: “Insofar as they participate in Christ’s pneumatic corporeality, believers participate in Christ’s divine identity. The result is the human attainment of the clearest of all divine attributes: immortality (1 Cor 15:50–52). Litwa’s monograph is well written, wide-ranging, compelling, and illuminating. It is a must read for anyone interested in Paul’s letters.

Matthew Thiessen
Saint Louis University


In this second volume of a three-part study, Oropeza traces the various ideas about and responses to the issue of apostasy in the Pauline letters. For the purposes of this study, he discusses all the letters in the Pauline corpus except Philemon, although this does not mean that Paul is the actual author of all the letters. Oropeza approaches the subject generally book by book. He begins each chapter by describing the community addressed and the issues that require Paul to write. This approach helpfully situates the issue of apostasy into the larger social and religious contexts of these early Christian communities. He then works through the content of each letter drawing attention to the causes of and the consequences of apostasy. As with the first volume, this study is primarily exegetical and there is little theological reflection, which does have some drawbacks for the overall debate about perseverance and falling away. Nevertheless, the volume is an important and helpful discussion of the Pauline texts relevant to the issue of apostasy and how Paul responded to the issue.

Jason Maston
Highland Theological College UHI


This monograph is a revised version of the author’s dissertation, which uses ancient philosophical and rhetorical theory to analyze Rom 1:2–4, 16–17. The monograph begins by examining Greco-Roman rhetorical theory that stressed that a definition should capture the essence and function of a subject with an economy of words (brevity). The author then shows how these theories were used in practice. Within the framework he provides, Calhoun identifies Rom 1:2–4 as a definition of what is the Gospel and 1:16–17 as a definition of what the Gospel does. Calhoun argues that Paul’s language in 1:16–17 is intentionally ambiguous, and this allows Paul to clarify the terms later on in the discourse in Rom 3:1–8, 21–31; 9:1–10:21. Various strengths characterize this work, such as the array of ancient sources and Calhoun’s use of rhetorical theory, which brings added clarity to the passage. Calhoun also uses several patristic authors to confirm various points. This monograph is geared toward those with an advanced
knowledge of ancient rhetorical terms and theory and is intended mainly for advanced study.

Jason A. Myers
Asbury Theological Seminary


Welborn surveys the history of scholarship concerning the identity of the Corinthian figure who attacked Paul of Tarsus, showing that it cannot be the incestuous man (1 Cor 5), nor a visitor to the community, nor a figure who robbed Paul of his collection for Jerusalem. Rather, in a mammoth chapter of 180 pages (and 1026 footnotes!), Welborn establishes from an exegesis of 2 Cor that nothing can be said about the identity of the wrongdoer from exegesis alone. Only an analysis of the social and rhetorical conventions evidenced in 2 Cor (Chapter 4) can advance the conversation: the wrongdoer was Gaius, Paul’s host. A prosopographical study of Gaius follows (Chapter 5), and from there a study of the history of the friendship (a term deliberately chosen by Welborn) between Paul and Gaius (Chapter 6). The hypothesis is strong, and a certain advance on the question, but this book would have benefited from a few things to improve its readability: a more robust introduction, a conclusion, and shorter or more condensed chapters.

Zeba Crook
Carleton University


This masterful commentary represents the culmination of decades of work by a leading scholar of Paul. By drawing upon both his own distinguished body of work and his years of robust dialogue with other scholars, de Boer has given scholars a true gem. This commentary will quickly take its proper place as a leading commentary on this crucial Pauline letter. De Boer’s interpretative approach assumes both that Paul’s thought developed over time and that the Pauline narratives in Acts are often historically suspect. Thus, de Boer’s interpretation of Galatians seeks to harmonize this letter neither with the theology of Romans and the later Pauline letters nor with the narratives in Acts. De Boer stands within the “new perspective” on Paul (believers are saved by the faithfulness of Christ, not by the believer’s own faith), dates Galatians according to the “north Galatia” approach (thus the chronology of Paul’s life in Acts is incorrect), and emphasizes the apocalyptic character of Paul’s message (thus soteriology, Christology and ecclesiology all take on an eschatological character). This commentary is recommended for all serious interpreters of Galatians—both scholars of religious studies and more theologically minded exegesis.

Thomas E. Phillips
Arapahoe Community College


Nebreda, professor of NT at the United Evangelical Theological Seminary in Madrid, argues that the christological hymn in Philippians speaks to the social and political structures of the Roman empire. According to Nebreda’s historical reconstruction, Paul wrote Philippians while in Roman custody, far from the Roman colony of Philippi. The hymn, whether created by Paul or adopted from a pre-existing source, offered Christ as a model of a different social and political system, a system characterized by self-sacrifice and servanthood in contrast to the selfishness and self-aggrandizement of the Roman system. In Nebreda’s reading, this historical background—Paul writing to a Roman colony from a Roman prison—is particularly important for the interpretation of the hymn and for understanding Paul’s vision of the Christian community as an alternative to the ethnic and imperialistic claims of the empire. This volume is solidly argued and is consistent with much of the anti-imperial interpretation that is presently popular among scholars. Seasoned readers of Pauline scholarship are unlikely to find this volume as innovative and original as Nebreda claims, but all readers will be rewarded with a somewhat fresh and challenging reading of this intriguing Pauline hymn.

Thomas E. Phillips
Arapahoe Community College


“Pastor, what do you think would have happened if a runaway slave in America had carried this letter back to his master?” Ironically, this question serves as an example of what might rescue Paul’s letter to Philemon from oblivion. To suggest Philemon plays a critical role in the history of Pauline studies would be a gross overstatement. The letter has been silenced by Catholic and Protestant debate over Romans and Galatians and by Pentecostals and Charismatics in favor of the Corinthian correspondence. The church has all but ignored Philemon for its “minimal theological content” or used it (embarrassingly) to sustain and advance slavery (e.g., “Philemon is not asked outright to free Onesimus”). Finally, whether in the church or the academy, the actions of Paul and Philemon take center stage with little concern for Onesimus. In this volume, eight African-American scholars finally give Onesimus his due. They apply fresh interpretative approaches marked by post-colonial and reader-response criticisms as well as sociopolitical/cultural perspectives. Several chapters stand out: Williams produces a stellar history of Pauline interpretation with particular attention to monumental shifts of the last twenty years; Smith revisits the oft-compared slavery of
the first century and African-American slavery; and Matthew Johnson suggests Onesimus’s voice as “groans and sighs too deep for words” resembles the “trembling” references in Negro spirituals. This volume is a must for courses on Pauline studies. Given the brevity of Philemon, the chapter contributors move quickly from recent methodological developments to key exegetical issues and sensitive pastoral application.

Martin W. Mittelstadt
Evangel University


The author describes this revised dissertation as “the most comprehensive study of ‘the heavenlies’ in Ephesians” to date. Brannon contends that consensus readings which tend toward a spiritualization of this phrase are erroneous. Instead, Paul the “mystic and visionary” uses this statement to refer to the actual/local heavenly abode of God. Paul is influenced by Jewish apocalyptic and mystical movements and literature which, in the absence of a temple, used ascetic means to bring about revelations, visions, and spiritual ascents to God’s heavenly dwelling place. Yet, in Ephesians, Paul modifies such views by asserting that God’s abode is now in Christ and can be accessed by earthly believers via the Holy Spirit. Within the Church, the new Temple, God’s presence and true revelation can be encountered. Beyond an abundance of repetitive sentences and a final excursus on synonymy that should have come earlier in the volume, overall this work is well written, thorough, and insightful. While generally agreeing with the majority of Brannon’s conclusions, especially his main thesis, it weakens Brannon’s argument to assert that Paul’s various descriptions of “the heavenlies” come down to style, a conjecture that could be made regarding nearly anything in the NT. Further, it seems that Brannon is too quick to dismiss Paul’s ascetic tendencies toward spiritual ends, particularly as one who chose to practice slavery—spiritual and physical—in Christ’s name. Nevertheless, I commend this book to all Pauline scholars.

T. Michael W. Halcomb
Ashbury Theological Seminary


In this revised dissertation, Joseph attempts to demonstrate the value of interpreting the Christology of 1 Peter by analyzing what he calls the “narrative sub-structure.” Integral to this proposal is what Jones describes as the fabula of 1 Peter, namely, a coherent narrative world that allows the ancient audience of 1 Peter to interpret their experience of social marginalization in light of four core or foundational narrative events gleaned from the Jewish Bible: election, suffering, faithfulness/faithful response, and vindication. In light of Joseph’s avowed focus in this study concerning the precise role that the OT plays in 1 Peter, this monograph provides a creative contribution to the question of how narrative theory relates to more traditional social scientific studies of 1 Peter that tend to emphasize more heavily the Greco-Roman dynamics underlying the text. Methodologically, one might question whether the specific narrative approach advocated by Joseph in the end differs substantially from what might be called a more traditional focus on intertextuality.

Kevin B. McCruden
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Alexander Böhlig (1912–1996) was a giant in scholarship on oriental Christianity and varieties of Gnosticism. He studied in four different faculties in Berlin: Theology, Egyptology, Semitics, and Iranian. During that time the collection of Manichaean manuscripts found at Medinet Madi in Egypt became available for study, and he became active in publishing editions of the Coptic texts. In 1947, he completed his doctoral dissertation at Münster on the Bible among the Manichaens. When the Nag Hammadi Codices became available for study, Böhlig spent many sessions in the Coptic Museum in Cairo over a number of years, and published a number of editions and studies on the Coptic Gnostic manuscripts. But his Münster dissertation was never published until it appeared in the book here under review. Böhlig’s original text is pretty much preserved in this edition, with updating provided by three colleagues. Their additions are indicated in square brackets, with their initials: CM = Christoph Markschies, PN = Peter Nagel, SR = Siegfried Richter. Three previously published articles are added to the book: one on the Cologne Mani-Codex, one on syncretism as reflected in the traditions of Mani’s passion, and one on Manichaeism and Christianity. Böhlig is noted for stressing the Christian background to Manichaeism, as well as the Jewish background to Gnosticism. This book is a valuable contribution to scholarship on Manichaeism and Gnosticism.

Birger A. Pearson
University of California, Santa Barbara

This book is the author’s revision of his dissertation submitted to the University of Messina. Part I in four short chapters introduces the “great notice” of Irenaeus on Valentinianism (Haer. I:1–8), discussing its presentation of Valentinianism and Irenaeus’ treatment of it. Part II constitutes the largest part of the book, a synopsis of the “great notice” with parallels in Tertullian’s Adversus Valentinianos. In two short chapters, he takes up the problems of the text, and presents a preface to his synopsis. Chapter 3 is a lengthy synopsis of the Greek and Latin texts with Italian translation and philological notes. Part III, in five chapters, is devoted to the structure and doctrinal content of the “great notice”: Irenaeus’ working methods, and Valentinian theology: the Pleroma; the development of Sophia and matter; the cosmos as divine degradation; revelation, ethics, and salvation. A short chapter of conclusions treats the development of Valentinianism, and Valentinus’ relation to the Gnostikoi (identified in modern scholarship as Sethians). There are also a lengthy bibliography and indices. This book is an excellent treatment of Valentinian Gnosticism.

Birger A. Pearson
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The first edition of this book was published in 1994. In this new edition, Williams has corrected a few errors, revised his translation, and updated his notes and index. St. Epiphanius (315–403), bishop of Salamis on Cyprus, was a fierce champion of Christian orthodoxy and an avid heresy hunter. This volume of his “Medicine Chest” contains his accounts of heresies from no. 42, “Against Encratites,” through no. 80, “Against Massalians,” with an appended “Concise, Accurate Account of the Faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church” (De Fide). Students of Christian history are indebted to Williams for his definitive translation of a very important product of fourth-century Christianity.

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Stewart’s book helpfully assembles several texts that, to a greater or lesser extent, belong to the “Two Ways” tradition, a form of moral discourse that presents life as a stark choice between the way of life and light and the way of death and darkness. Some of the texts presented here, such as Qumran’s Community Rule and the early Christian Didache and Epistle of Barnabas, are quite well known, while other included works will almost certainly be new to most readers. Stewart has arranged his book chronologically, beginning with the Community Rule and extending through the eighth century CE, allowing the reader to follow the reception history of this tradition. Although the majority of the book is dedicated to the texts themselves, some readers may wish that Stewart had provided more contextual information and analysis of the works. Stewart’s commentary often leans heavily in the direction of textual relationships; his nine-page introduction to a pair of third century documents is almost exclusively devoted to an attempt to fit them into a broader stemma of Two Ways texts. Though this is an important inquiry, the details may get somewhat tedious for the intended “novice” reader, and they highlight the relative lack of historical context provided in places. Nonetheless, this book provides a handy start for anyone who wishes to explore this important form of early Christian discourse, and the breadth of its texts gives insight into the way traditional motifs were adapted to different purposes.

Joshua Noble
University of Notre Dame


This collaborative effort presents the two earliest examples of what the authors refer to as “Pro-Nicene” writings on the Holy Spirit. These two works, Athanasius’s Letters to Serapion and Didymus the Blind’s On the Holy Spirit, were written three to four decades after Nicea, and they argue forcefully that the Spirit is not a created being, but is one with the Father and the Son. Although Athanasius’ letters have been readily available in English for many years, this is the first English translation of Didymus’s treatise. In addition to their translations, the authors provide a full and informative introduction to the context, structure, and argument of both works. The authors are all well qualified for the task, particularly Ayres, who has written extensively on Nicea and Trinitarian theology. The footnotes to the texts are helpful without being intrusive, and they provide relevant biblical citations, additional explanatory information, and notes on the underlying Greek and Latin. Some of the translation choices are debatable—the translation of the term substantia jumps back and forth between “substance” and nature”—but the footnotes consistently alert the readers to this alternation, allowing them to make their own decisions. On the whole, this book is an excellent and accessible piece of scholarship aimed at those interested in fourth-century Trinitarian theology.

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