

THE BIBLE, CHRISTIANITY, AND CULTURE

ESSAYS IN HONOR
OF PROFESSOR
PETR POKORNÝ

EDITED BY
PAVOL
BARGÁR

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The Bible, Christianity and Culture

Essays in Honor of Professor Petr Pokorný

Pavol Bargár (ed.)

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PREFACE

This book originated in the *Donatio Universitatis Carolinae* award and research support that Professor Petr Pokorný received in 2017. It was envisioned, designed, and originally conducted as a project exploring the biblical roots of Christian culture. Experts in various theological and philosophical disciplines, both from the Czech Republic and abroad, were to probe this topic from their particular perspectives. The hoped-for output was to be a coherent collective study of the proposed topic.

However, due to the unexpected passing away of Prof. Pokorný in early 2020, the project could not be executed according to the original plan. Rather than a collective monograph, therefore, the present book is a collection of essays that investigate various aspects of the Bible and Christianity in their relation to culture as a broad human phenomenon. The book is divided into two sections. While the first section focuses on particular issues in the Bible, the second addresses historical, philosophical, and cultural developments. As Petr Pokorný was actively and importantly involved in the initial stages of the project, two essays are written by him personally. The whole book, then, is dedicated in his honor.

I am immensely grateful to Prof. Pokorný for inviting me to be part of this project since its beginning, as project secretary, book editor, and one of the authors of the essays. Furthermore, I would like to thank all the colleagues who contributed as authors to this volume. My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to Dr. Joyce Mauler Michael for translating to English most of the essays in this book and language editing all of them. Furthermore, I am indebted to Prof. Stephen Bevans, SVD, of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and Rev. Dr. Michael Trainor of Australian Catholic University in Adelaide for kindly reviewing the manuscript and providing their insightful comments. Finally, a special thanks goes to Karolinum Press, and particularly editor Dr. Josef Táborský, for their very professional publishing services.

Pavol Bargár
Prague, Czech Republic
June 25, 2022

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The invitation to be involved in this project felt like a rare honor because I had a strong sense that its exploration of the Christian/biblical roots of European culture had the potential to bring scholarship out of the sacred halls of study into a perplexed and perplexing world that surely could benefit from the academy's insights. This possibility has been confirmed as I have worked on the texts that comprise this collection. However, its diversity of authors and topics has presented some unique challenges that I will seek to identify in these comments.

(1) The biblical text itself has raised some interesting dilemmas. Professor Petr Pokorný originally requested that the New Revised Standard Version be used for all biblical citations, and unless a specific translation is identified in the text or in a footnote, the NRSV has been employed throughout the book. However, in some cases, the wording of the Czech Ecumenical Translation (ČEP) was closely tied to a particular author's reflections and/or provided a valuable alternative to familiar English translations. Thus, my understanding of the ČEP is occasionally included in order to preserve the relationship between the author's thoughts and the biblical text that underlies those or to share some of the striking imagery that the Czech translation uses. A notable example of this practice occurs in the Pokorný chapter on the resurrection, where the wording of the ČEP is so critical to the discussion at some points that I have used brackets to insert my understanding of that translation into citations of the NRSV.

The content of two other chapters have also required special approaches to the biblical text: (a) Dr. Lenka Karfíková's philosophical analysis of 1 Corinthians 15:28 and the surrounding context discusses Paul's insights in relation to major works by Origen and Augustine. The NRSV translation of 1 Corinthians 15:42, 50–54 employs the terms "perishable" and "imperishable," but the official English translations of Origen and Augustine that were provided typically share the King James Version's use of the words "corruptible" and "incorruptible." Thus, for the sake of consistency and clarity, I have cited the KJV at pertinent points in that essay. (b) Dr. Jan Roskovec's reflections on Paul's views of justice and justification also posed a challenge because the Czech word "*spravedlnost*" means both "justice" and "righteousness"—which have subtle, but important, differences in connotation in English. Thus, it was

difficult to convey the radical transformation of the notion of justice that is introduced by Paul's reflections on justification using the NRSV's rendering of pertinent passages in Pauline writings where the word "righteousness" typically appears. After my first two attempts to address this difficulty fell short, I opted to use the phrase "righteous justice" to translate *spravedlnost* when the text refers to God so that the bond between justice, justification, and righteousness could be preserved. However, in the end, I handed my efforts over to two colleagues in the United States so that Dr. Roskovec's revisions could be properly represented. Thus, the present form of the chapter is the work of Professor Roskovec, Rev. John Rauhut, and Rev. L. Cean Wilson, rather than myself.

(2) The complex issue of gender neutral speech has also posed a challenge. In the case of human beings, I have rarely, if ever, used a masculine noun or pronoun to refer to an unspecified person unless such a designation was essential to an author's imagery or was required by a foreign phrase. Instead, I have usually employed plural formulations in order to avoid the awkwardness of she/he and him/her. However, I have rarely been gender neutral when it comes to God. In part, this is because the NRSV frequently does not use gender neutral terms to speak of God; thus, some amount of gendered language is unavoidable in essays which are based on that translation. However, beyond that, I perceive that many of the current options for genderless God-talk pull God into the commendable human struggle to move beyond language that breeds inequality and injustice. As noble as these efforts are, they are often—or necessarily—"engineered" by human beings, rather than inspired by the immanent otherness of the Great I Am. Thus, such attempts may become a source of confusion and conflict in the human sphere—ironically imperiling the very ideals that they seek to safeguard. I occasionally have glimmers of transformational ways to "de-gender" our references to God, but those remain elusive. Thus, I have continued to use masculine pronouns for God, except for a few instances where the inappropriateness of those pronouns was too stark for them to be retained.

(3) Switching abruptly to more technical matters, I would note the following:

(a) I have typically presented the titles of non-English works in the language in which they were written, followed by English translations in parentheses, on the occasion of their first occurrence. In footnotes, bracketed translations have been provided the first time a particular work is mentioned, but in subsequent references, the title of the work has been retained in its original language. This practice may periodically remind readers that several linguistic and cultural worlds have given rise to this book.

(b) Transliterations of words written in non-Latin scripts have generally not been provided unless the transliteration is so well known in English that

its inclusion enhances the intelligibility of a particular essay. Yet, occasionally, an author's writing style or emphasis on a particular foreign term has led me to break that "rule."

(c) With regard to the positioning of foreign words and their English equivalents, when foreign terms serve an "illustrative" purpose, they have been placed in parentheses following the English word. However, when they are central to the content of the essay, the foreign words have been presented in the body of the text and have been followed by the English wording in parentheses.

(d) Unusual words or key phrases have been put in quotation marks only the first time they occur in a given chapter, except in rare instances of repeated citations of biblical phrases and such. The treatment of repetitions of italicized words is more dependent on their function in the text than on a general rule.

(e) Complete bibliographical information for each individual work has been provided in a footnote the first time that it occurs in any given chapter. The book's length and breadth may make this a useful practice for readers who want to explore specific topics further.

(f) Decisions about the capitalization of particular religious, philosophical, historical, and cultural terms have been based on the *Chicago Manual of Style* and other respected style manuals. However, there may be some inconsistencies in capitalization that reflect particular authors' preferences.

(g) Because the original essays followed the documentary conventions that are standard in their culture of origin, it has been a struggle to implement a uniform way of handling issues like the abbreviation of classical texts; the punctuation of works that include volume, section, page, and line numbers; and such. I am especially grateful to Dávid Cielontko and Zuzana Vítková for providing me with pointers regarding the documentation of Qumran and Nag Hammadi texts. Since continued explorations of these matters have sometimes led me to adopt slightly different patterns that seemed to be more in keeping with the general principles of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, I need to apologize for resulting irregularities in form.

(4) Indeed, I am painfully aware that discriminating readers will spot innumerable inconsistencies in the text. Thus, I want to briefly mention some reasons for this state of affairs:

(a) I was surprised by my own lack of awareness of all of the issues that the *Chicago Manual of Style* addresses. The complexity of the technical aspects of some of the chapters meant that I immersed myself in that imposing work more intently than I typically do, and in the process of doing that, I invariably discovered rules about a myriad of matters that I had routinely handled in different ways. Another complicating factor reflects the fact that many European publishers require the use of British styles of spelling, punctuation,

and documentation. My attempts to adopt such practices over the years mean that my North American stylistic “habits” are not as “pure” as they once were. Finally, due to the length of the text, I submitted each chapter to Dr. Pavol Bargár separately at the time of its completion. This meant that although I made a concerted effort to remedy stylistic shortcomings in chapters that were still in process as soon as I discovered a new rule, I could not correct such errors in chapters that had already been submitted. Thus, an additional source of inconsistency emerged.

(b) The diverse ways of handling citations of classical works and historically specific terms that appear online made it virtually impossible to determine which options really were “established,” to borrow one author’s terminology. One day, I would be sure that I had found the definitive solution to a knotty issue, and the next day, I would find a different—equally credible—possibility that would lead me to question my previous decision. The resulting ambiguity has greatly increased the likelihood that particular issues have unintentionally been treated in different ways in individual chapters.

(c) The variety of topics, styles of writing, and ways of handling technical issues pursued by the seventeen authors of these essays have made it difficult to maintain a single pattern. In some chapters, the chosen method of handling a specific issue has worked naturally, while in other cases, an author’s writing style and content adopted a different approach. Thus, in the end, I have realized that I can only pledge to seek consistency within a given chapter, rather than throughout the entire book.

(d) This translation has now been through many stages of review as the authors have provided written responses to my questions about specific passages; as my English proofreaders/editors have suggested idiomatic changes; and as Dr. Bargár has proposed additional revisions. Thus, I have been through the second draft of the translation at least six times as I have prepared questions for, and incorporated the responses of, each of the participants in the process. Yet, although Dr. Bargár has now determined that all of the chapters are ready for publication, some authors may rightfully make other changes that may unintentionally introduce patterns that are inconsistent with established English conventions and may occasionally modify my attempts to prepare a translation that is both faithful and idiomatic.

Notwithstanding this litany of inconsistencies, I want to extend hearty words of appreciation to Rev. Wilson and Rev. Rauhut who created the current form of chapter 7; to Rev. Dr. Beverly Schmidt who began the process of reviewing the text from the perspective of a native reader of English; to Fay Bierly Kay who carried on and completed that task with care and creativity; and to Dr. Bargár who admirably agreed to assemble this book’s bibliography, patiently granted me the time I needed to wrestle with the documentary and

terminological challenges outlined above, and simultaneously devoted many hours to reviewing each chapter and offering unwavering counsel and support. I am more than grateful to these committed folks, and above all, to the authors who responded to my questions with thoughtfulness and wit. I trust that every person involved in this process will forgive the errors and misrepresentations that remain in the text, and will eventually be glad to know that the insights contained in this book have finally made their way into the public sphere.

This “conclusion” brings me to a pair of final comments. This book is a child of COVID-19. Due to restrictions on travel and interaction, I could not meet directly with any of the authors to iron out mysterious passages and technical issues. Indeed, this text’s gestation period was long and belabored since every step had to occur in written form, rather than dialogically. Yet, I am convinced that it represents an important challenge and source of hope during this time. A critical leitmotif of this collection is its insistence that the Christian faith is “defined” by the affirmation that every human life has inimitable worth. Yet, as I write this, there have been nearly five million COVID-related deaths in our world, and that overwhelming number appears to be having a numbing effect which sometimes results in a stunning disregard for the sanctity of life. In some circles, self-centered individualism trumps the common good, and some people seem to be unwilling or unable to acknowledge that the brilliant tapestry of the world becomes less radiant each time the unique spirit of one of COVID’s victims is prematurely erased in ways that do not honor death’s potential to become the crown of life.

Yet, our Euro-American and human cultural heritage directs us toward a more gracious possibility. Thus, during the darkest days of isolation and uncertainty, I regularly found myself being heartened by these essays, which were written in 2018–2019 before COVID-19 had appeared on the horizon. Indeed, the conviction that the Christian tradition is grounded in a resurrecting story which demands and enables the realization that the life of every person has irrepeatable value resounds throughout the book because it is a truth that transcends the particular circumstances of any specific time or place. Thus, the words that Jan Hus wrote in the 1400s subtly introduce this theme whenever the hymn “Jesus Christ, the Bountiful Priest” is sung or heard: ‘You lived in the world with us, your body suffered wounds for us, . . . in your grace; you have deigned to dwell in us [and] . . . to sustain us, . . . in your grace.’ Of course, the unique ability that Czech words and melodies have to remind us of our abiding worth does not end there. In fact, it was carefully nurtured across the centuries until the communist era when a bard named Miloš Rejchrt wrote another cherished chorus that contains these words: “Stay with us, Lord, when it is growing dark; stay with us when the day is drawing on; . . . Open eyes that do not see you, that do not see truth, that

only have delusion. Awaken trust in us like children have. Speak to us Lord; say 'Peace be yours.'"¹ Other refrains from different times similarly call us to see every person's irreplaceable worth; to turn our eyes toward truth; and to raise our voices on behalf of all who have not yet been able to perceive or lay claim to their inherent value. Precisely because these melodies transcend the particular circumstances of any specific time or place, they have power in each and every time and place. If we dare to embrace the irrefutable sanctity of every human life even now that darkness seems to be closing in again, a grand chorus of peace may resound once more.

J. Mauler Michael
Prague, Czech Republic
October 15, 2021

1 My fanciful paraphrase of random phrases from Hus's hymn is based on the ancient Czech version of the text in *Evangelický zpěvník* [Protestant Hymnal] (Lahr/Baden: EPB for the Synodal Council of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, 1979), 308. My translation of Miloš Rejchrt's hymn is based on the chorus and the second verse of the text found in *Evangelický zpěvník/Dodatek* [Protestant Hymnal Supplement] (Prague: Kalich, 2004), 622.

**PRESUPPOSITIONS
AND BEGINNINGS
OF CHRISTIANITY: THE BIBLE
AND THE EARLY CHURCH**

MOSES, THE MULTILATERAL MEDIATOR: THE MESSAGE OF THE CHIASTIC STRUCTURE IN THE SORY OF THE GOLDEN CALF (EXOD 32–34)

PETR SLÁMA

SERVANT OF THE LORD

The epithet “the servant of the Lord” (עַבְד־יְהוָה) does not appear even once in the book of Exodus, which provides most of the biographical information about Moses. This title appears at the end of the book of Deuteronomy, surprisingly in the sentences about the fact that he has died (Dt 34:5). Immediately thereupon, we learn that he was buried in Moab, although exactly where is not known; that he lived to see “one hundred twenty years” and “his sight was unimpaired;” and that although Joshua assumed command after him, “never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (Dt 34:10). The fact that the phrase “Moses, the servant of the Lord” sounds familiar to us in spite of this is due to the fact that it turns up at dozens of points in the sequential literary work about the history of the Jewish monarchy that constitutes one of the foundations of the Hebrew Bible—that is, in the “Deuteronomistic History” and especially, in its book of Joshua. It is also in Chronicles and in Nehemiah that the phrase “the servant of God” (עַבְד־הָאֱלֹהִים)—which incidentally, is a precursor of an Arabic epithet and later, of the proper name Abdullah—appears only in connection with Moses.

However, the phrase “servant of the Lord” appears in many passages in the Bible and by no means always in relation to Moses. The use of this designation in the “Servant Songs” in Deutero-Isaiah is the most striking and admittedly, also the most thought-provoking. The author of this text from the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE represents the servant of the Lord as the one who has to fulfill an important mission, yet who “will not cry or lift up his voice” (Is 42:2). The task consists of “raising up the tribes of Jacob” (Is 49:6). At the same time, the unknown one will remain faithful in a situation of strife and oppression (Is 50:5–9). As a result, he will be so disfigured (marred) that he will bear no resemblance to a human being (Is 52:14). In Isaiah 52:13–53, he is finally represented as someone who has suffered so heinously that it appears that the Lord has cast him aside. Yet, it comes to light that his defeat and suffering have salvific significance—which is not clarified further—for the well-being of those who observe his suffering. We do not find a more exact prefiguration of Jesus’s passion narrative in the Hebrew Bible, just as we do not find a more precise soteriological justification

of Jesus's substitutionary death than Isaiah 53:4–6: "Surely, he has borne our infirmities; . . . yet, we accounted him . . . struck down by God. . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions. . . . All we like sheep have gone astray . . . , and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Therefore, it is surprising how little the New Testament explicitly uses this motif. We would expect many more direct and indirect references to Isaiah 52–53, especially by the apostle Paul, who in the Letter to the Romans, contemplates the vicarious effect of Jesus's suffering. More often than not, he chooses a secondary motif when he quotes from a song about the Suffering Servant. For example, in Romans 10:16, when he reflects on why Israel did not accept Christ, Paul quotes the rhetorical question—"who has believed what we have heard"—from Isaiah 53:1 as an explanation. Of course, it is possible that the motif of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 52–53 constitutes such an obvious foundation of Jesus's story that New Testament authors do not even bother to present particular citations. Another possible explanation for the scanty use of the motif of Isaiah 52–53 in the New Testament may be the fact that by the first century CE, Deutero-Isaiah's Suffering Servant was already associated with a certain biblical figure to such a degree that a new identification with Jesus would have met with resistance.

Who was the figure of the Suffering Servant most frequently identified with during the first century? According to the Bible's internal chronology, which knows nothing of the modern consensus dating Deutero-Isaiah to the post-exilic period, such a candidate would be King Hezekiah. In the second half of the eighth century BCE, he was Isaiah's contemporary and patron. The end of the original part of Isaiah (chapters 36–39) and its parallel in 2 Kings feature a series of scenes of their encounters with one another. Hezekiah survived Sennacherib's siege and a deadly illness (2 Kgs 18–20). When rabbinic literature wants to neutralize inflamed messianic expectations, it mentions Hezekiah as a messiah who has already been here.¹

In the second part of the book of Isaiah, salutations to "Jacob my servant" are scattered among the Servant Songs (Is 44:1, 2b; 48:20). That led some rabbinic scholars to consider the "servant" to be a cypher for a collective hero—the people of Israel.

In the opinion of some researchers, Zerubbabel, who was chosen by the Persians to be the leader of the Jewish returnees from the Babylonian exile, historically lies hidden behind the image of the Suffering Servant.² Bold expectations about the restoration of the Davidic dynasty were obviously linked to the appointment of the grandson of the last king of Judah to be its

1 See the Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 28b and especially, Sanhedrin 94a.

2 James Washington Watts, ed., *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 222. (Rabbinic literature is also discussed here.)

governor (1 Chr 3:17). In Haggai 2:23, the Lord addresses him as “Zerubbabel my servant, son of Shealtiel.” Yet, as Zechariah 4 implies, this Zerubbabel mysteriously vanishes from the scene at some point, perhaps eliminated by domestic or foreign adversaries. According to Watts, it is precisely this traumatizing event that the Servant Song in Isaiah 52–53 reflects.

In the opinion of other thinkers, the Suffering Servant is the Persian ruler Cyrus himself. The Servant Song in Isaiah 52–53 is said to reflect the grief of his grateful Jewish subjects at the moment that news of his death reached them.³ According to Klaus Baltzer, the author of a commentary on Isaiah, the whole text of Deutero-Isaiah is a libretto in six acts whose main hero is Moses himself.⁴ Roughly speaking, that work is contemporaneous with the emerging Mosaic Torah, which was depicted in the Pentateuch as the sum of Moses’s teachings. At exactly that time, Moses became an integrative figure, who enabled hitherto competing emphases to be combined with one another. Of course, it is not surprising that given this position, Moses would subsequently be the exalted servant of the Lord. Yet, what events in his life are the passages in Isaiah 52–53 related to?

HISTORICAL QUERIES ABOUT MOSES

The question of the “historical Moses” has occupied readers since antiquity. Jews had even then to come to terms with Egyptian historians who mapped Egypt’s troubled relations with its Asian neighbor, whose territory the historians regarded as Egypt’s buffer zone. In rough outline, the story of Exodus—Israel’s escape or deliverance from bondage in Egypt—corresponds to a pattern of mutual contact and confrontation between the Nile empire and its northeastern neighbors from the third to the first millennia BCE. These neighbors, who mostly were Semitic inhabitants of the Levant, found themselves in a situation of direct or mediated domination by Egypt during the Late Bronze Age (the sixteenth to the twelfth centuries BCE) and the beginning of the Iron Age (the eleventh to the tenth centuries BCE).⁵ This pattern involved waves of the Semitic population from the Levant who repeatedly came to Egypt (1) for economic reasons (more or less as described in Genesis 41:57–42:5); (2) as captives of Egypt (for example, after Merenptah’s punitive expedition); or even

3 Jon Lawrence Berquist, *Judaism in Persia’s Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 51ff.

4 Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001).

5 Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology’s Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 65; Jan Christian Gertz, Angelika Berlejung, Konrad Schmid, and Markus Witte, *Grundinformation Altes Testament: Eine Einführung in Literatur, Religion und Geschichte des Alten Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

(3) as invaders. Later they usually left, fled, or were expelled.⁶ The complexity of this pattern is precisely why it is not possible to relate the oldest traditions about Moses to a particular event in Egyptian history.

Memories of Moses could have gradually been linked to traditions about Semitic invaders and usurpers that the Egyptians themselves recounted, but the narrative invariably took on specific features of Egyptian oppression and deliverance based on the time in which it was related. For example, in the seventh century BCE, the story of the Exodus acquired new immediacy. More than a hundred years after the destruction of northern Israel where it had originated long before, the basic plot of story of the Exodus was already part of Judah's collective memory. Necho II, the Egyptian pharaoh at that time, started a massive construction enterprise. As archeological explorations in the area of the present-day Wadi Tumilat in the eastern Nile Delta and the writings of Herodotus consistently verify, Necho set out to build a canal that would connect the Nile with the Red Sea.⁷ For this, he enlisted scores of foreign workers, apparently also from Judah. The narrative in the first chapter of the book of Exodus about building activities and the subjugation of the Israelites includes a number of practical realities that correspond precisely to this historical period.

Concerning the leader of the Israelites, whom the book of Exodus portrays as Moses, the Great Harris Papyrus from the twelfth century BCE describes the chaos that overcame Egypt after the death of Pharaoh Seti II. It is said that for a short while at that time,

the land of Kam [Egypt] had fallen into confusion, everyone was doing what he wished, there was no superior authority for many years which had priority over others. The land of Kam was under the chief of nomes, each was killing another out of ambition and jealousy of another coming after him. After some years, A-ar-su, a Kharu [Syrian] amongst them as chiefs placed the whole country in subjection to him. One united his companions to drag things away, were treated the gods as if they were men, no sacrifices or offerings were made in their temples.⁸

Memories of this Syrian usurper may have provided the basic relational constellation and plot of the conflict between Egypt and its Levantine neighbors. In this form they have been encountered and preserved both by the Jews and by the Hellenized historian of Egypt called Manetho. During the more than three-thousand-year history of Egypt's domination of the entire region,

6 Regarding the captives of Merenptah's forces, see Helmut Utzschneider and Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1-15*, International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2012), 76.

7 Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 66; Herodotus, *Histories* 2.158.

8 Samuel Birch, ed., *Facsimile of the Hieratic Papyrus of the Reign of Rameses III* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1876), plate LXXV.

this pattern changed several times, insofar as it began with the entrance (εἰσοδος) of inhabitants of the Levant into Egypt; continued with their settlement and expansion within Egyptian society; sometimes, culminated in an attempt to seize power; and in any case, led to crisis, struggle, and eventually, to the exodus of the Levantines.

Nevertheless, it would be short-sighted to declare Moses to be a totally fictional character. That is, it is precisely the features which—somewhat paradoxically—do not fit the theological profile of the traditions within whose framework they are preserved that make the most compelling case for the existence of a man having this name. The first argument is Moses’s Egyptian name מֹשֶׁה (*moshe*), which is a corruption of the Egyptian word *msj*—“child of”—that we are familiar with from the theophoric names of numerous Egyptian pharaohs, e.g. Ramesses or Thutmose.⁹ Whether we have in the name Moses only part of what originally was a theophoric name or a full name analogous to the modern Arabic name *Walid*, it is certain that such a name would not have simply been made up by the tradition in which Egypt was a synonym for slavery and the influences that the prophets warned against. The fact that its founder had the name Moses was so deeply ingrained in the nation’s collective memory that it was not possible to replace it with something else.¹⁰ Of course, in Exodus 2:10, the biblical narrative suggests that Moses’s name means “drawing out [of the water].” However, the fact that the explanation does not correspond to the context of the story (in which a boy drawn out of the water would not have been named *moshe*, but *mashu*) shows that we have to do with a pun here.

Just as scandalous from the perspective of the later Deuteronomistic theology is Moses’s marriage to the daughter of the priest of Midian—who also continues to be an unequivocally positive figure in the narrative in the books Exodus and Numbers—and for that matter, the fact that Moses’s call and the revelation of the Lord’s name occurred in Midian. The later tradition would also not have made up this information. Numbers 25 tells of “one of the people of Israel” who brought a Midianite woman “before Moses,” which is the impetus for Phinehas’s bigoted actions in verses 7 and 8, consistent with the post-exilic policy of rejecting intermarriage. It is precisely these troublesome facts of Moses’s biography that constitute the most compelling argument for the historicity of the figure of the biblical Moses.

9 The word *msj* had penetrated into the Israelites’ collective memory much earlier and had undergone a change from “s” to “sh” during a process of linguistic appropriation. See Ernst Axel Knauf, *Midian: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas Nordarabiens am Ende des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988), 105.

10 Erhard Blum, “Der historische Mose und die Frühgeschichte Israels,” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1, no. 1 (2012): 41.

MOSES IN EXODUS 32-34

Moses's life-saving and mediating role fully manifests itself in the story of the golden calf and what that story triggers. It describes Moses as the "servant of the Lord" whom "the Lord knew face to face" (Dt 34:5a, 10b). Preceding chapters—especially the narrative in Exodus 3-4 about Moses's call at the burning bush—had already told of Moses's encounters with God. Here though Moses becomes Israel's deliverer; he will offer his destiny as a ransom for Israel, and after that, he himself becomes the revelation of God's face to Israel (Exod 34:35).

Chapters 32-34 are a narrative interlude dividing the tabernacle account in the second part of Exodus. In the first part of that book, the people languished in slavery; the Lord called Moses, and he became the Lord's intermediary, who, by means of "nine plus one" plagues, forced Pharaoh to let Israel go. Moses led Israel in the wilderness, and across the Red Sea—where the eleventh plague struck the Egyptians—to the foot of Sinai, and up Mount Sinai itself (Ex 3 and 24). Then legal ordinances follow: the Decalogue, the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 21-23, and from chapter 25 to the end of the book, regulations about the tabernacle as cultic infrastructure, enabling Israel to communicate with God. It is just here, in the middle of the cultic stipulations, that the story of the golden calf has been inserted like—at first glance—an "erratic boulder". Within the *Halakha* about what worship and the sanctuary that the Lord orders to be built so that he can dwell (sh-k-n, Ex 25:8) in the midst of the Israelites should be like—an *Aggadah* about how the people tried to secure God's presence on their own suddenly rings out. Because that is what's at stake from the beginning to the end of our story.

I have separated Exodus 32-34 into twelve units that I would now like to go through briefly. I have divided them according to formal markers like the *setuma* and *petucha* of Masoretic paragraphs or changes in the participants. Much like the whole book of Exodus, these three chapters are the result of complex authorial work and eventually, of compromise among the various groups that cultivated traditions about the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt and about Moses. Priestly and non-priestly circles constituted the two main camps, but these went on to develop all sorts of nuances as they reacted to each other, imitated one another, and put forth their own versions of something that the other side had come up with.¹¹ Thus, in what follows, the Roman numerals designate the order of the units in the canonical text that are interpreted here, but from the section VII onwards they are sequenced in a way that corresponds to the chiasmic structure of the text whose climax is in Exodus 22:12-16 (sec-

11 Some time ago, I delivered a lecture in which I spoke about Jon D. Levenson and his image of dialogue between two mountains—Zion and Sinai, cult and law, land and exile—and Amedeo Molnár's "already" and "not yet."

tion IX) in this version of the Moses story. The chart included below shows this clearly. I will focus in greater detail on the second part of the narrative where Moses returns to the Lord on Mount Sinai and negotiates with him. Let us now look at the first five paragraphs, which describe occurrences in the valley.

I Exodus 32:1–6: The Golden Calf

The people's demand is motivated by a fear of being left alone by God. They ask Aaron to make them gods that will go before them. They anticipate that Moses, who is not here now, is somehow connected to the absent God. Aaron orders them to take off their gold jewelry, casts a statue from it, and presents it to them as 'the gods who brought you out of Egypt.' In fact, based on statuettes of Baal, we know that it probably might have only meant a pedestal of an unseen rider. In any event, Aaron proclaims "a festival to the Lord" the following day. If the Decalogue had been familiar to the Israelites at that time, they would have been aware that they were sinning against the second, not the first, commandment, as these are numbered by the Reformed Protestant tradition.

II Exodus 32:7-14: The First Conversation between the Lord and Moses on Sinai

The Lord describes the situation down in the camp to Moses. He appeals to Moses to let him destroy the people. He will then make a nation of Moses alone. Moses rejects this temptation. It is worth noting how shrewdly he conducts his argument. Previously, God had spoken to Moses about "your people whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex 32:7). Moses turns this back to God, referring to "your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt" (Ex 32:11). He then adds "what would the people in Egypt say about this?" (see Ex 32:12) "Remember [their ancestors], Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, your servants. . . . And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people." (Ex 32:13-14).

III Exodus 32:15-18: What Do I Hear?

Then, Moses descends, and in his hand, he has the tablets of the law that are "the work of God." At this point, the rabbinic tradition develops a wordplay. In the words "the writing of God engraved upon the tablets," the consonant form of the word חרות (*charut*) reads as if the word was "freedom" (*cherut*). Thus, Moses brings the people "the writing of God—that is, freedom—on the tablets." Such a reading confirms the emancipatory potential of the Jewish tradition. Yet, simultaneously, the contrast between the tablets of the law and the circuitous way of obscure wordplays accentuates the row down in the valley. Indeed,

there is another wordplay in which Joshua erroneously thinks that he hears the din of battle, but discovers that it is a case of impish songs (Ex 32:17).

IV Exodus 32:19–24: Moses versus Aaron

Although Moses talked the Lord out of his anger, he himself also lapses into it (Ex 32:19b). Destruction of everything occurs: of the tablets of the law and the golden calf. The individual acts do not connect up in a totally logical way, but they correspond to a Ugaritic parallel of Anat’s complete destruction of Mot. The drinking referred to in verse 20 may call to mind Numbers 5, where the bitter water that a woman must drink in the event of her husband’s jealousy is a curse. Moses’s discussion with Aaron follows the pulverization of the golden calf. Through the rhetorical question, “what did this people do to you,” he implies that Aaron had wronged them when he was at their will. The contrast between the two is revealed: While Moses fights for his people, Aaron heaps shame upon them (Ex 32:22b: “They are bent on evil.”). And then, with typical alibism, he describes how, at their request, he took the gold, threw it into the fire, and then, without knowing how, a calf came out of the fire.

V Exodus 32:25–29: The Massacre in the Camp

The massacre carried out by the Levites in the camp is a pendulum reaction to the previous license for evil. Like every manifestation of *jihad*, this Levite act is not a demonstration of great piety, but a reaction to extreme laxity.

This section is followed by seven sections in which Moses’s negotiations with the Lord continue, albeit with many detours. Here, separate motifs blend, repeat, and change. They seem to reflect the complexities of the situation of postexilic Judaism. However, the text displays surprising symmetry and actually creates a concentric (chiastic) structure. Among other things, this concentricity has a feature that—like in a treasure hunt—has what is most important in the center, always framed by two parts that are related in some way. Therefore, beginning with section VII, I will present corresponding sections of the “descending line” (paragraphs XI and X) always after sections of the “ascending line” (paragraphs VII and VIII). (See the chart below.)

VI Exodus 32:30–35: “Blot Me out of [Your] Book” (Second Conversation)

In part VI, the original non-priestly narrative continues. Moses turns to the people whom he had previously forced to drink the powder of the pulverized calf, and reproaches them for their sin—but then, he goes back to the Lord to intercede for the forgiveness of that sin. In his intercession, he is even blunter

than he was in Exodus 32:11–12. Not only had Moses rejected God’s proposal to give up on his people because God will make a new nation from Moses alone. He now says to God—as though he had copied from *Sophie’s World* by the Norse writer Jostein Gaarder—if you will not forgive them, “blot me out of the book that you have written” (Ex 32:32b).¹² He refuses to play in a game where the people of Israel would not play along with him.

VII Exodus 33:1–6: “I Will Not Go Up Among You” (Third Conversation)

The Lord announces a return to daily order: Moses should take his place at the head of the people and move on to the Promised Land (Ex 33:3a). An angel of the Lord is due to carry out the dirty work of driving out the original inhabitants. “But I will not go up among you, for you are a stiff-necked people” (Ex 33:3b, d). Here, this looks like the cession of God’s direct leadership, although in Exodus 23:23, exactly the same scene is described as a desirable state. Here, being stripped of existing security is also represented by the fact that the Israelites took off their jewelry at this place, just as Moses had once removed his shoes there.

XI Exodus 34:1–27: New Tablets (Moses’s Sixth Conversation with the Lord)

In section XI, themes similar to those in section VII turn up. A reference to the “patriarchs”—in the sense of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—occurs, and the motif of driving out the native peoples—which the Lord now promises to carry out himself—appears (Ex 34:11). Where the Lord had refused to be amongst the people, Moses now prays for that. Yet, he uses the same argument that led to the Lord’s refusal to accompany the Israelites—“this is a stiff-necked people,” (Ex 34:9). This section increases the number of precepts rather disproportionately, but it also begins to show us what the solution to the Lord’s impending distance will be: “Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel” (34:23).

VIII Exodus 33:7–11: Moses’s Tent of Meeting

Moses erects a tent outside the camp and meets with the Lord face to face in it. The tent is a real enigma in the composition of Exodus 32–34, in part, by virtue of what it claims about this place at a time when the question of the Lord’s nearness was still far from being resolved, but also due to the kind of verb tense and mood employed here. In contrast with the customary narrative mode (*wayyiq-*

12 Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie’s World*, trans. Paulette Moller (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007).

tol), the sequential perfect *weqatal* form is used here. Thus—despite other existing translations—I would translate the whole passage to express a hypothetical, somewhat dreamlike possibility. The fact that the text clearly does not fit here means that it was inserted from someplace else—but from where? The end of chapter 34, where there is talk of Moses “horned” with a shining face, may be eligible for consideration. *Weqatal*, the sequential perfect, is the special form used there as well as here (see XII). Erhard Blum thinks that the scene about the tent of meeting was moved because the priestly description of the way Bezalel and Oholiab build the tabernacle according to priestly ideas continues at the end of chapter 35. Thus, it would have been absurd if just before that, the completed tabernacle was already in operation. The question then is whether the redactors assisted with the insertion here. I see the answer in the concentric construction. Section VIII corresponds to section IX. Both of these parts make the question of whether God can be seen face to face a central theme.

X Exodus 33:17-23: The Lord’s Back (Fifth Conversation)

Section X about the Lord’s back creates a dialectical dialogue with the section about the tent of meeting. The topic is Moses’s request to see God face to face, or as the case may be, to catch sight of his glory. Where section VIII explicitly agreed to that in Exodus 33:11, section X, which is a late chronistic emendation, unambiguously says: “You cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live” (33:20).

IX Exodus 33:12-16: If Your Face Will Not Go with Us (Fourth Conversation)

This brings us to the central part of the concentric construction. Moses invokes the Lord’s earlier initiatives, maintaining that “delivering Israel from Egypt was your idea. Likewise, you say that I have found favor in your sight. So tell me which way you will go and if you will go with us” (Ex 33:12, 13). The core of the entire long discourse is Moses’s plea for the direct, unmediated fellowship with God without which nothing has worth (Ex 33:15). It sounds rather tautological: “Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight” (Ex 33:13). Yet, for Moses, it no longer is just a matter of saving the people from God’s wrath; nor does the issue hinge only on whether the Israelites successfully reach the Promised Land. For Moses, it depends on whether the Lord will go with them.

XII Exodus 34:27-35: Moses’s Shining and Veiled Face

The final section picks up speed once again. In eight verses, it attends to the forty days on Mount Sinai, where Moses has the task of writing the words

in accordance with which the Lord makes a covenant with him and Israel (Ex 34:27).¹³ Here, the motif of the writing corresponds to section I. Besides the phrasing of this verse is a justification for the rabbinic theory of the dual Torah. A new motif appears in the narrative: Moses's face has begun to shine because he has been talking with the Lord (34:29b). He summons Aaron, the princes of the nation, and all of the people, and conveys to them everything that God has showed him. When he gives them the commandments, his face shines. When he finishes, he covers his face with a veil (33). He removes the veil the moment he speaks to the Lord (34). Moses's face thus becomes the medium of communication between the Lord and the people. All other aspects of Moses are to be covered.

What is that veil supposed to signify? According to the Apostle Paul, Moses thereby wants to mask the moment when the glory disappears (2 Cor 3:13). However, that is a rather "malicious" interpretation that does not correspond to the Exodus narrative. When Moses speaks with God and after that, with the people, he does not have a veil. When he finishes his mediating role, he puts on his veil. I take this tableau to mean that Moses covers—veils—all of his various aspects except the ones that make him the Lord's intermediary, as though with the shining face, he has become the embodiment of God's face. "Face" is the most frequently used term in the three chapters under consideration. Of course, Moses embodies God's face solely and only as the herald of the Lord's teachings. It is as if he has been transformed into a Torah scroll, which is also covered by a veil in the synagogue when it is not being used for reading.

MOSES'S MEDIATING ROLE

Thus, let me sum up why Moses merited being called the servant of the Lord, "whom the Lord," according to Deuteronomy 34:10, "knew face to face." At the beginning, the "distress of salvation" is the Israelites' uneasiness about what would happen to them without Moses (section I).¹⁴ The calf that is representative of God's presence is the first solution. That turns out badly, but in the continuing crisis, Moses rejects an offer to become the father of a new Israel. In section II, he valorously fights for Israel, and in section VI, he risks his own role in the whole story. This contrasts with Aaron's alibism. Moses refuses to play a role in salvation history—even if that were to end well and

13 Mention of Moses's special encounter with the Lord on Sinai first appears in Exodus 24:11.

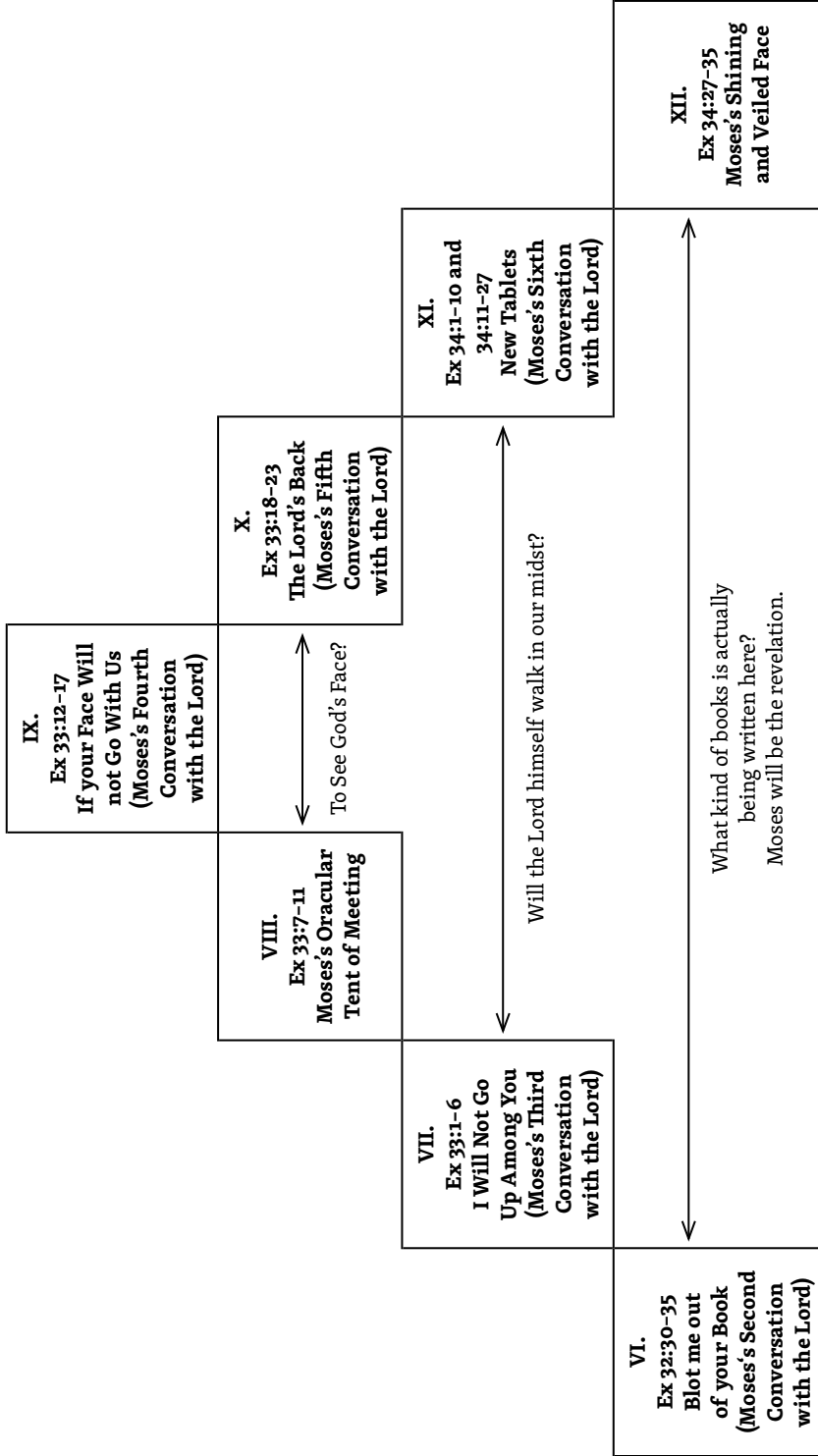
14 The term "distress of salvation" is from the heritage of the Bohemian Reformation. The author of this essay writes that "Hus and the Unity of Brethren acted—in their own words—out of the 'distress of salvation,' thus refuting the Catholic accusation of willfulness."—Trans.

the Israelites were to enter the Promised Land under his leadership—if that journey was not accompanied by the face of God (section VII). The thrilling dialectic of Sections VIII and X opens up—and leaves open—the question of whether it is possible to see the face of God through some kind of direct revelation. In the background of this dialectic, the central unit of section IX states that apart from the face of God, all of Israel’s effort has no value. The descending steps leading from peak of the chart to section XII demonstrate that God’s face is revealed to Israel in the Mosaic Torah, and that in his theological potency, Moses is the servant of the Lord and of people. This is one of several consequential conclusions of the message of the Hebrew Bible which Jesus and the Christian Bible follow up on through a new interpretation of the Mosaic Law.

Moses: A Multilateral Mediator

Twelve Stopping Points in the Story of the Golden Calf

I. Exodus 32:1-6 The Golden Calf	II. Exodus 32:7-14 First Conversation between the Lord and Moses on Sinai	III. Exodus 32:15-18 What Do I Hear?	IV. Exodus 32:19-24 Moses versus Aaron	V. Exodus 32:25-29 The Massacre in the Camp
<p>(1) The people to Aaron: Get up, make gods for us who will go before us. To be sure, that Moses, the man who brought us out of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.</p> <p>(5) Aaron exclaimed: Tomorrow will be a festival to the Lord.</p>	<p>(10) The Lord to Moses: I will put an end to them, but of you, I will make a great nation.</p> <p>(11) Moses to the Lord: Why does your wrath burn against the people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt?</p> <p>(12) Why should the Egyptians say . . . ?</p> <p>(13) Remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel), your servants.</p>	<p>(16) And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved (in freedom) upon the tablets.</p> <p>(18) The sound of victory is not heard; the sound of defeat does not ring out. I hear the sound of decadence (or, the beginning of the grape harvest—see LXX).</p>	<p>(19) Moses broke the tablets (20) and ground up the calf.</p> <p>(21) Moses: “What did they do to you?”</p> <p>(22) Aaron: They are an evil people . . .</p> <p>(24) Out came the calf.</p>	<p>(32:25-29) The Levite massacre in the camp</p>



RESURRECTION IN EARLY JUDAISM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF EXISTING BELIEFS ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE

DÁVID CIELONTKO

The resurrection of the dead is the Christian's trust. By it we are believers.

—Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis*

Good luck with your resurrection!

—A sepulchral inscription from the Jewish catacombs at Beit She'arim¹

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study² is to depict the “history” of ideas about resurrection in early Judaism as a precondition for understanding the meaning of resurrection in Christianity.³ Resurrection lies at the beginning of the Christian faith and is also the basis of the cultural values that have arisen from it, as Petr Pokorný convincingly and repeatedly illustrates in his work.⁴ The confession that Jesus had been resurrected would not have been possible without this idea's previous impact on Judaism. Therefore, this chapter is an important part of this consideration of Christianity and its influence on the history of thought and culture.

Naturally, this study is not the first of its kind. Many have already undertaken this task in varying degrees. There has been everything from short review articles to massive two-volume works.⁵ Nevertheless, I will embark on

1 The inscription reads: εὐτυχῶς τῆ ὑμῶν ἀναστάσει (BS 194). See Moshe Schwabe and Baruch Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim* (Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1974), 2:181–182. Some researchers believe that the intent of this inscription was sarcastic.

2 This study is a result of research supported by Charles University through program PRIMUS/20/HUM/010 and the Charles University Research Centre program no. 204052.

3 In this essay, I use the terms “early Judaism” and “early Jewish literature” for the corpus of Jewish texts and religious concepts from the Hellenistic and Roman periods (ca. the third century BCE to the second century CE). The canonical status of the individual texts in the various religious traditions does not play a role in this study. I view all of the texts mentioned here as evidence of Judaism's different forms during a single historical epoch.

4 See Petr Pokorný's chapter on resurrection in this volume.

5 For example, John J. Collins, “The Afterlife in Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 198–216; Casey D. Elledge, *Resurrection of the Dead in Early Judaism, 200 BCE–CE 200* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2017); Neil Gillman, *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1997); Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck, eds., *Death, Life-After-Death, Resurrection and the World-To-Come in the Judaisms of Antiquity*, Judaism in Late Antiquity, Part Four (Leiden: Brill, 1999); George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and*

the same task here. I want to offer an overview of particular texts that refer to resurrection and against that backdrop, to explicate the development of, and changes in, belief in resurrection in the context of ideas about life after death in early Judaism. Simultaneously, I will attempt to trace important shifts in scholarship that have occurred in recent decades as a consequence of discoveries and investigations of new manuscripts. I believe that this study may be of service to other deliberations on the meaning of resurrection in Judaism and Christianity.

BELIEF IN LIFE AFTER DEATH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND ANCIENT ISRAEL

The Hebrew Bible is a collection of heterogeneous texts that came into being over several centuries. Yet, very often and quite legitimately, it is instrumental in reconstructing ancient Israel's religious ideas and practices. However, such an undertaking runs into an obvious problem with regard to the historical setting of the Hebrew Bible's individual layers. Insofar as this study concerns the motif of resurrection and belief in life after death from a historical—and thus, a diachronic—perspective, exploring this topic throughout the whole Hebrew Bible is methodologically problematic. It is well known that the Hebrew Bible grapples with the question of death on a very small scale and deals with what will be after that even less.

The book of Daniel, in which an indisputable reference to resurrection is found in 12:1–3, constitutes a clear exception.⁶ Some scholars similarly consider prophetic texts in Isaiah 24–27, Ezekiel 37, and Hosea 6:1–3 that use the image of resurrection as a metaphor for a renewal of the people of Israel to be relevant to this discussion.⁷ In general, however, the evidence of this theme in the Hebrew Bible is unsatisfactory. More often than not, the voice that echoes

Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity, Harvard Theological Studies 56, expanded ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006); Emile Puech, *La croyance des esséniens en la vie future: immortalité, résurrection, vie éternelle? Histoire d'une croyance dans le judaïsme ancien*, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1993); Günter Stemberger, *Der Leib der Auferstehung. Studien zur Anthropologie und Eschatologie des palästinischen Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, *Anelecta Biblica* 56 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972).

6 The Book of Daniel, which final form dates to approximately 167–164 BC, will be discussed together with other texts from the same period below.

7 The debate about whether to read these texts as metaphors for Israel's renewal mainly involves "Isaiah's apocalypse" in chapters 24–27. This reading is widely accepted in the rest of the cases. Regarding the passage in Isaiah, see the very thorough analysis in Brian Doyle, *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking: A Study of the Use, Function and Significance of Metaphors in Isaiah 24–27*, *Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* 151 (Leuven: Leuven Univ. Press, 2000). From among recent commentaries, see J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary*, *Hermeneia* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015), 332–33.

in the materials of the biblical text suggests that death is the final destiny of all people, and there is nothing further. This prevalent belief is very closely related to the fact that traditional promises of blessings and curses, which depend on whether the people of Israel listen to and obey the Lord's commandments, are oriented toward the future of people in the coming generations. This perspective is primarily expressed in articulations of Deuteronomistic theology such as Deuteronomy 27:11–28:44, but not only there, as Leviticus 26:1–39 demonstrates. However, these are not applied to the individual, but to the whole community of Israel.⁸ Indeed, as a result of post-Deuteronomistic and post-Priestly redaction, the Torah generally is theologically oriented toward the whole of Israel.⁹ The prophets similarly mediate the Lord's message to his people or to the king who represents the people, and if need be, they pass judgment on other nations. However, this view of the finality of death also appears in texts that express the perspective of an individual, as is the case in Psalms 6, 30, 39, 49, and 146, or Job 10:20–22 and 14:1–10.

A classic image of death is leaving for or descending to a place of shadows called Sheol (שְׁאוֹל in Jb 26:6; Prov 15:11; 27:20); often, in parallelism or when synonyms are being used, Sheol is also called *abaddon* (אַבְדּוֹן), *shachath* (שַׁחַת), or *bôr* (בוֹר). There is no return from this place, and in it, the dead lose all relationship to the world, God, and consciousness (Jb 7:9; 10:21; Ps 88:12; Eccl 9:5–10). The Hebrew Bible describes Sheol as the site of the absolute end of everything that makes a human being a human being. Yet, this does not have to be a pessimistic or negative idea. The Hebrew Bible is cognizant of a different picture of death that stands in partial tension to Sheol's darkness. If a long and blessed life precedes it, death is seen as a natural part of life (see Jb 21:13 and the death of Abraham in Gn 28:5). Deceased persons take their place in the story and memory of their people. Thus, in death, Isaac and Jacob were "gathered to [their] people, old and full of days" (Gn 35:29; 49:33) and David "slept with his ancestors" (1 Kgs 2:10).¹⁰

However, the relationship of the Hebrew Bible's texts to the ancient Israelites' beliefs is a separate and weighty question. In their article on death and the afterlife, Richard Friedman and Shawna Overton point out that the Hebrew Bible's mysterious silence with regard to such basic religious questions is problematic.¹¹ Death was a nearly inseparable part of the everyday

8 See Dennis T. Olson, "Deuteronomy," in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 6:657–58; Martin Rose, "Deuteronomium," in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, ed. Thomas Römer, Jean-Daniel Macchi, and Christophe Nihan (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2013), 281–83.

9 See Christophe Nihan, "Die Entstehung des Pentateuch: Die aktuelle Debatte," in *Einleitung*, ed. Römer et al., 138–64.

10 Gillman, *The Death of Death*, 69–72.

11 Richard Friedman and Shawna Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan Avery-Peck (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 4:35–59.

life of ancient people at a time when most people did not live more than forty years, the mortality rate of children was staggering, and the ability to cope with common illnesses was minuscule. It hardly seems conceivable that an ancient society could devote so little attention to the question of death. Rich evidence of interest in this issue in the neighboring civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt only deepens the enigma of this suspicious silence. Thus, it is fitting to ask if the image that the Hebrew Bible offers corresponds to the Israelites' lived experience.

In this context, Friedman and Overton refer to archeological evidence—and especially to discoveries of graves in Judah and Israel from the Iron Age.¹² Many of these tombs provide evidence of the fact that the Israelites buried their dead with various objects of daily necessity: food, amulets, jewelry, figurines, lamps, and the like. These are objects that could supply both nourishment and magical protection to the buried persons.¹³ The burial itself occurred in two phases: in the first, the body of the deceased was placed in the grave, which in Judah, typically was a rock-cut mastaba (bench) tomb, and in the second stage, the bones were transferred to a repository in the form of a pit or a recess, where they were added to a mound of ancestral bones.¹⁴ However, the extent to which this practice of caring for the dead can be interpreted as a cult of the dead is a question.¹⁵ In all probability, there was not an ancestral cult—in the sense of a deification of the dead—in ancient Israel. Nevertheless, the survivors continued to look after their dead; they remembered them and most likely, even tried to communicate with them in some cases.¹⁶ Thus, archeological records indicate that the Israelites' ideas about the afterlife probably were richer during the pre-exilic period than the Hebrew Bible suggests.

Friedman and Overton go on to point out some allusions in texts from the Hebrew Bible that refer to strange places, persons, and objects that are

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- 12 Friedman and Overton, "Death and Afterlife," 36–40. See an important study by Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practice*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Series 153 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992). For discussion and polemics, see Ron Tappy, "Did the Dead Ever Die in Biblical Judah?," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 298 (1995): 59–68; and Jens Kamlah, "Grab und Begräbnis in Israel/Juda: Materielle Befunde, Jenseitsvorstellungen und die Frage des Totenkultes," in *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in Seiner Umwelt*, ed. Angelika Berlejung and Bernd Janowski, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament Series 64* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 257–97.
- 13 See Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 63–108, 140–41. Some of the buried objects (especially the lamps) could have been left in the tomb because they were impure since the buriers had carried them along with the corpse of the deceased. Then, their presence in the tomb would not have been related to care for the departed.
- 14 Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 48–49.
- 15 Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "The Cult of the Dead in Judah: Interpreting the Material Remains," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 3, no. 2 (1992): 222–24.
- 16 See Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 429–73.

etymologically connected with the sphere of life after death in related Semitic languages. These primarily include the previously mentioned Sheol; mysterious beings רִפְּאִים (*rephaim*, shades), תְּרַפִּים (*teraphim*, house gods), אִטִּים (*ittiim*, mighty ones); and the profession engaged in necromancy אוֹב וַיְדַעֲנִי (*’ób wejidd’oni*).¹⁷ This "silence" should therefore be interpreted as a result of the fact that behind most of the literature of the Hebrew Bible were priestly circles that promoted a monotheistic Yahwistic cult and official institutions that were polemical towards popular and family piety.¹⁸ As was already noted, prior to the Hellenistic period, an important feature of the Israelite conception of faith is an emphasis on the collective. While the Egyptian belief in life after death places stress on the individual and personal fate, biblical promises are oriented toward the community of the people and the nation.¹⁹ In this context, it is possible to interpret care for ancestors after death as a counterbalance to the shortness and fragility of an individual life, which functions by accentuating the long duration of the ancestral line. Although my task is not to review the religious conceptions of ancient Israel in detail, I would consider it to be unsatisfactory if this study dealing with the development of religious ideas about the afterlife and resurrection in Judaism made due with the statement that the Hebrew Bible is silent concerning these themes and that consequently, interest in these notions does not appear until a later time.²⁰

THE QUESTION OF THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA OF RESURRECTION

We have seen that in spite of the Hebrew Bible's silence, it is possible to assume that some ideas about the afterlife existed in ancient Israel. However, where Jewish idea of resurrection came from is a separate question, which has occupied researchers' minds for over a hundred years. The standard answer oscillates between those who argue for "internal" development within the scope

17 For discussion of such occurrences, see Friedman and Overton, "Death and Afterlife," 41–45; Brian B. Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded 'Death after Death' in Ancient Israelite Society," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan Avery-Peck (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 4:87–100.

18 See the Priestly polemic against invoking the dead and interrogating them (Dt 18:11; Lv 19:31; 20:6, 27; Isa 8:19; 65:4; 1 Sam 28) or sacrificing to the dead (Dt 26:14). Also see Friedman and Overton, "Death and Afterlife," 48–51.

19 Jan Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil. Politische Theologie in Altägypten, Israel und Europa* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2000), 149–52.

20 As for example: Hans C. C. Cavallin, *Life after Death: Paul's Argument for the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Cor 15*, part 1, *An Enquiry into the Jewish Background*, Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series 7.1 (Lund, SE: Gleerup, 1974) and Nicholas T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God Series 3 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003).

of Israelite theology and those who give preference to “external” influence from other religious traditions. A representative voice of the first group is Jon Levenson, who, in his influential book, asserts that even if the Hebrew Bible does not contain the kind of teachings about life after death that later emerge in “post-biblical Jewish literature” (his term), it does include all of the components needed for its formulation.²¹ The crucial difference lies in the aforementioned emphasis on the collective—that is, the community, family, and nation—in which the “salvation” of the individual takes place is realized. In other words, the Hebrew Bible’s conception of restoration is a prototype of the later idea of resurrection. For example, even the Hebrew Bible’s *locus classicus* of resurrection, Daniel 12:1–3, is strongly influenced by Isaiah 65–66 with regard to the language and motifs that are used.²²

In the other group, there are scholars who believe that there is a historically significant break and change in the view of the afterlife in Judaism, and that this break is due to a conceptual import from another religious milieu. The belief that the idea of the resurrection derives from Persian Zoroastrianism is the most influential in historical research.²³ On behalf of this thesis, it is said that the idea of resurrection is inseparably connected with the last judgment in a similar way in the case of both Zoroastrianism and Judaism. Such influence is also quite conceivable in view of the fact that exiled Jews sojourned in Persia. The “Persian thesis” has repeatedly been disputed, primarily due to problematic dating of Zoroastrian source texts. However, in recent years, experts in Persian literature have documented necessary evidence of the antiquity of this idea and have “resurrected” the plausibility of this thesis.²⁴ Therefore, it is quite possible that Persian eschatology did, in fact, provide a conceptual catalyst.²⁵ However, as we will see in explications of particular texts, it is difficult to speak of any influence that is more tangible than a rudimentary inspiration, except in texts that also demonstrate the direct impact of Persian thought in other cases.

Dag Endsjø offers an inducement to reappraise the influence of Greek culture and religion in a provocative book in which he demonstrates a sur-

21 Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2006); also see Gerhard F. Hasel, “Resurrection in the Theology of Old Testament Apocalyptic,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (1980): 267–84.

22 John J. Collins, *Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 391–94; Elledge, *Resurrection*, 66–71.

23 See the classic work by Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 21 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1926).

24 See Yuhana Sohrab-Dinsha Vevaina, “Resurrecting the Resurrection: Eschatology and Exegesis in Late Antique Zoroastrianism,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19 (2009): 217–20.

25 A thorough review of Persian eschatology is offered by Anders Hultgård, “Persian Apocalypticism,” in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. John J. Collins (New York: Continuum, 1999), 1:39–83.

prising similarity between Greek conceptions of the afterlife and the idea of bodily resurrection. He objects to the prevailing myth that the Greeks focused solely on the soul and that the body did not interest them—and maintains that “the idea that the soul could be immortal independently of the body appears to have been completely unknown to most ancient Greeks.”²⁶ Conversely, he contends that for the ancient Greeks, life is possible only in a body, and well-known stories about Greek heroes and gods are proof of that. In those stories, a recurring motif occurs where the hero (such as Asclepius, Hercules, Memnon, Menelaus, Dionysus, or Hector), is revived—“resurrected”—after death—and subsequently, obtains bodily immortality and dwells among the gods. As Endsjø emphasizes, their immortality is primarily demonstrated through the acquisition of an imperishable body.²⁷

According to Endsjø, the commonly prevailing myth about the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul (in contrast to the body) is a consequence of the success of Platonism in Christian culture, but not in the ancient Greek civilization.²⁸ On the contrary, the proclamation of Jesus’s resurrection had this kind of success in their area precisely because the ancient Greeks were so well-acquainted with mythological stories about resurrected heroes. It is important to mention that Endsjø does not try to argue in favor of the influence of the Greek notion of resurrection on the concept of resurrection in Judaism. Instead, he looks at them in parallel, but in the process, he asserts that in contrast with the Greek interpretation, early Jewish texts mainly speak of the resurrection of the soul/spirit. Thus, although Greek conceptions of life after death deserve a thorough revision in the general consciousness, the image of an eschatological resurrection that will be part of a final judgment does not find the kind of support here that it has in Persian ideas. I find a crucial difference in the direct connection of death to the question of justice. Thus, the original stimulus for emerging ideas about the afterlife might have stemmed from Zoroastrianism during the Persian period. Nevertheless, the open world of Hellenism, in which a blending of cultures and ideas occurred is the historical context from which the earliest evidence of the Jews’ belief in resurrection comes. Naturally, even if it is assumed

26 Dag Øistein Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 105. Similarly, Jan Bremmer considers the notion of an independent immortal soul to be a “relative latecomer” in the antiquity. See Jan Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1. Ancient authors also considered the idea of an immortal soul to be foreign to Greek conceptions and believed that it involved a view imported from Egypt, Babylonia, or India. See Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.123; Pausanias, *Descript. Graec.* 4.32.4; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7.4.

27 Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 57.

28 Both Plutarch (*Mor.* 328D–E) and Origen (*C. Cel.* 6.2) mention that Plato was not read or known very much in their times.