

COMMEMORATING IN EUROPE: ALONG LINES OF SEPARATION

Countries in Central Europe are celebrating a series of anniversaries which all are connected to events of the 20th century. The history of the last century gave Mark Mazower reason to speak about a *Dark Continent*, as is the title of his account of Europe between the First World War and the Fall of the Berlin Wall. It is a period of conflicts and war, ideologies with a high violent potential like nationalism, fascism and communism, resulting in the dictatorial rule of one party over a significant part of Europe.

Surveys about issues of national identity from Central European area always indicate that history plays a central role in the way people think about their community and identity. According to them history is the most important factor in the formation and structure of national identity in countries like Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and elsewhere. Or, to put it in another way, history is very much alive and kicking in the streets of Prague, Bratislava, Budapest and Bucharest – but we could also add Belgrade, Skopje or Zagreb. That means that anniversaries are not just moments to mark certain historical events, but they are commemorated for their role in the self-perceptions of the nations in Central and Southeastern Europe.

In the Czech context 2008 offers anniversaries of 1918, 1948 and 1968, in 2009 it will be about 1939, about Jan Palach and about the Velvet Revolution. Already in 2007, when it was 40 years ago that the manifesto Charta 77 had been published, we could see an interesting trend in commemorating events from recent history. The anniversary of the human rights movement resulted in an interesting international conference, several new studies by a new generation of historians, and a much more complex view on the character of Charta, its representatives, structures and significance.

Whilst in this case public memory was considerably enriched, in another case stereotypes are only repeated and confirmed. In the framework of the commemoration of the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi-Germany in 1939 the National Museum organizes an exhibition in the

National Museum about the Czechoslovak Republic between the world wars. One would expect it to present some findings of research of the last two decades, but unfortunately this is not the case. The concept of the exhibition is a shining example of a liberal and prosperous Czechoslovakia amidst a dark sea of Central Europe full of crises and nationalism. This view of interwar Czechoslovakia has become incorporated in Czech national identity, with the result is that in the National Museum we cannot find a comprehensive explanation about the issue of minorities in the period. They – especially the German minority – are not a part of the collective discourse on this key period for modern Czech identity, though they occupied more than one fifth of the territory of today's Czech Republic.

Public memory about the period of the communist dictatorship in Czechoslovakia is still in the process of formation, as anniversaries of that period show. So far there no broad consensus has come of this process of crystallization, also because for a significant time the issue was surrounded by taboos like the archives of the former Secret Police. Such a consensus has been established concerning the period between 1918 and 1939 and at least an exhibition of an institute like the National Museum does not have the liberty to cast doubt on this. Another taboo is created.

The main anniversary of 2009 will be the Fall of the Berlin Wall. In the public memory in Central European countries, before a part of the Soviet empire, 1989 marks the end of dictatorship and the start of a period of freedom. Some slogans of the time itself, like "Return to Europe!" underlined the aspects of democracy and Western civilization, which became a fundamental part of the political orientation of Central Europe after the peoples' revolutions. In that sense the accession of 12 countries to the European Union of 2004 and 2007 was considered a confirmation of the events of 1989.

It seems that public memory in Western Europe has a different image of the events of 1989. Before that year the prevalent perspective from Paris, Brussels or The Hague was that everything at the other side of Western Germany was a grey, uninteresting, depressing and poor place, from where all roads went to Siberia. Some time after the changes of 1989 the eastern part of Europe became associated with an uncertain, unpredictable, chaotic and corrupt territory. The

new accession countries would endanger the stability and prosperity of the European Union, as they had no experience with democracy and the rule of law, compared to the strong democratic traditions of Western Europe.

The refusal of the European Constitution in the two referenda in France and the Netherlands has to be understood in this context. Essentially it was a vote against a Europe which had lost its simplicity and lucidity of the division of the Cold War. The developments in the Netherlands, which saw a sudden rise of populist movements against the multicultural society, showed the extent of this identity crisis. The disappearance of an easily understandable Western Europe dominated by Germany, France and Great Britain resulted in a profound doubt in the European identity of the country. The events of 1989 seen from Western Europe are rather associated with a loss of orientation and with uncertainty than with the liberation from a dictatorial system and the reunification of Europe. The anniversary of 1989 in Western European countries will be commemorated only in a small setting with invited guests, or at best during a discussion meeting of a politically engaged think tank.

European identity is still very immature and considerably incohesive. Not even events like those of 1989 are a part of the collective historical memory throughout Europe, but on the contrary show a division about the identity and orientation of the continent. Whether this is a problem, remains to be seen, but it is sad when Western Europe is not able to join the joy of the former Eastern European countries about the return of freedom.

This issue of *Communio Viatorum* brings longer and shorter studies from different fields. Thomas Fudge writes about Luther's understanding of faith. Pavel Hošek compares the concepts of faith of two systematic theologians - Wolfhart Pannenberg and Wilfred Cantwell Smith - in their efforts for a dialog with other religions. Filip Čapek and Petr Sláma introduce the Old Testament School of Prague, connected to names like Slavomil Daněk and Jan Heller. György Benyik gives an historical overview of the Hungarian tradition of biblical studies. Márta Czerháti discusses the question whether in biblical studies scholars can use a terminology from another context to under-

stand some text or whether they have to use only a terminology from the context of the text itself. Miroslav Varšo and Uwe Bauer bring exegetical studies concerning the practice of interest and usury in the world of the Old Testament and about the positive way some biblical texts speak about enemies.

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SAINTS, SINNERS AND STUPID ASSES: THE PLACE OF FAITH IN LUTHER'S DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

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Martin Luther called the martyred heretic Jan Hus a 'saint.' He referred to Pope Leo X as a 'stinking sinner,' and labelled some of his theological opponents 'stupid asses.'¹ Strangely enough, this unlikely combination of 'saints,' 'sinners,' and 'stupid asses' are related equally within Luther's dominant theological principle. Like so many other religious figures, Martin Luther's theology was notably shaped by a decisive event subsequently called the 'tower experience' (*Turmerlebnis*). Heiko Oberman long ago drew attention to the fact that the history of Christianity is filled with a '*Turmerlebnis*' tradition.² Luther's 'tower experience,' with its 'hated' notion of the 'righteousness of God' (*iustitia Dei*), became Luther's quintessential theological turning point.³ For more than a decade, in the Augustinian cloister at Erfurt, Luther sought salvation and the assurance of divine favor by scrupulously following the penitential cycle as developed in medieval Christendom. This chapter of ecclesiastical history is well known. Luther remained uncertain, deeply troubled and confused by

¹ Luther's references to Jan Hus are numerous and scattered throughout his writings. See Thomas A. Fudge, "'The Shouting Hus": Heresy Appropriated as Propaganda in the Sixteenth Century' *Communio Viatorum* 38 (No. 3, 1996), pp. 197-231. On calling his opponents 'stupid asses' see note 68 below. Unless otherwise noted, references to Luther's writings are from the Weimar Ausgabe edition. *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar 1883-. Hereafter WA. On the pope as a 'stinking sinner' see 'To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,' 1520, WA 6, p. 436.

² Heiko Oberman, "'Iustitia Christi" and "Iustitia Dei": Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification,' in: *Harvard Theological Review* 59 (No. 1, 1966), p. 9 wherein he draws attention to S. Paul, Augustine, Thomas Bradwardine, Richard FitzRalph, Jean Gerson, Andreas Karlstadt, Gasparo Contarini and John Calvin.

³ On the history of this concept see Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2 volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

the human inability to apprehend the righteousness of God. In the struggle to master his hatred of God and to find righteousness in his sinfulness, Luther happened upon a solution presented in Romans 1:16–17. For him it was the beginning of life.⁴ This theological breakthrough became the premise, foundation, and center of Luther’s activity and played a crucial role in the dynamics of religious reformation in the sixteenth century. The perception of Luther as a man stumbling up a winding staircase in a bell tower in the pitch dark, losing his balance and reaching for the bannister to steady himself, only to be startled by the tolling of the bell, is an altogether accurate one.⁵

Luther’s *Anfechtungen* gave way to a new and dynamic conception of faith. To say faith alone (*sola fide*) is to say ‘faith in Christ’ (*fides Christi*).⁶ Indeed, Luther’s ‘...lectures and writing are nothing but a sustained teaching about faith...’⁷ While this assertion may tend toward hyperbole it contains a kernel of truth. For Martin Luther, then, this new realization was freedom in Christ from the power of sin and bondage to that immutable law of God – the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*). This ‘truth’ experienced constituted being declared righteous and wholly justified in the sight of God by faith alone (*sola fide*), ‘not having a righteousness of my own based on the law, but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness from God that depends on faith.’⁸

The transition from the *Anfechtungen* of hating the God who demanded righteousness to the *fides Christi* motif was also a movement away from the philosophical and theological categories associated

⁴ ‘Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther’s Latin Writings,’ 1545, WA 54, pp. 185–6.

⁵ An appropriate image drawn from Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, Nashville and New York 1950, p. 83.

⁶ Ian D. Kingston Siggins, *Martin Luther’s Doctrine of Christ*, New Haven and London 1970, pp. 104–5. There is no suitable translation for the word *Anfechtung*. Roughly it involves depression, doubt, despair, angst, desperation, panic, and turmoil. It might either be of divine or demonic origin. In the case of the former its purpose would be to test, in the case of the latter to destroy.

⁷ Daniel Olivier, *Luther’s Faith: The Cause of the Gospel in the Church*, trans. John Tonkin, St. Louis 1978, p. 33.

⁸ μή ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (Philippians 3:9).

with the *via antiqua* as well as the *via moderna* of later medieval thought. It commenced with a repudiation of the scholastic theories of faith, justification and the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*). It is important to recall that Luther received his philosophical training at the University of Erfurt which at the end of the Middle Ages was, in some ways, a center of nominalism and representative of the *via moderna*. This did not make Luther an Ockhamist. Indeed William of Ockham had stood upon the shoulders of John Duns Scotus to advance beyond Scotus. In like fashion Luther reached beyond Ockham and Gabriel Biel in repudiating philosophy entirely as an attempt to fashion a reliable liaison between the mind of humankind and the inner being of the divine.⁹

At the commencement of his early lectures on Psalms (*Dictata super psalterium*) in August 1513, Luther held the concept of righteousness (*iustitia*) in the Ciceronian sense (also embedded in canon law) which, stated briefly, includes the idea that each person ought to be given what they are entitled to. However, by the conclusion of his lectures in the fall of 1515 he had completely redrawn his understanding of righteousness (*iustitia*). This transition was one from the Ciceronian legal rationalization of justice to the notion of the 'righteousness of faith' (*iustitia fidei*) which is explicated in terms of the righteousness by which the sinner is justified by God. This is effected not according to acts of human goodness, not because of human righteousness, but is rather infused into the Christian through faith.¹⁰ In his first lectures on Galatians in 1519 Luther articulated his new definition of *iustitia* as 'faith in Jesus Christ' (*fides Ihesu Christi*) instead of the Ciceronian righteousness conceived as a 'virtue giving to each what that one deserves' (*virtus reddens unicuique, quod suum*

⁹ Heiko A. Oberman, 'Via Antiqua and Via Moderna: Late Medieval Prolegomena to Early Reformation Thought,' in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (January-March, 1987), p. 30. See also Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, Grand Rapids 1967, and John L. Farthing, *Thomas Aquinas and Gabriel Biel: Interpretations of St. Thomas Aquinas in German Nominalism on the Eve of the Reformation*, Durham and London 1988.

¹⁰ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1516/17, in WA 57, p. 69. I owe the contextualization to Alistair E. McGrath, 'Mira et nova diffinitio iustitiae: Luther and Scholastic Doctrines of Justification,' in: *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 74 (1983), pp. 42-3.

est).¹¹ For much of later medieval history there existed a common theological understanding which accepted the axiom, ‘God does not withhold grace to one who is doing what is in one’s self’ (*facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*). Thomist theology, with which Luther was familiar, declared that God justifies the unrighteous while respecting human personhood and human free choice. However, God likewise moves human free choice to accept the gift of grace. Therefore the human soul is moved by God and faith is therefore informed by charity. Thomas also argues that charity informs all virtues and directing the acts of charity to the end results.¹² Luther did not necessarily disavow these ideas but he separated them from his understanding of faith.

In terms of salvation, Luther rejected this idea and in so doing created a theological understanding in opposition to scholasticism; a concept which marked out a clear and decisive point of departure from the traditional Thomist assumption. The scholastic notion of ‘doing what is in one’s self’ (*facere quod in se est*), as held both by the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna*, was denied in light of the reality of faith and the doctrine of justification. Luther could no longer hold that the *facere quod in se est* motif, which hinged upon the idea of *synteresis*, could remain alongside the *fides Christi* motif.¹³ He rejected the nominalist teaching that by performing some merit (*meritum de congruo*) humankind could thereby receive God’s grace. Likewise he repudiated the teaching of the disciples of Duns Scotus that while the infusion of grace effected ‘definite change’ (*mutatio realis*) the forgiveness of sins signaled only an ideal transformation. If, as Luther perceived it, faith in Christ (*fides Christi*) eliminated the *facere quod in se est* idea then the nominalist teaching that the merits of Christ are never the ‘sole and complete cause of merit’ (*sola et*

¹¹ WA 2, p. 503. This is borne out as well in his *Dictata super psalterium*, 1527–30, WA 57, p. 69.

¹² *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 11.3 (corpus), 1a 2ae 113.4 (corpus), 2a 2ae 23.8 and 2a 2ae 24.2 et al. for a discussion of what may be rightly understood as the strength of scholastic theology. My point is not to analyse scholastic understandings of justification prior to the sixteenth century.

¹³ *Synteresis* is an Aristotelian concept which articulates an innate ability to understand morality apart from participatory formal moral training. The medieval scholastics utilized this term as a synonym for the *scintilla conscientiae* of patristic writers.

totalis causa meritoria) had also to be rejected. Inherent in Luther's new definition of righteousness (*iustitia*) was the expressed denial of the scholastic soteriological principle that 'faith is formed by love' or through good works (*fides caritate formata*). In its place *fides Christi* became the necessary component for the reception of the Word, faith, Christ, and justified existence. Critical also is that Luther's conception of faith was not a Platonized concept. Instead it was a movement toward his 'magisterial doctrine of the Word.'¹⁴ What seems obvious is that Luther's 'tower experience,'¹⁵ briefly delineated in the *Preface to the Latin Writings* in 1545, had led to a rejection of the Ciceronian understanding of righteousness (*iustitia*) and the acceptance of *iustitia* as *fides Christi*.¹⁶

It is not the purpose of this study to explore how Luther came to this definition. There are a number of works readily accessible which deal with that development.¹⁷ However, is it important to consider the context of theological statements and the religious needs and milieu of the time. Clearly, Luther's psychology was somewhat unusual and the religious needs of the sixteenth century differed vastly from those of the thirteenth century. But this is an investigation for another venue. Neither am I concerned with faith as it came to be articulated by Lutheran orthodoxy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in

¹⁴ E. Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies*, New York 1953, p. 144.

¹⁵ The reliability of the text *Preface to the Latin Writings* written nearly thirty years after the events has been questioned. Ernst Stracke has argued the text is reliable historically in his work *Luthers grosses Selbstzeugnis 1545 über seine Entwicklung zum Reformator*, Leipzig 1926. See especially pp. 112-28. Alister McGrath contends the historical reliability cannot be extended to the theological aspects of the text. See McGrath, 'Mira et nova diffinitio iustitiae,' p. 38. This assumption is, however, not without its own problems.

¹⁶ McGrath, 'Mira et nova diffinitio iustitiae,' p. 43.

¹⁷ See McGrath, 'Mira et nova diffinitio iustitiae; McGrath, 'The Anti-Pelagian Structure of "Nominalist" Doctrines of Justification,' in: *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 57 (April, 1981), pp. 107-119; Heiko A. Oberman, "'Iustitia Christi" and "Iustitia Dei": Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification,' in: *Harvard Theological Review* 59 (January, 1966), pp. 1-26; Oberman, 'Via Antiqua and Via Moderna: Late Medieval Prolegomena to Early Reformation Thought,' pp. 23-50; Steven Ozment, 'Luther and the Late Middle Ages: The Formation of Reformation Thought,' in: *Transition and Revolution: Problems and Issues of European Renaissance and Reformation History*, ed., Robert M. Kingdon, Minneapolis 1974, pp. 109-29.

the ‘synergistic heresy’¹⁸ of *sola fide* as ‘knowledge’ (*notitia*), ‘assent’ (*assensus*), or ‘trust’ (*fiducia*). While the Tridentine Fathers defined *fides* as submissive acceptance of revealed truth,¹⁹ it is apparent such understanding had little in common with the Pauline idea of ‘faith’ (πίστις) or Luther’s *fides Christi*.²⁰ What follows is focused on the idea of faith as Luther understood and articulated it. In brief, the question is: What has this faith in Christ (*fides Christi*) to do with Luther’s doctrine of salvation?

Faith as theological principle

Without doubt Luther’s understanding of faith came to mean something other than the philosophical conception of late medieval scholasticism, or even the theological constructs employed by the ‘fathers.’ The scholastic conceptualization of *fides* with its sub-categories of ‘historical faith’ (*fides historica*), ‘temporary faith’ (*fides temporaria*), ‘saving faith’ (*fides salvifica*), ‘actual faith’ (*fides actualis*), ‘direct faith’ (*fides directa*), ‘blind’ or ‘implicit faith’ (*fides implicita*), ‘informed faith’ (*fides formata*), ‘uninformed faith’ (*fides informis*), among other types, become essentially non-existent in Luther’s *fides Christi* motif. The significant juxtaposition with respect to faith during Luther’s early theological development comes to the fore in the dialectical *fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed) over against *fides qua creditur* (the faith by which [something] is believed). Luther’s understanding of faith focused on the latter. What was it that Luther conceived of when he spoke of faith? Or how could he imagine that *sola fide* created dynamic transformation? It is at this point where Luther makes a serious and important contribution to the doctrine of salvation in the western church. In his own words, ‘... wherever there is faith, everlasting life has begun.’²¹

¹⁸ David W. Lotz, ‘The Sacrament of Salvation: Luther on Baptism and Justification,’ in: *Trinity Seminary Review* 6 (Spring, 1984), p. 5.

¹⁹ See the decrees and canons on the article of justification passed at the Council of Trent in Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 volumes, London and New York 1990, vol. 2, pp. 671–81.

²⁰ Jared Wicks, ‘*Fides sacramenti* – *Fides specialis*: Luther’s Development in 1518,’ in: *Gregorianum* 65 (Fasc. 1, 1984), p. 53.

²¹ ‘Commentary on Psalm 118,’ 1529–20, WA 31, p. 156.

Indeed, faith is wholly-other from ordinary conception. Faith not only lives in the Christian it likewise inspires the presence of the divine.²² Clearly Luther's articulation of faith suggests something other than the medieval paradigm of faith formed by love or good works (*fides caritate formata*). What did Luther mean by faith? Essentially Luther drew a line of demarcation between faith as knowledge and faith as absolute trust. The former is not faith at all according to Luther, not faith which is relevant for salvation. The latter, however, is a trust which reckons everything upon God, throws itself upon God and in the end is the sole condition for authentic Christian existence.²³ It is the phrase, 'faith which throws itself upon God,' which is fundamental for correctly perceiving Luther's concept of faith and his soteriology. Yet further elucidation is necessary at this point in order to make clear what Luther meant. No one, on the basis of his or her own prerogative, can throw oneself upon God.²⁴ No one comes to God except through the mediation of the Spirit who draws (*cf.* John 14:6; II Corinthians 3:17). However, Luther is ascribing to faith the means whereby one can apprehend God in the power of the divine reality by throwing oneself upon God.²⁵ Yet Luther quickly asserts that faith has no human origin but rather springs from the presence of God.²⁶ Faith only comes through the word of God or the gospel.²⁷ Faith is

²² 'Sermons on the Gospel of St. John,' WA 47, pp. 190-1. This statement is similar to the concept *Der Glaube ist eine gewisse Zuversicht* (faith is a definite assurance) expressed by Luther elsewhere. See his 'Treatise on the Last Words of David,' 1543, WA 54, p. 32.

²³ 'Lectures on Isaiah,' 1527-30, WA 31.2, pp. 9-10.

²⁴ Both influences of Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux are evident here.

²⁵ 'Faith joins the soul with the Word of God which is invisible, inexpressible, unspeakable, eternal, unthinkable, and simultaneously separates it from every thing visible.' 'Commentary on Psalm 2,' WA 5, pp. 69-70. Apart from this Word, there can be no proper knowledge of God. *cf.* Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz, Philadelphia 1966, pp. 15-19. The one who has faith can perceive through the power of the Word the knowledge and glory of God. In this Word, God is revealed. This Word reveals the invisible God and brings humanity into the presence of the Eternal.

²⁶ Luther calls faith 'God's might.' This divine 'might' is that faith within human-kind which originates not from *synteresis* or as a result of *facere quod in se est* but from God. Hence, Luther repeatedly refers to faith as the 'pure gift of God.' 'The Sacrament of Penance,' 1519, WA 2, pp. 722-23; 'Preface to Romans,' 1546, WA DB 7, pp. 9-11, et al.

²⁷ 'Preface to Romans,' WA DB 7, p. 7.

not simply a human idea or ‘dream’ that some people call faith.²⁸ The initiative is a divine prerogative. Faith is something done to humankind, rather than something done by humans, in that it effects a change in the heart and mind.²⁹ The faith which God awakens in the hearts of humankind is powerful in its opposition to sin, death, and hell. This is apparent because God created it in the divine Word, and God is present in the Word. Faith is the power of God and not a human capability. Through faith humankind shares in the power of God.³⁰ This occurs apart from works, delivers the individual from death and hell, is the product of grace and the gospel, and is solely received by faith.³¹

Through his recognition of faith as the specific work of God, Luther experienced a dynamic transformation of his own being. Through faith he discovered himself in Christ. Yet it should be noted that *fides Christi* did not constitute a self-consciousness for Luther. Rather, in dramatic fashion, it revealed a God-consciousness. This faith, which can never be separated from the Word, cannot exist apart from the Word. The Word creates and sustains faith.³² Hence, *fides Christi* cannot be reduced to cerebral intellectual assent or situated as religious experience. Instead it is a divine work within, a living confidence in God inspired by God.³³ Faith, for Luther, grounds itself upon God in the person and work of Christ and thus joins the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) and the righteousness of Christ (*iustitia Christi*). Faith takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is both the object of faith and the content of faith in the sense that he is

²⁸ ‘Preface to Romans,’ WA DB 7, p. 9.

²⁹ ‘Lectures on the Minor Prophets,’ 1525, WA 13, p. 500.

³⁰ Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, p. 48.

³¹ *The Church Postil*, ‘Gospel for the third Sunday after Epiphany’ (Matthew 8), 1521, WA 17.2, p. 74

³² David W. Lotz, *Ritschl & Luther*, Nashville and New York 1974, p. 126. ‘One might ask, “What is the Word of God, and how can it be used, inasmuch as there are so many different words of God?” I answer: The Apostle clarifies this in Romans chapter one. The Word is the good news of God about the Son of God, who was made flesh, died, and rose from the dead. He was glorified through the Spirit who sanctifies. To proclaim Christ is to feed the soul, to cause it to become righteous, to set it at liberty, and save it. This is contingent upon believing what is proclaimed. Faith alone is the saving and efficacious use of the Word of God.’ ‘The Freedom of a Christian,’ 1520, WA 7, p. 51.

³³ ‘Preface to Romans,’ WA DB 7, p. 9.

present in faith.³⁴ When faith lays hold upon Christ, then Christ dwells in the Christian, but only through faith.³⁵ This is the manner in which justification takes place, through the possession of the treasure, by faith, which is Christ.³⁶ Therefore, faith comes through the possession of Christ which is the proclaimed Word. The holy community (*communio sanctorum*) of the faithful, then, is to be a *Mundhaus* (mouth-house), that is a preaching community, and not primarily a *Federhaus* (pen-house).³⁷ The faith which comes from hearing the Word and possessing Christ 'does not require information, knowledge or security. What is needed is unconditional surrender and a joyful daring upon an unfelt, untried, unknown goodness.'³⁸

In Luther's thought faith creates and constitutes a relation to Christ.³⁹ In other words 'faith forces one outside of oneself and leads to Christ.'⁴⁰ This 'going outside of oneself' ignores the scholastic injunction of 'doing what is in oneself' (*facere quod in se est*) and comes into relation with the subject and the object of faith which is Christ. This, then, is what Luther calls the creative power of faith-

³⁴ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40, pp. 227-29. This idea that Christ is truly present in faith is a theme in Tuomo Mannermaa, *Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus: Rechtfertigung und Vergottung*, Hannover 1989, and more recently *Christ Present in Faith*, Minneapolis 2005. This expression *fides Christi* excludes the *facere quod in se est* motif. The 'doing' is thereby transferred from humankind to Christ. Søren Kierkegaard's dictum is valid here: 'The object of faith is not the teaching but the teacher' in: *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. David Swenson, Princeton 1962, p. 77. For Luther, faith and christology are linked in such a way that they become one. Since faith is one with Christ Luther's maxim for preaching is relevant: '*Nihil nisi Christus praedicantur*' (nothing except Christ is to be preached). Quoted in Fred W. Meuser, *Luther the Preacher*, Minneapolis 1983, pp. 16-25.

³⁵ 'Third Christmas Sermon,' *Sermons of Martin Luther*, 8 vols., edited by John Nicholas Lenker, Grand Rapids 1988, vol. 6, p. 180. Hereafter referred to as *Sermons*.

³⁶ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40.1, pp. 229-30.

³⁷ 'Sermon for the First Sunday in Advent,' *Sermons*, vol. 1, p. 44. '...the gospel is properly not something written, but spoken bringing forth the Scriptures in the same sense as Christ and the apostles did. This is the reason Christ wrote nothing but merely spoke. He referred to what he taught, not as Scripture but as gospel which means good news or a proclamation that should be disseminated not by the pen but instead by word of mouth.' 'A brief instruction on what to look for and expect in the Gospels, 1521,' WA 10.1.1, pp. 8-18.

³⁸ 'Sermon on the Virgin Mary,' 8 September 1522, in WA 10.3, p. 329.

³⁹ Jared Wicks, 'Justification and Faith in Luther's Theology,' in: *Theological Studies* 44 (March, 1983), p. 24. See also 'The Disputation Concerning Justification,' 1536, WA 39.1, pp. 109-110.

⁴⁰ 'Concerning Rebaptism,' 1528, WA 26, pp. 165-6.

creatrix divinitatis – which means that faith is not the work of humankind or ‘anything in humankind’ (*aliquid in homine*) but rather the work of God which has as its primary focus the standing of the individual ‘before God’ (*coram Deo*). Faith is not ‘something done for God’ (*facere Deo*) but rather a ‘making God’ (*facere Deum*). This is nothing other than a relinquishing of human control to God through the activity of faith alone.⁴¹ This *facere Deum* has some relation to the Patristic idea of deification.⁴² Accordingly, Luther argues that just as the word of God became flesh likewise flesh may become the word of God. In this process of deification (*Vergöttlichung*) God takes everything that is human in order to impart to humankind that which is divine.⁴³ While Luther never develops the idea, it is clear that the human relation to God is predicated upon faith.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought*, trans. R. A. Wilson, Philadelphia 1970, p. 257.

⁴² The idea can be found in both Latin and Greek fathers from Clement of Rome to the seventh century. For example, Origen: ‘From him [Christ] commenced a union of the divine nature with human nature, so that through communion with the divine, humanity might be enabled to rise to the state of divinity. This was not in Jesus only, but likewise in every one who believes and enters into the life taught by Jesus.’ *Contra Celsum*, 3.28, in Jacques Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, 163 volumes, Paris 1857–61, volume 8, cols. 576–7. Irenaeus taught that Christ became everything that humans were in order that humans might become everything that Christ was. ‘Jesus Christum dominum nostrum: qui propter immensam suam dilectionem factus est quod sumus nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse.’ *Adversus haereses*, 5, preface, in Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, volume 5, col. 1014. The idea persisted for centuries that the Son of God took on human poverty in order to make humans gods by grace. Since God dwells within humankind it is possible to become gods through divine transformation and imitation. ‘αΔιὰ τούτο ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνθρωπίνην πτωχεΐαν ἐνδύεται ἵνα θεοὺς ἡῖὰς ἀπεργάσῃται χάριτι καὶ τὰὐτὰ ἡελωδῶν ὁ θεοπάτωρ Δάβιδ... Ἐγὼ εἶπα: Θεοὶ ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες ζ Θεὸς ἐν ἡῖν· θεωθῶῖεν θεΐαις ἡετάρβολαις καὶ ἡιῖῃσειν.’ Sophronius (7th century monk) in his Christmas sermon. Quoted in Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, 7 volumes, New York 1961, volume 3, pp. 173–4. The idea among the fathers is summarized in Thomas A. Fudge, ‘Concepts of Salvation in the Western Church to the Sixteenth Century,’ in: *Communio Viatorum* 45 (No. 3, 2003), pp. 229–35.

⁴³ ‘Christmas sermon,’ 1514, WA 1, p. 28.

⁴⁴ On Luther’s relation to the idea, as well as a survey of recent Finnish scholarship on the topic, see Dennis Bielfeldt, ‘Deification as a Motif in Luther’s *Dictata super psalterium*,’ in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (No. 2, 1997), pp. 401–420. Franz Posset, ‘“Deification” in the German Spirituality of the Late Middle Ages and in Luther: An Ecumenical Historical Perspective,’ in: *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 84 (1993), pp. 103–26 is also useful.

What this adds up to is that the indisputable common denominator in Luther's concept of faith is *fides Christi*. Luther's doctrine of salvation constitutes a faith event. That is to say, the object of faith – the pure gift of God – is Christ. Yet Christ is also the active subject of faith. In a sense Luther borrows the patristic christological idea of *communicatio idiomatum* to elucidate the connection between the pilgrim (*viator*) and Christ within the context of *fides Christi*. Faith as the *possessio* of the *viator* is in some sense not something that may be attributed to or regarded as the property (*proprietas*) of the *viator*. Instead it is the *proprietas* of Christ given to the *viator* as gift. Hence, faith (which is Christ) is given through the 'living word' (*viva vox*). Christ remains both the object of the promise as gift and the active subject of the gift as promise. In this paradox is Luther's conception of faith as *fides Christi*. The medieval notion of faith formed by love (*fides caritate formata*) is annulled by faith which is brought about by Christ (*fides Christo formata*), which explicates Luther's doctrine of salvation in terms of the idea that 'faith is formed by Christ, for us, outside of us' (*fides Christo pro nobis formata extra nos*) and becomes the human *possessio* of the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) in a living, active, and progressive manner.⁴⁵ Only in this relation, with this possession, could Luther move beyond the antagonism of his *Anfechtungen*, his hatred of the righteous God, and his troubled conscience, to truly become 'a religious man before God' (*homo religiosus coram Deo*).⁴⁶

According to Luther, it is faith which makes an individual righteous and fulfills the law.⁴⁷ He further contended that humankind's relation to God had reached an impasse with the entrance of sin into the world. Thus, for Luther, the only route beyond this critical impasse for the *viator* is through the way of the cross by faith alone (*sola fide*). In this assumption Luther can affirm his conviction: 'the

⁴⁵ 'Bondage of the Will,' 1526, WA 18, p. 769; 'Exposition of Psalm 69' in WA 3, p. 443; 'Exposition of Psalm 100' in WA 4, p. 133; 'Exposition of Psalm 150,' WA 55.1, p. 915, and 'Adnotationes Quincuplici Fabri Stapulensis Psalterio manu adscriptae,' WA 4, p. 465. See the instructive and careful treatment in Oberman, "'Iustitia Christi'" and "'Iustitia Dei,'" *HTR* 59, pp. 23–5.

⁴⁶ 'Preface to the Latin Writings,' 1545, WA 54, pp. 185–6.

⁴⁷ 'Preface to Romans,' WA DB 7, p. 7.

theology of the Cross alone is our theology!’ (*Crux sola est nostra Theologia*).⁴⁸ Coming to Christ and believing in Christ are the same thing. There is no other way in which humankind can come to Christ except by faith.⁴⁹ By linking faith to Christ and to a radically conceived theology of the cross (*theologia crucis*) Luther’s *sola fide* cannot be interpreted in a subjectivistic manner.⁵⁰ Hence, as we have noted earlier, Luther’s breakthrough to *fides Christi* was not the creation of a self-consciousness, but the awareness of a God-consciousness.

The estrangement of humanity from divinity is thereby cancelled and overcome in the person and mission of Christ. In Christ, God made available to all humankind the gift of faith. We have noted above that this gift of God constitutes the sole means of union with God. Yet it is the heart of the believer which comes to God through faith, which is both the gift and grace of God, and not through human work or effort.⁵¹

Since Luther rules out every human consideration and contribution as relating to faith his concept of *fides Christi* is rightly perceived as *sola fide*. There is ‘no law, no work but only faith.’⁵² Hence,

⁴⁸ ‘Exposition of Psalm 144’ in WA 3, pp. 258–60. See also ‘Operationes in Psalmis,’ in WA 5, pp. 176 and 179.

⁴⁹ ‘Sermons on the Gospel of St. John,’ 1530–1, WA 33, p. 58.

⁵⁰ ‘A later Protestantism alienated from the sacraments, may have interpreted Luther’s *sola fide* in a subjectivistic manner, but in 1518 it is clear that Luther did not so detach and isolate *fides* in his pastoral instruction.’ Wicks, ‘*Fides sacramenti – Fides specialis: Luther’s Development in 1518,*’ p. 86.

⁵¹ ‘Sermons on the Gospel of St. John,’ WA 33, p. 75. Faith, for Luther, is tied both to the *viva vox* and the sacraments. ‘One comes to Christ when one believes in him. Then he is with you and near to you. He lies before us, in front of our eyes and ears, in order that we can see and hear him. Simply believe in him, and in this way you have eaten him and come to him.’ WA 33, p. 60. Here Luther is in close proximity to Augustine who asserted: ‘Ut quid paras dentes et ventrem? Crede, et manducasti.’ (For what reason have you made ready your teeth and stomach? Believe, and you have eaten already.) ‘Tractate XXV on the Gospel of St. John 12,’ in Jacques Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, 217 volumes, Paris 1843–73, volume 35, col. 1602.

⁵² ‘Preface to the Acts of the Apostles,’ WA DB 6, p. 416. ‘We argue that good works can not bring us to heaven or have any effect before God. Instead it is faith alone which accomplishes this.’ ‘Sermons on the Gospel of St. John,’ WA 33, p. 161. *cf.* WA DB 6, p. 417. ‘To call *sola fide* the natural norm of his theology would be unequivocally correct, if only Luther’s disciples (old and new) had remembered his injunction “Christ and faith belong together.” For Luther *sola fide* is simply another way of saying a *solo Christo*.’ Siggins, *Martin Luther’s Doctrine of Christ*, pp. 104–5.

faith is the dwelling place of the Spirit and the Word. Faith is having the Word in one's heart and not doubting it (*Fides est, habere verbum in corde et non dubitare de eo*). This faith alone casts itself upon the sufficiency of Christ, committing oneself to the ultimate leap, and in so doing takes a chance upon God and divine completeness.⁵³ Unable to find this idea articulated clearly anywhere in ecclesiastical history, Luther declared the teaching was his.⁵⁴

As we examine faith as experience, as opposed to faith as theology, it becomes readily apparent that Luther's *fides Christi* motif holds true. Instead of grounding itself in feeling or experience, *fides* for Luther is grounded in Christ apart from feeling. 'It sometimes happens, in fact it is frequently the case concerning such faith, that often the one claiming to believe does not really believe and on the other hand the one who does not think they truly believe, and is in despair, has the greatest faith.'⁵⁵ It is instructive to note that 'faith does not begin with the elating experience of God's nearness but with terror because of God's remoteness.'⁵⁶ Thus, in Luther's own words, 'God is not to be known through feeling but through faith.'⁵⁷

The broad thrust of medieval scholasticism in both the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna* models allow good works to become the essential element of saving faith.⁵⁸ In the theological reflection of the *via antiqua*, an initial infusion of grace coupled with moral cooperation,

⁵³ Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, p. 57. 'This *sola fide* is simply the reflection of the *soli deo gloria*... just as conversely this *soli deo gloria* is simply the reflection of the *sola fide*.' 'What is the *sola fide* but a faint yet necessary echo of the *solus Christus*?' Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, volume 4.1, trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Edinburgh 1956, p. 632.

⁵⁴ 'Hoc dogma meum: Sola fides iustificat.' 'Adversus armatum virum Cokleum,' 1523, WA 11, p. 302.

⁵⁵ 'Concerning Rebaptism,' 1528, WA 26, p. 155.

⁵⁶ Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman, Minneapolis 1976, p. 79.

⁵⁷ 'Non cognoscendus deus secundum sulen, sed secundum fidem.... Cognitio Christi consistit in fide...' In his 'Sermon on Sunday Misericordias Domini, 10 April 1524,' in WA 15, p. 536. William Hordern expands Luther's statement by noting that '... faith was not seen by Luther as the experience of God's presence but the relationship that is born from out of trusting the promises of God.' William Hordern, *Experience and Faith: The Significance of Luther for Understanding Today's Experiential Religion*, Minneapolis 1983, p. 82.

⁵⁸ Ozment, 'Luther and the Late Middle Ages: The Formation of Reformation Thought,' p. 117.

doing what one is capable of (*facere quod in se est*), yields eternal life. Many Ockhamists, or the proponents of the *via moderna*, begin with human effort, followed by the gift of grace, augmented by *facere quod in se est*, which then yields eternal life.⁵⁹ For mainstream scholastics, faith alone (*sola fide*) simply equated with uninformed faith (*fides informis*). The disciples of the *via antiqua* generally asserted a real ontological transformation of the sinner into a saint. Salvation could be attained only through the aid of a sacramental infusion of grace. Promoters of the *via moderna*, on the other hand, alleged that God does not need to accept anything from a creature in an ontological sense (*nihil creatum est a deo acceptandum*). To be certain, that approach to theology was Augustinian in principle, but the commensurate anthropology, including the idea that humans can do what is within them towards righteousness, was denounced by Luther as Pelagian.⁶⁰ The main thrust of scholasticism with regard to faith is that noted above: good works become the central feature of saving faith. But this connection of faith to works was repudiated by Luther. ‘Let such nonsense go the devil, and pay attention to what Paul is teaching. The one who believes in the Son of God has life.’⁶¹ Can one, then, be trusting in *fides Christi*, as Luther understands it, and still be adhering to the idea that ‘works of law’ (ἔργων νόμων) function as the necessary condition for laying hold of the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*)? Luther’s negative reply is adamant. It is impossible for Christ and the law to dwell together. In brief, to hold such a specious premise negates the work of pure faith for Christ justifies in spite of sin and without the assistance of good works.⁶² With the

⁵⁹ Ozment, ‘Luther and the Late Middle Ages: The Formation of Reformation Thought,’ pp. 117–18.

⁶⁰ ‘Lectures on Romans,’ WA 56, pp. 502–3.

⁶¹ ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1535, WA 40.1, p. 427.

⁶² ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1535, WA 40.1, pp. 300–308. Luther uses the word ‘law’ to connote both the adherence to the legalistic letter of the Mosaic Law and also the scholastic emphasis on works as the *conditio sine qua non* for saving faith. In a note on his translation of Romans 4:25 Luther makes clear that it is “‘Faith alone, without works, which saves.” I regret I did not add the words *alle* and *aller*, in order to say, “without any works of any laws,” in order that it might have been said even more completely and accurately. Nevertheless it will remain in my New Testament and even though everyone of those papal asses go completely berserk, they will be unable to remove it.’ ‘On Translating: An Open Letter, 1530,’ WA 30.2, pp. 642–3. ‘The righteousness of the law is in keeping the law.... The righteousness of faith is in

doctrine of predestination as a referential, Luther posits *fides Christi* as God overpowering the *viator* in the sense that righteousness (*iustitia*) functions as a spiritual overwhelming of the believer.⁶³ Therefore, the one who ignores works, as a means to righteousness and as a supplement to the merits of Christ, receives the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*). According to Luther the law cannot avail for righteousness, and along with its works, is deemed useless to the *viator* when juxtaposed over against *fides Christi*. Faith without works justifies apart from good works (*fides caritate formata*) and all humanly prepared dispositions toward grace.⁶⁴ The gospel is corrupted in the assertion that works must accompany faith for righteousness to be realized.⁶⁵ To assert that righteousness (*iustitia*) can be acquired apart from Christ alone is, for Luther, 'a horrible blasphemy.'⁶⁶ Luther proposes an alternative: 'Christ himself in us does everything' (*Christus ipse in nobis facit omnia*).⁶⁷

Luther perceived in the Pauline epistle to the Galatians the greatest exposition of the doctrine of *fides Christi*, the antithesis to the medieval theological doctrines of doing whatever one can (*facere quod in se est*) and faith formed by love (*fides caritate formata*). To mingle works with faith in the hope of obtaining the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) was inconceivable for Luther and he showed no restraint in pouring scorn on his opponents with biting invectives.⁶⁸ Those holding to the scholastic doctrine of justification were dis-

believing, just as it is said, "The righteous one shall live by faith." But the law requires that we do something for God. Faith has no such requirement. Rather it requires that we believe in the promises of God and accept something from God.' 'Lectures on Galatians, 1535,' WA 40.1, pp. 425-6.

⁶³ 'Lectures on Romans,' 1515, WA 56, pp. 295, 387 and 422.

⁶⁴ 'Lectures on Genesis,' 1535-45, WA 42, pp. 562-3. Against the Tatianists and the Manicheans, Luther asserts that '...it is faith alone which is capable of accomplishing what they expect works to do.' 'Avoiding the Doctrines of Men, 1522,' WA 10.2, p. 77.

⁶⁵ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40.1, pp. 236-8.

⁶⁶ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40.1, p. 307.

⁶⁷ 'Thesis regarding Faith and Law,' 1535, WA 39.1, p. 46.

⁶⁸ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40.1, pp. 413, 410. '... such pigs imagine that righteousness is simply something moral. This is because they only look at the visor, or the visible demonstration of the work but not at the heart of the one who undertakes the work... They are truly dull and stupid asses [stupidi asini] for they distort and turn the whole thing upside down by putting the work in the first instance rather than accurate judgment of reason and the proper intent.'

missed as ‘fools (*Stulti*) and pig-theologians’ (*Sawtheologen*).⁶⁹ Luther’s commitment to what may be regarded as a theological ‘Copernican Revolution’ of ‘let God be God’ enabled him to delineate the line of demarcation between faith and works.⁷⁰ For Luther this soteriological faith in Christ (*fides Christi*) is faith alone (*sola fide*) and such a motif is more than a theological principle, it is the realization of *iustitia Dei* and works of merit cannot contribute to the transition of the *viator* as sinner to the *viator* as righteous. Luther’s later work on Galatians constituted both a powerful exposition of his own thought and exerted profound influence in the sixteenth-century.⁷¹ The salient point drawn was stark.

Do we do nothing? Do we work nothing at all in order to obtain this righteousness? I reply, nothing at all. For it is perfect righteousness to do nothing at all, to hear nothing at all, to know nothing of the law, or of works whatever. Instead it is to know and to believe... that Christ... is our high priest who intercedes for us, who reigns over us, and in us, by grace.⁷²

Luther’s polemic against those serving ‘the god of works-righteousness’ (*der Gott der Werkgerechtigkeit*), as he called them, included the injunction to radically separate Law (works) and Gospel (faith). Luther’s conclusion is quite blunt. Unless one dismisses Moses and sends him away, together with his law, and takes hold of Christ who died for the sins of the world, there is no possibility of salvation.⁷³ With regard to the narrative of Hebrews 11, so often championed by many Scholastics as proof of the *fides caritate for-*

⁶⁹ ‘Lectures on Romans,’ 1515, WA 56, p. 274.

⁷⁰ On this overall idea see especially Philip S. Watson, *Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther*, London 1947, *passim*.

⁷¹ For example, Robert Kolb, ‘The Influence of Luther’s Galatians Commentary of 1535 on later Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Commentaries on Galatians,’ in: *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 84 (1993), pp. 156–84 makes the point.

⁷² ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1535, WA 40.1, p. 47. ‘... a human being, not that person’s works, must be righteous and accepted by God without works at all, but completely on account of grace, which faith itself believes and takes hold of. However faith, as a work, does effect righteousness; but this is so only because it grasps hold of the mercy which has been offered in Christ.’ ‘Lectures on Genesis,’ WA 42, pp. 191–2. ‘... grace and faith are infused without our works.’ ‘Heidelberg Disputation,’ 1518, WA 1, p. 364.

⁷³ ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1535, WA 40.1, pp. 489.

mata idea, Luther dismissed the argument in strident terms as 'blasphemous' and 'satanic' and asserted that such an interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews led people, not to Christ, but away from Christ.⁷⁴ Similarly, Luther regarded the Epistle of James as a 'papist letter' and dismissed it from any serious consideration in terms of faith and righteousness.⁷⁵ Luther repudiates again the correlation of faith and works and calls for the entire *fides caritate formata* notion to be damned since it is but an invention of the Devil designed to denigrate the work of Christ and to establish a righteousness based upon human effort.⁷⁶ The 'straw' of James cannot match the gospel of Christ and the monument of Pauline theology.⁷⁷

In brief, then, Luther denies the validity of all works for justification. But he does not deny the place of good works in the life of the *viator* following the reception of the gift of faith. 'Works do not cause an individual to be a Christian, but a Christian should perform good works.'⁷⁸ This line of distinction between works without faith and works done from faith is the significant separation to be observed.⁷⁹ Luther's doctrinal proposal was both original and devastating. It altered the basic structure of Christian ethics. The idea of merit and reward – long regarded as the basis for human action – was now emptied of significance. Despite medieval ecclesiastical pronouncements, good works were dispensed with and loosed from their moorings in traditional scriptural basis.⁸⁰ Redemption was now appre-

⁷⁴ 'Lectures on Galatians, 1535,' WA 40.1, pp. 422–4.

⁷⁵ 'Er ist der papisten epistel.' WA TR, volume 5, p. 414, no. 5974.

⁷⁶ 'Lectures on Galatians, 1535,' WA 40.1, pp. 427–8. 'Here an incompetent ass of a sophist simply looks at the external appearance of a work in the same way that a cow stares at an unfamiliar gate. However, this work must be considered in the sense that initially one ought to consider the type of individual David was before he undertook this work... (I Samuel 17:37; 45–47)... He was righteous and acceptable to God, he was strong and steadfast in faith, and all before he undertook this work. Therefore, David's "doing" is not a natural doing nor yet a moral undertaking, but rather it is a doing in faith.' *Ibid.*, pp. 412–413.

⁷⁷ 'Preface to the New Testament,' WA DB 6, p. 10.

⁷⁸ 'Sermons on the Gospel of St. John,' WA 33, pp. 99–100. *cf.* 'Lectures on Genesis,' WA 42, p. 669.

⁷⁹ See Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther's World of Thought*, trans. Martin H. Bertram, St. Louis 1958, p. 171.

⁸⁰ Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart, New York 1992, p. 154.

hended by the *viator* without merit through pure grace (*sine meritis pura gratia*).⁸¹ The implications of all this for all of life at the end of the Middle Ages were staggering.

Faith as Reality

Luther's teaching concerning faith is neither simple theologizing nor is it merely the antithesis to works. Instead *fides Christi*, in Luther's theological system, finds expression in the life of the Christian *viator*. Luther follows Paul in understanding the gospel as 'promise.'⁸² Forgiveness, grace, righteousness, and life come as 'promise' and 'gift' directly from God in the reality of *fides Christi* and are to be regarded as the immediate work of Christ within humanity. We shall briefly examine two of these expressions of *fides Christi*.

Justification

In his large commentary on Galatians Luther sets forth his understanding of justification as the possession of the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) in six major points. First, righteousness cannot be found through the 'works of the law' (*opera legis*), nor can it be presented to God by humanity on the basis of natural volition. Second, good works follow from justification rather than preceding it. Third, justification is an internal, rather than an external, act. Fourth, the state of justification is not attainable through natural human ability. Fifth, the meaning of justification is that one is in Christ and Christ is in that individual. Sixth, justification means to be 'made righteous' (*iustum effici*).⁸³ While Luther was a member of the Augustinian Order he departed radically from Augustine in terms of his understanding of justification. For the patristic churchman, justification found its primary expression in the idea of 'renewal' (*renovatio*). The supplement to this renewal for Augustine was the non-imputation of sins. By contrast, Luther understood justification in the first instance as the

⁸¹ 'Decem praecepta Wittenbergens: praedicta populo,' 1518, WA 1, p. 427.

⁸² Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, pp. 256-7.

⁸³ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1519, in WA 2, pp. 455, 458, 460, 489-92, 495 and 555.

non-imputation of sins and the parallel imputation of righteousness. The supplement, therefore, was renewal or the second work of God.

There is some consensus in modern exegesis which affirms Luther's fidelity to Paul as opposed to Augustine who appears, ostensibly to have erred on this point.⁸⁴ The faith which receives justification is neither historical faith (*fides historica*) nor a faith formed from good works (*fides caritate formata*). Instead, it is an 'authentic faith' (*fides vera*), which is *fides Christi*, which comes only from God. Promise and faith go together, because where there is no promise, there cannot be faith, and where there is no faith the promise, even if it exists, has no relevance.⁸⁵

In the High Middle Ages and late medieval period, as noted above, the *viator* strove to fulfill the requirements of the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*).⁸⁶ In other words, since the righteousness of Christ (*iustitia Christi*) is received sacramentally, there exists a dichotomy, at least in theory, between the *iustitia Christi* and the *iustitia Dei*. The *iustitia Christi* is given in justification as 'grace' (*gratia*) or 'love' (*caritas*). The *iustitia Dei*, however, is not granted at the same time (*simul*) with the *iustitia Christi*. Instead the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) remains the goal of the *viator* who works toward the final reward through the righteousness of Christ (*iustitia Christi*) which is then counted as a 'work of mercy' (*opus misericordiae*). Luther's doctrine of justification, within the context of *fides Christi*, is that the heart of the gospel is the simultaneous infusion of *iustitia Christi* and *iustitia Dei*. The righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) is revealed at the cross as the righteousness of Christ (*iustitia Christi*) and is given to humankind 'through faith' (*per fidem*). This new soteriological principle of faith formed by Christ (*fides Christo formata*) replaces the notion that faith is formed by love or good works (*fides caritate formata*), an idea held by Thomas Aquinas, Dun Scotus, Gabriel Biel, and later promulgated as Tridentine theology by the fathers at the Council of Trent. Through the unification of these two

⁸⁴ Uuras Saarnivaara, *Luther Discovers the Gospel*, St. Louis 1951, pp. 14–15.

⁸⁵ 'Treatise on the Last Words of David,' WA 54, p. 33.

⁸⁶ Oberman, " 'Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei,'" *HTR* 59, p. 19. The following discussion is informed, to some degree, by Oberman's work.

principles, which may be dated back to Luther's '*Turmerlebnis*,' the sinner is justified before God (*coram Deo*). On the basis of this new anthropology the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) becomes the foundation of the Christian life. While it is 'alien righteousness' (*iustitia aliena*) it is also 'eternal righteousness' (*iustitia infinita*) 'which devours all sin in a single moment.'⁸⁷ Therefore, the *viator*, who has been justified by faith alone (*sola fide*), even if he or she commits sins thereafter, such sins are not imputed to them because of this faith in Christ.⁸⁸ So even though righteousness does not exist 'in itself' (*in re*) it does exist 'in hope' (*in spe*)⁸⁹ and while not the property of the *viator* it certainly is the possession of the Christian.

Sanctification

According to Luther the justified-sanctified life of the Christian *viator* is a paradoxical one. In various theological expositions Luther uses terms such as 'at one and the same time righteous and a sinner' (*simul iustus et peccator*), 'always a sinner, always penitent, always justified' (*semper peccator, semper penitens, semper iustus*), and 'in a way we do not understand, we are justified; though at the same time, in a way we do understand, we know we are unrighteous: sinners indeed, yet righteous in hope' (*ignoranter iusti et scienter iniusti, peccatores in re, iusti autem in spe*), to express his understanding of the paradoxical nature of the Christian life.⁹⁰ The motivation toward sanctification and the godly life is indeed *fides Christi*. Christ lives in the Christian through redemption and the dynamic forgiveness of sins (*per vivificationem et sanctificationem*), while the Holy Spirit through sanctification daily purges out sins in order for the Christian

⁸⁷ 'Two Kinds of Righteousness,' 1519, WA 2, p. 146. There is a good discussion in D. P. Whitelaw, 'An examination of two early sermons of Martin Luther: the *Sermo de duplici iustitia* and the *Sermo de triplici iustitia*,' in: *Theologia Evangelica* 17 (September, 1984), p. 26.

⁸⁸ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40.2, pp. 95-6.

⁸⁹ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40.1, pp. 24-5 and 'Lectures on Romans,' 1515, WA 56, pp. 269 and 272.

⁹⁰ See 'The Disputation concerning Justification,' 1536, WA 39.1, pp. 97-8; 'Exposition of Psalm 51,' 1532, WA 40.2, p. 352; 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1519, WA 2, pp. 496-7; 'Against Latomus,' 1521, WA 8, pp. 67 and 96; and 'Lectures on Romans,' WA 56, pp. 270, 343, 351 and 442.

to continue in authentic existence.⁹¹ This sanctifying work of faith is the impetus for the priesthood of all believers,⁹² and the definite cause for new transformed existence.⁹³ In short, *fides Christi* is transformative in the life of the *viator* because of the action of Christ in the believer.⁹⁴ Hence, Luther can define holiness as the reality created by the Holy Spirit in giving people faith in Christ.⁹⁵ Justification, of necessity, precedes sanctification and is soteriologically significant, but both are natural corollaries of *fides Christi* which Luther perceived as the dynamic power of the Christian life. This important motif of Christian existence, as explained by Luther, is later reflected perhaps best in the thought of Albrecht Ritschl in his 'Christian ideal of life' (*das christliche Lebensideal*) motif.⁹⁶ This *Lebensideal* concept is what becomes the Christian paradox ethic. In the existential application of this 'life ideal,' the being of faith finds immediate expression. Faith, then, expresses itself as the 'Christian ideal of life.' It is founded on the ground of justification, in the context of *fides Christi*, and is expressed in the work of sanctification.

Salvation as union and exchange

What follows from this reality is the union of the *viator* and Christ. 'Christ is the object of faith. [Christ is] the one present in faith itself.'⁹⁷ This means that a 'righteous individual does not live in him-

⁹¹ 'On the Councils and the Churches,' 1539, WA 50, pp. 625-6.

⁹² 'I most happily agree that such faith as I refer to as the authentic office of the priest is really capable of accomplishing everything... It is quite impossible to attribute to this faith too much. Indeed, I assert that such faith is what causes all of us to be priests and priestesses.' 'A Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass,' 1520, WA 6, p. 372.

⁹³ 'The purpose in life is to know God, to discover happiness in the wisdom of God, and to enjoy the presence of God. We attain such life through faith in Christ.' 'Lectures on Genesis,' WA 42, p. 353.

⁹⁴ Wicks, 'Justification and Faith in Luther's Theology,' p. 14.

⁹⁵ 'On the Councils and the Churches, 1539,' WA 50, pp. 626-7.

⁹⁶ Lotz, *Ritschl & Luther*, p. 70.

⁹⁷ 'Lectures on Galatians,' 1535, WA 40, pp. 228-9. cf. Marc Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, trans. Edwin H. Robertson, Minneapolis 1982, p. 186 where he points out Luther acknowledges, along with the mystics, that in faith Christ is born a second time.

self or herself but Christ lives in that person and this is on account of faith in Christ.⁹⁸ Through faith the *viator* and Christ become ‘as one body... Faith joins me to Christ more intimately than a husband is joined to his wife...’⁹⁹ Everything is held in common with and by Christ.¹⁰⁰ Faith essentially puts on Christ and these two are made one.¹⁰¹ The presence of Christ in faith, *fides Christi*, is a reality the *viator* can participate in by ‘appropriating faith’ (*fides apprehensiva*).¹⁰² ‘Faith causes you and Christ to become as one person, so to speak. This means you cannot be separated from Christ, but have become part of him, as though you truly were Christ. At the same time he declares he is that sinner.’¹⁰³ Faith permits the believer to know Christ, in the context of forgiveness and power where the *viator* is seized and taken into Christ (*nos rapi de die in diem magis voluit*).¹⁰⁴ This ‘union with Christ’ (*unio cum Christo*) never exists apart from faith. It seems fundamentally true to assert that this union never directs itself beyond faith to a higher dimension, but rather, this faith-Christ-union is its own culmination.¹⁰⁵ Luther’s doctrine of faith and justification is effectively an applied christology.¹⁰⁶

Hence, Christ does act, dynamically, in faith. It is incorrect to see in Luther only a forensic justification in relation to *fides Christi*. Since Christ is present in faith he actually takes sin from the *viator* and destroys it. Then as ‘promise’ fulfilled he gives righteousness to hu-

⁹⁸ ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1519, WA 2, pp. 501–2.

⁹⁹ ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1535, WA 40.1, p. 286.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1519, WA 2, p. 504. See also ‘The Heidelberg Disputation,’ WA 1, p. 364.

¹⁰¹ ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1519, WA 2, pp. 535–6. See also ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1535, WA 40.1, pp. 539–40. Walther von Loewenich also provides an excellent discussion of the elements and nature of this faith-Christ-mysticism in *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, pp. 104–6. One other essential collection is Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, Grand Rapids 1998.

¹⁰² Lotz, *Ritschl & Luther*, pp. 131–2.

¹⁰³ ‘Lectures on Galatians,’ 1531/5, in WA 40.1, p. 285.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Against Latomus,’ WA 8, p. 111.

¹⁰⁵ Walther von Loewenich, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, p. 106. cf. ‘The Freedom of a Christian,’ WA 7, p. 54. See also Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, pp. 43–49.

¹⁰⁶ Georg Kretschmar, ‘Das Heilsverständnis Luthers im Rahmen von Patristik und Scholastik,’ in: *Cristianesimo nella storia* 14 (No. 2, 1993), pp. 221–61.

man beings.¹⁰⁷ Righteousness (*iustitia*) is *fides Christi* 'beyond ourselves' (*extra nos*) but this *extra nos* cannot be a purely forensic judgment to the extent that righteousness is not the possession of the *viator*. There is a dynamic transaction. This is what Luther calls the 'joyous exchange' (*fröhlicher Wechsel*) in which the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) is given to humankind and the sin of the world is given to Christ.¹⁰⁸ Thus, Luther can say: 'if I am really a sinner, I am still not truly a sinner. I am a sinner in myself and apart from Christ. But apart from myself and in Christ I am no sinner, for Christ has obliterated my sins with his holy blood.'¹⁰⁹ Herein, is the meaning of Luther's theology of the cross (*theologia crucis*) and his *fides Christi* motif. Faith and God belong together and in no sense can this be understood as a violation of *sola fide*.¹¹⁰ Faith alone (*sola fide*) is the essential correlate to the cross; a theology of the cross is a theology of faith.¹¹¹ In Luther's own words, 'the cross alone is our theology' (*Crux sola est nostra Theologia*).¹¹²

It remains finally to briefly examine the legitimacy of positing *fides Christi* as a theological solution. To be sure there are immediate detractors. Some insist that 'Luther's obstinate "*sola fide, non fides charitate formata...*" is a confessional decision, not a theological solution.'¹¹³ I contest the validity of that assertion and insist that Luther's *fides Christi* does indeed provide a theological solution. By absolutely linking faith to the Word Luther removes the human element from faith and thus negates the dilemma of performing whatever is in humankind (*aliquid in homine*). Instead, faith comes from the Word, the living word (*viva vox*), and is ever to be the context for *fides Christi*. When people such as Andreas Karlstadt and the Zwickau Prophets advanced the notion that faith could be had apart from

¹⁰⁷ See Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 188.

¹⁰⁸ 'The Freedom of a Christian,' WA 7, pp. 54-5.

¹⁰⁹ 'The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests,' 1533, WA 38, p. 205.

¹¹⁰ Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought*, p. 256.

¹¹¹ This is the thesis advanced by Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, Oxford 1985, *passim*.

¹¹² 'Operationes in Psalmos,' 1519-21, WA 5, p. 176.

¹¹³ Peter Manns, 'Absolute and Incarnate Faith - Luther on Justification in the Galatians Commentary of 1531-1535,' in: *Catholic Scholars Dialogue with Luther*, ed., Jared Wicks, Chicago 1970, p. 144. For Luther's articulation of this premise see 'Lectures on Galatians, 1535,' WA 40.1, p. 239 and *passim*.

the Word, Luther dismissed them as ‘fanatics’ (*Schwärmer*) and insisted that an appeal to the Spirit apart from the Word was inappropriate and merely amounted to a choking on the feathers of the Holy Ghost.¹¹⁴

By re-defining faith in terms of Christ, as the object and active subject, Luther bypasses the faith and works nexus, the problem of doing whatever is in one’s self (*facere quod in se est*) motif, and the struggle to find peace in the God who demands righteousness. *Fides Christi* certainly became a theological solution to the problem of the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) for Luther. Indeed, Luther’s view of the interdependence of faith and Word militates against the later dogmatic understanding of the post-Reformation era which in some cases perceived faith as the possession of the individual. This served to reduce Christian proclamation and religious authority to a bastardized dependence upon a proto-Biblical inerrancy. Luther did not acquiesce in a practical *sola scriptura*. He was certain that scripture could never be alone (*scriptura numquam sola*). Faith was neither textually rooted nor restricted. ‘God and scripture are two completely different things, just as separate as the Creator is from the creation.’¹¹⁵ To ground one’s experience in the Bible, or to hold sacred literature as exclusively authoritative causes faith to spring from human decision, to be sustained by self-assertion, and to become in the end a do-it-yourself ‘faith.’ According to Luther this entire scenario violates the first commandment and fails to let God be God.¹¹⁶ The focus is God in Christ, apprehended by ‘faith.’ Consequently, faith is the only true ‘appropriation of the gospel’ (*usus evangelii*).¹¹⁷ Christ is the

¹¹⁴ ‘Against the Heavenly Prophets,’ 1525, WA 18, p. 66.

¹¹⁵ ‘Duae res sunt Deus et Scriptura Dei, non minus quam duae res sunt, Creator et creatura Dei.’ ‘The Bondage of the Will,’ WA 18, p. 606.

¹¹⁶ Eric W. Gritsch, ‘Revelation and Faith in Luther’s Theology of the Word,’ in: *Lutheran Forum* 23 (No. 2, 1989), p. 18.

¹¹⁷ Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought*, p. 133. Luther defines the gospel as ‘a discourse about Christ, as Son of God who was made human for us, that he died and was raised and that he has been made Lord over everything.’ ‘A brief instruction on what to look for and expect in the Gospels, 1521,’ WA 10.1, pp. 8–18. ‘The gospel is nothing except a proclamation about Christ.’ ‘Preface to the New Testament,’ 1546 (1522), WA DB 6, p. 7. In similar fashion ‘Christ is a gift which strengthens one’s faith causing one to become a Christian.’ ‘A brief instruction on what to look for and expect in the Gospels,’ WA 10.1, pp. 8–18.

content of the gospel, the promise of the gospel, and the center of the proclaimed Word. Faith, as the 'pure gift of God,' is the primary response to the gospel and in light of the theological ramifications of *fides Christi* is, for Martin Luther, the only appropriate use of the gospel.

In the end Luther's teaching concerning faith is simultaneously a pedagogical discourse about God. Indeed, the theology of the cross and the *fides Christi* motif demands that faith and God remain forever linked.¹¹⁸ In this way it is manifestly clear that Luther understood *fides Christi* as a theological solution for all persons. This solution was for the saints, those held in high esteem by worldly standards; for the sinners, those failing to measure up to religious, ecclesiastical or contextual ethical-moral expectations; and also for the 'stupid asses,' as Luther called them, those seeking righteousness and 'salvation' another way. Therefore, all 'saints,' all 'sinners' and all 'stupid asses' can find eternal salvation in Christ alone, *sola fide*. With this understanding and firm conviction, despite acknowledging himself as God's 'unwirdiger Euangelist' (unworthy evangelist), Luther could proclaim with confidence in the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) that since faith alone is enough there is no need for anything except faith.¹¹⁹ Such faith is the demonstration of the power and dominion of its own freedom. According to Luther, this is what constitutes the incalculable power and freedom of Christians.¹²⁰ The multiple religious worlds of sixteenth-century Europe may not necessarily have agreed, but a new idea had been planted.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ebeling, *Ibid.*, p. 256.

¹¹⁹ 'Commentary on the alleged Imperial Edict,' 1531, WA 30.3, p. 366

¹²⁰ 'Commentary on the alleged Imperial Edict,' 1531, WA 30.3, p. 366 and 'The Freedom of a Christian,' WA 7, p. 57.

¹²¹ While it is not within the purview of this article to review recent ecumenical debates on the doctrine of justification, it is worth noting that in 1999 at Augsburg the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church issued a "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" affirming there was no fundamental disagreement between those churches on the issue of justification. In other words, after nearly 500 years these two great Christian traditions declare the rupture of the Latin Church in the sixteenth century should never have taken place, at least so far as the doctrine of justification is concerned. The text appears in *Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification*, Grand Rapids 2000.

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Summary: Luther's theology, and his identity as a Christian reformer at the end of the Middle Ages, is predicated upon his understanding of faith. While his concept is rooted in later medieval theological motifs, Luther develops it in a new and revolutionary fashion. The application of Luther's doctrine created a fundamental shift in religious practice. From a history of ideas perspective, a new chapter in the Christian doctrine of salvation emerges. The idea of faith alone (sola fide) represents a radical shift from medieval doctrines and proposes a new approach to religious practice at the dawn of the modern world. In Luther's hands, faith is neither intellectual assent nor adherence to a system of beliefs. Instead, faith is Christ, reality, relation, and dynamic spiritual being. An appreciation of Luther's idea of faith is essential to understanding Luther's theological and religious motivations.

Keywords: Reformation – Doctrine of Salvation – Luther – Sola Fide

TOWARDS A DIALOGICAL “GLOBAL THEOLOGY”: WOLFHART PANNENBERG AND WILFRED CANTWELL SMITH

Pavel Hošek, Prague

This article focuses on similar yet different proposals of two scholars W. Pannenberg and W. Cantwell Smith concerning the appropriate theory and framework of interfaith relations and dialogue. The similarities are numerous: both of them are Christian theologians by training, both were deeply interested in (and published in the field of) general philosophy of religion and methodology of religious studies. Both see the contemporary situation of globalized world as an imperative for all theologians and religious thinkers to think through anew – or even completely revise – the principles of coexistence with religious others (both scholars therefore react against the isolationist tendencies of the so called “kerygmatic theology,” which limits the task of theology on hermeneutics of the specifically Christian revelation). Both of them actually propose an interdisciplinary and dialogical “global theology of religion” or “world theology” which would study the religious history of humankind in its entirety, but not just from Christian presuppositions, and also not just empirically and descriptively, but also with reference to the transcendent mystery which is the referent of religious truth claims.¹ In trying to understand and interpret the various religious traditions of the world, both scholars prefer the historical perspective as more inclusive than the “timeless” comparative perspective. Both scholars (being Christian theologians) also ask about the place and role of Christianity in the entire religious history of humankind.

I want to briefly summarize the particular views and methodologi-

¹ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1976, p. 358ff.

cal proposals of both scholars and point out the important difference² between these two approaches.

Wolffhart Pannenberg

Global theology

Pannenberg bases his proposal of an universalist global theology (i.e. theological reflection of the entire human religious history) on his particular understanding of the relationship between revelation and history. For him (like for Hegel) history, in its entirety and totality, may be viewed as a gradual process of revelation of divine reality³ (for explanation, see below).

Pannenberg formulates and proposes this universalist inclusivist view of revelation partially in polemics with the so called kerygmatic theology, which limits revelation to revelation by Word and sees the task of theology as hermeneutics of the particularly Christian revelation, witnessed to in the canonical documents of the Christian Bible. This view opens an unbridgeable gap between the Christian “salvation history” (the historical “space” where the Word is proclaimed) and general history of humankind in its entirety and totality.⁴ The major problem of kerygmatic theology in Pannenberg’s view is the fact that it permits no questioning of the truth claims of the kerygma (Christian message) itself⁵. It is an attempt to immunize Christian truth claims from atheistic critique of critics such as Feuerbach, Marx or Freud etc. But, Pannenberg objects, the result is that Christian

² Smith is one of the contributors to the collection of papers (edited by J. Hick and P. Knitter) *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. Towards a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, New York 1987, which is a manifesto of the so called pluralist paradigm of theology of religions. Pannenberg is one of the contributors to the collection of papers edited by G. D’Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered. The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, New York 1990, which is a polemical response to the previous collection, arguing primarily for an inclusivist theology of religions.

³ Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, London 1968, p. 16ff.

⁴ Pannenberg’s polemics with this view see in Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 135ff.

⁵ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. II, London 1971, p. 66.

claims have no universal binding validity or relevance. They are and must remain – if kerygmatic theology is right – unintelligible for those who are not initiated in the specifically Christian tradition. And therefore, any “global theology” would be by definition impossible.

In his proposal for an universalist global theology Pannenberg emphasizes that Christianity, just like every other religious tradition, makes universal truth claims that are in conflict and competition with the truth claims of other traditions.⁶ Keeping this in mind, in global theology “everyone who has eyes to see” (Christian, Atheist, Buddhist, Hindu, whoever) is invited to enter an unprejudiced investigation of the ultimate meaning of the religious history of humankind, says Pannenberg. The facts of the universal history of religions, including truth claims made by religious traditions, should be the basis for “exegesis” and critical investigation in such endeavour. Christian (and any other) perspective is acceptable, yes, but its presuppositions are not a legitimate basis of argumentation.⁷ They are to be offered as hypotheses, open to intersubjective investigation.⁸

For such critical investigation, the comparative perspective is not sufficient, says Pannenberg,⁹ because it underestimates the irreversible historicity of humankind. It takes data out of historical contexts and often works with an a priori presupposition of a timeless essence of human religiosity. More importantly, only the all-inclusive perspective of history has the capacity to integrate otherwise fragmented fields of knowledge, i.e. to put the explicitly religious data into context and explicit relation to all the rest of relevant facts, biological, social, cultural, economic etc., and therefore enables one to make a qualified judgement concerning the conflicting truth claims.

An important observation for Pannenberg’s methodology is the (especially today) obvious fact that humanity (human race) is essentially one. We can therefore legitimately speak of religion as something generically human and of one common religious history of the

⁶ Pannenberg, Religious pluralism and conflicting truth claims, in G. D’Costa (ed.), *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, p. 96ff.

⁷ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 70.

⁸ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 315.

⁹ For the following, see Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 72ff.

one humankind, not just parallel isolated histories of individual religious traditions. Therefore, the search for the essential meaning of religion and its history in totality (i.e. the ultimate aspiration of global theology in Pannenberg's understanding) is legitimate and possible.

History of religions as competition

But we cannot start looking for the essential meaning of religious history in its beginning.¹⁰ It is too distant, and therefore inaccessible to our investigation. In Pannenberg's view, that should constitute no serious problem, because the ultimate meaning of religious history of humankind (as the meaning of every historical process) is actually gradually emerging with time. With the flow of history it becomes clearer and clearer. Only as time goes on, people in different cultures are sooner or later articulating the question: What is the ultimate goal of human history? And the more or less convincing articulations of the answer to this question are gradually emerging in the process of history, as various religious traditions interact.¹¹

Let us look closer at how Pannenberg describes this process decisive for his understanding of the task and method of global theology.¹² In the history of religions, says Pannenberg, we find competing candidates for an all-inclusive account of the ultimate meaning of everything. In the earliest stages of religious history we know of, this competition has the form of rivalry, antagonism and struggle among deities as they strive for supremacy¹³ (see for example ancient Egypt). Sometimes, as part of this competition, we can also observe fusion of deities and their respective attributes and spheres of activity. Or, individual gods are sometimes gradually seen as concretions of a force field of absolute transcendence¹⁴ (see for example ancient India).

Sooner or later in religious traditions the question emerges: How

¹⁰ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 83.

¹¹ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 94.

¹² For the following, see Pannenberg, *Religious pluralism...*, p. 102f.

¹³ For the following, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1991, p. 146ff.

¹⁴ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 145.

to solve the tension between unity and plurality in deity?¹⁵ Since all religions seek a holistic account of the ultimate meaning of human existence and surrounding reality, we observe a universal tendency as a partial answer to this question, to associate more and more additional spheres of operation to fewer and fewer deities. This tendency eventually gives birth to a singular view of the Absolute, such as monotheism.¹⁶ For example, in the Hebrew Bible the Jewish God is viewed as the Creator (El), he is also the Lord of fertility and vegetation (Baal), he gradually takes over (and absorbs into himself) the attributes of other gods of fertility, vegetation, agriculture, sexuality, war etc.¹⁷ Gradually, the subject of the struggle of religious history becomes the question of unity of divine reality.

As this process goes on, in historical accounts of various religious traditions we see many processes of interaction, integration and syncretism.¹⁸ But we can also observe obvious differences in assimilative, inclusive and integrative capacity among religious traditions and their respective deities. Gods and their respective myths function as explanatory frameworks, as heuristic models, they help people with the ultimate question of how to make sense of reality. They offer more or less satisfactory accounts of what happens in human life. Some deities are less successful than others. The question (criterion) of course is whether the god is what he (she) claims (promises) to be – for example the creator of the universe and the lord of history.¹⁹ Some deities fail and loose followers, some don't and the loyalty of their worshippers is preserved and strengthened.

In a sense then, we can speak of a competition going on in the history of religions concerning the greatest convincing and explanatory power, the most impressive mastery of changing historical situations.²⁰ Not always is this related to political dominion or supremacy,

¹⁵ For the following, see Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 84ff.

¹⁶ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 149.

¹⁷ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 147f.

¹⁸ For the following, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 160ff. See also Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 85.

¹⁹ For the application of this criterion in global theology, see Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 320. See also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 167.

²⁰ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 89. See also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 148.

there are cases when the gods and cultural values of the defeated nations “overcome” the victorious nation, see for example, ancient Greeks and Romans. What is essential in this competition is the relative explanatory power and interpretive potential of the particular religious tradition and the deity it gives witness to.²¹ This explanatory and illuminative power concerns not just explicitly and exclusively the religious domain, but relates also to all the remaining fields of reality and of human knowledge (i.e. areas which today are studied by natural sciences, social sciences etc.).

In the entire history of religions, numerous processes of integration (caused by interaction and communication among different neighbouring cultures) have been going on. But in the last two centuries these processes are going on on global scale with unprecedented speed and intensity. We can even speak about progressive unification of the religious history of humankind. Maybe the divine reality is involved in this process, says Pannenberg.²² As our human world is growing together and becoming smaller and smaller, the essential question still remains: which account of deity has the greatest explanatory power or interpretive potential, which is the most convincing, all-illuminating, most all-inclusive. Today as always, we have to ask: who or what is the all-determining power (ground, foundation, source) of reality, of our world?²³ Today as in the ancient past, religious assertions and truth claims can win credibility only by showing relevance and illuminative power in relation to the religious domain and also to other spheres of human experience (other fields of knowledge, studied by natural sciences, social sciences etc).²⁴

Pannenberg emphasizes again and again, that competing and conflicting truth claims of religious traditions must not be played down or treated as secondary in addressing this question. This is an essential condition of global theology.²⁵

²¹ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 82. See also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 167.

²² Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 95.

²³ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 88.

²⁴ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 102. See also Pannenberg, *Religious pluralism...*, p. 103.

²⁵ Pannenberg, *Religious pluralism...*, p. 102n.

After this short summary of Pannenberg's project of a dialogical (interactive) universal global theology, it will be useful to show how he understands religious epistemology and the process of growth in religious knowledge in individual human life, because, as I will demonstrate below, there is a striking similarity between Pannenberg's view of the process of growth in religious knowledge in individual life and his view of the process of growth in religious knowledge of humankind in its entire history.

Anthropological perspective: growth of religious awareness and knowledge²⁶

If I rephrase now Pannenberg's view of the entire religious history of humankind in anthropological terms, he says this: when we reflect on the universal, incurable religiosity of humankind, we can observe an universally human awareness or intuitive sense of transcendence. We, human beings are, as the world's religious traditions testify, from the beginning of our individual lives faced with a transcendent mystery, in relation to which we feel incomplete, dependent and finite.²⁷

As we reflect on this essential incompleteness of humankind, as we think about our finitude, and the finitude of the reality surrounding us, we gradually come to the conclusion, that finite things are delimited by the infinite as their background. We gradually realize that the finite is not self-grounded, that it may be thought of as being "carved out of the infinite." Theologically speaking, God or deity may be viewed as the answer to the question implied in human finitude.²⁸ How does this gradual development of our religious awareness or religious knowledge proceed?

Pannenberg argues as follows: in fact we human beings always have, besides the inner intuition of infinity, provisional answers to the ultimate questions of existence.²⁹ As long as these answers can

²⁶ For the following, see Pannenberg, *Theology and Philosophy of Science*, p. 301ff. See also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 107ff.

²⁷ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 98ff. For the following see also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 136ff.

²⁸ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 102.

²⁹ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 116.

serve as a reliable basis for confidence, they are sufficient. But sooner or later we get to a point of dissatisfaction with their provisionality and incompleteness.³⁰ Where do we look for more (most) comprehensive and more (most) satisfying answers? Usually in our cultural and religious tradition. Religions witness to and explicitly speak about the ultimate horizon, the ultimate mystery of life, they give answers to the ultimate questions of being. In religious traditions we find articulations of the answers to ultimate questions about the transcendent mystery that human beings have been facing since the beginning of their individual lives, we see the answers to the question implied in human finitude. The inner intuition of the infinite can be identified or recognized and named as a knowledge of deity (God) only secondarily, after “hearing about God” from religious tradition.

But today, more so than ever before human beings are faced with an additional dilemma: there are at least several different candidates, i.e. several different versions of the account (articulation) of the ultimate reality, carried by the diverse religious traditions with their conflicting truth claims. Contemporary societies are multicultural, multi-faith, multireligious. So for more and more people today (because of globalization) there are at least several different options. We have to choose, to compare, and confront.³¹

History of religions as the history of gradual revelation

When we change perspective again and look at what was described above as the process of growth in religious knowledge of individual human beings from the standpoint of the panorama of humankind’s entire history, the history of religions can be viewed in this sense as the history of gradual appearing and articulation of the divine mystery, presupposed in the structure of human existence and finitude.³² The most adequate concept (or articulation) of deity is emerging in the process of religious history. Less adequate, less comprehensive and less complete articulations of the ultimate mystery – for example

³⁰ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 310.

³¹ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 93.

³² Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 112. See also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I.*, p. 171.

those which are too tightly connected with finite reality³³ – show themselves insufficient and therefore false.³⁴ They are recognized as insufficient and left behind, and actually substituted with more convincing, more comprehensive and more all-inclusive articulations. They are found insufficient because they “lack infinity,” they refer to something that is “less than divine.” This is the substance and structure of all religious idolatry: worshipping something less than God as God.

For example worshipping a number of plural deities with limited spheres of activity or competence (i.e. polytheism) has been sooner or later in history left behind and substituted with a singular view of transcendence (for example monotheism, pantheism or monism) of which the particular deities are seen to be finite manifestations. Or another example: religious fixation on the past (typical for the so called archaic religions) makes it impossible to explain the actual historical transformations of religions (they have no place and no explanatory framework for novelty and irreversible historical change).³⁵

Viewed from the anthropological perspective, in history the human spirit discovers or gives birth to values, norms and ideas with universal scope and claim, and their validity is a matter of historical conflict: this is an open process, it goes on as long as the history goes on.³⁶ It actually has its continuation in today’s interreligious communication and interfaith dialogue. That is why conflicting truth claims are so important for Pannenberg. Global theology, therefore, must necessarily be done in dialogue and creative interaction with people of different cultural and religious backgrounds.³⁷

The above mentioned fixation on the past (typical for archaic “pagan” religions) is by most of humankind, perceived as inadequate. Here the role of Israel in universal religious history is essential, since

³³ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 180.

³⁴ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 108.

³⁵ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 109. See also Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 185.

³⁶ Cf. Pannenberg’s analysis and appropriation of this concept of E. Troeltsch in Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology I*, p. 135ff.

³⁷ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 324.

it brought a radical reorientation towards the future.³⁸ Yet in Pannenberg's view Judaism remains to a large extent oriented to the past. Only in Jesus we see a radical and complete turn to the future (the coming Kingdom, Messianic age as the eschatological climax of history). God, proclaimed by Jesus, is the Power of the future.³⁹ The power that is drawing humankind to its ultimate goal, to the end of history as the ultimate manifestation of the glory of God. This is how Pannenberg sees the place and role of Christianity and of the Christ-event in the universal religious history of humankind.⁴⁰ Jesus in this sense is for Pannenberg the best candidate for an orienting centre – more precisely: the foretaste of the ultimate end – of the religious history of humankind. Pannenberg presents this proposal as a hypothesis to be tested, open to discussion, revision and debate, to intersubjective verification and falsification. He doesn't present this view as an a priori dogmatic statement.⁴¹

Before we move to the proposal of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, I will just briefly summarize how Pannenberg presents his proposal in strictly theological terms, i.e. when he addresses his fellow Christian theologians (especially the proponents of kerygmatic theology).

Theological perspective: Revelation as history

Pannenberg starts his Christian-theological justification of a universal (“global”) theology with the question: What is the appropriate understanding of revelation in Christian theology?⁴²

In his view, the Christian (biblical) notion of revelation (in the broadest sense of the word) cannot be identified with just the inspiration of biblical text, neither with the inspired proclamation of God's word, neither with direct self-manifestation of God in religious experience. The biblical notion of revelation is best described as God's indirect self-revelation in historical events.⁴³ It is always provisional,

³⁸ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 113.

³⁹ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 115.

⁴⁰ Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 139nn.

⁴¹ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 69f. See also Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 366, and Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 135ff.

⁴² For the following, see Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 3–21, 123–158.

⁴³ Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 7.

always referring to more to come, to future disclosure of the "glory of the Lord."⁴⁴ It often has a verbal component, i. e. it is articulated in words, but these words don't communicate God himself, rather they have the form of a promise referring to future acts of God, or a testimony referring to theologically significant past events (acts of God).

So the most adequate definition of the biblical notion of revelation is in Pannenberg's understanding that it is an indirect self-authentication of God through his historical acts in the sense of the frequent prophetic saying "and they shall know that I am the Lord." By the actual events of history, God shows himself as faithful, i. e. able and willing to fulfil his promises. God's revelation in historical events is never complete and finished, it is always partial, provisional, always anticipating more to come, always referring to future. God is indirectly revealed in everything that happens in history, not just in nature or in the universe in a static sense, but in the universe in motion, in the process, in time, i. e. in the flow of history. History leads ultimately to the eschatological manifestation of God's glory. The meaning of history as the meaning of every temporal process) can only be understood from the perspective of its end.⁴⁵ And this is, if we take Jesus' own words and claims seriously, what the Christ-event actually is: the flash-forward of the end of history. It has eschatological finality.⁴⁶ According to the Gospels, the ultimate goal of history was "proleptically" – as a flash-forward in a story – as manifested (anticipated) in the Christ-event.⁴⁷ The Christ-event should therefore be understood as the hermeneutical key to the ultimate meaning of humankind's history, the signpost of where is history going.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 126ff.

⁴⁵ Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 131.

⁴⁶ Pannenberg, *Religious pluralism...*, p. 101.

⁴⁷ Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 134.

⁴⁸ Pannenberg summarized his theological view of the relationship between history (in its entirety) and revelation in the following seven theses: 1) *The self-revelation of God in the biblical witnesses is not of a direct type, but is indirect and brought about by means of the historical acts of God.* 2) *Revelation is not comprehended completely in the beginning, but at the end of the revealing history.* 3) *In distinction from special manifestations of the deity, the historical revelation is open to anyone who has eyes to see.* 4) *The universal revelation of the deity of God is not yet realized in the history of Israel, but first in the fate of Jesus of Nazareth, insofar as the end of all events is anticipated in his fate.* 5) *The Christ event does not reveal the deity of the God of*

Wilfred Cantwell Smith

Global Theology

Wilfred Cantwell Smith also proposes a theological interpretation of the entire religious history of humankind. His starting point is also the essential unity or coherence of humankind's religious history.⁴⁹ Just like Pannenberg, he bases this presupposition on the essential unity of humanity (human race). This unity becomes now more obvious and more conscious than ever before in history.⁵⁰ All religious traditions of the world are (in the last two centuries) entering a stage of far-reaching, complex interpenetration, interrelation and interconnection.⁵¹ This historical situation calls for a "theology of the comparative history of religion"⁵² if we are to adequately conceptualize this globalizing historical process. As the world is becoming culturally globalized, the process of mutual interaction, overlapping and interpenetration of religious traditions has reached the stage when it becomes more and more conscious for millions of religious believers.⁵³ We are facing the challenge of new recognition of the global interdependence of all humankind⁵⁴. We can actually speak, says Smith, of the world process of religious convergence and of an emerging expanded religious consciousness.⁵⁵ Globalizing processes enlarge the framework of our thinking about religion.

Religious traditions are many and diverse, their truth claims seem conflicting and incompatible, which is the fact very much emphasized by Pannenberg. Smith is also aware of this problem, but his solution is very different.

Israel as an isolated event, but rather insofar as it is a part of the history of God with Israel. 6) In the formulation of the non-Jewish conceptions of revelation in the gentile Christian church, the universality of the eschatological self-vindication of God in the fate of Jesus comes to actual expression. 7) The Word relates itself to revelation as foretelling, forthtelling, and report. Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 125nn.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, Philadelphia 1981, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, Minneapolis 1991 p. 8-9.

⁵¹ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 4-5.

⁵² Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 27, 125, 127.

⁵³ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 37.

⁵⁴ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Faith and Belief*, Oneworld, Oxford, 1998, p. ix. See also Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 44, 50.

He suggests that religious traditions should be conceptualized as movements, as dynamic processes, in which individual believers participate.⁵⁶ These processes (Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam etc.) should be viewed as particular ways of being human, as different versions of realizing authentic humanity,⁵⁷ i.e. for example the Jewish way of being human, the Hindu way of being human etc.⁵⁸

In Smith's understanding religions consist of two essential components. The subjective, personal side, which is universally and generically human and which Smith calls "faith."⁵⁹ Faith is an existential commitment or a holistic personal response to ultimate reality. It means living one's life in relation to the transcendent mystery. Its opposite is indifference, nihilism or despair, i.e. an essential resignation on anything and everything that transcends material reality.⁶⁰ The second component of every "religion" is the "objective" or rather intersubjective side, which always has a particular historically and culturally conditioned objectivized shape and which Smith calls "cumulative tradition." Now of course there is a number of different cumulative traditions (Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim etc.). Cumulative traditions are historical sediments and "traces" of particular religious communities, they consist of artifacts, symbols, texts, sacred music, sacred buildings, items, festivals, customs etc. These cumulative traditions naturally have a conservative tendency, they tend to preserve and pass on the religious and cultural heritage of the past.⁶¹ Yet they constantly and inevitably undergo historical transformations as they encounter and creatively respond to the neighbouring cultural and religious traditions and other challenges in the flow of history. Cumulative traditions function as nurturing soil and preserving context for faith. They encourage a response of faith in individuals and they serve its transmission from generation to gen-

⁵⁶ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 23, 30.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 136ff.

⁵⁸ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 53.

⁵⁹ Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 3ff.

⁶⁰ Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 13, 63. See also Smith, *Belief and History*, Charlottesville 1977, p. 93.

⁶¹ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 37.

eration. They are like windows through which the individual perceives and understands oneself, the world and ultimate reality.⁶²

Religious traditions and truth

Smith emphasizes the fact that cumulative traditions are not primarily worldviews or ideological constructs. They are not based primarily on static, timeless doctrinal statements. These traditions are first and foremost facts. They are like mountains, they are not just theories. We may like them or not, climb them or not, trust them or not. They are simply there.⁶³ Beliefs with their implied truth claims are an important part of cumulative traditions, but not the most important part. Smith actually suggests that we should revise the common understanding of religious truth. Truth in religious traditions is not something abstract, timeless and objective, it is directly related to the quality of life, to the authenticity of human existence.⁶⁴ Truth therefore must be understood as personal and existential,⁶⁵ as the quality of human response to one's religious tradition or more precisely to the transcendent mystery witnessed to in that tradition. Truth is not a quality of beliefs or statements but of human beings. More precisely, says Smith, truth (true meaning) lies in the adequate or authentic relation or personal response of the particular person to the particular belief in particular time and space.⁶⁶ To live a true religious life in one's particular religious tradition then means to live a truly human life.

Viewed from this perspective the truth claims of various religious traditions are actually not necessarily conflicting at all. They are integral parts and components of their respective symbolic universes, they must be always understood in the holistic context of the cumulative tradition of which they are a part, their truth is not context-less

⁶² Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 50.

⁶³ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, New York 1967, p. 78-79.

⁶⁴ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 190.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 67, 81. See also Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 148.

⁶⁶ Smith, *Faith of Other Men*, Harper and Row, 1972, New York, p. 46-47, see also Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 16-17, and also Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 64. See in this connection also Smith, *Belief and History*, p. 17, 20.

and abstract, it is (or is not!) realized by individual believers as they interiorize these beliefs and implement them in their life, i.e. as they authentically relate to their neighbours, to the world and to the ultimate reality to which religious beliefs point. The function of religious beliefs should be understood as primarily symbolic, performative and evocative.⁶⁷ They refer the believer to the transcendent mystery (God) which transcends all human conceptualizations,⁶⁸ i.e. all cumulative traditions.

This is how in Smith's understanding we can understand truth with respect to a multiplicity of conceptual frameworks.⁶⁹ Cumulative traditions cultivate faith as a generically human response to the transcendent mystery. They produce particular forms of authentic humanity, which are of rather adjective, not substantive, quality⁷⁰. The appropriate question therefore is not: are you a Muslim, Christian, Hindu, but rather how Muslim, Christian, Hindu you are?⁷¹

This understanding of religious traditions must not lead into isolationism or pluralistic relativism, says Smith. He is not willing to resign on the essential unity of all knowledge.⁷² He emphasizes that any future global theology must also incorporate or be compatible with the heritage of Enlightenment rationality, if it wants to preserve the status of academic integrity and scientific discourse and not degenerate into poetry or wishful thinking. He therefore wants to resist the relativist temptation which would suggest the existence of parallel integrated enclosed worlds – i.e. cultural-religious traditions – which have absolutely nothing in common. This would be an isolationist resignation on the challenge of the contemporary global (political, cultural, religious) situation.

Smith therefore, in spite of what he says about the personal, existential nature of religious truth, insists that in global theology we have to seek compatibility and complementarity among religious tra-

⁶⁷ Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 52, 145–146. See also Smith, *Belief and History*, p. 44.

⁶⁸ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 183.

⁶⁹ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 88.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 99ff, 113.

⁷¹ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 106.

⁷² Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 60. See also Smith, *Belief and History*, p. 29.

ditions with their respective beliefs. The conflicts among truth claims should not be simply ignored, but rather adequately interpreted in the light of how Smith understands the nature of religious truth and possibly reconciled.⁷³

The history of humanity is obviously converging as the world is progressively growing more and more globalized. It is time for a “next step” in religious studies,⁷⁴ says Smith, a time for a global theology, understood as a new collaborative discourse, based on dialogical cooperation of believers and scholars of all cultural and religious backgrounds. In this sense, Smith speaks about the emerging corporate trans-cultural critical self-consciousness of humanity, which is also comprehensive and global.⁷⁵ The time of splendid isolation is gone. We are all involved in building a common world, whether we like it or not. For example, in religious studies, any published “we” which includes less than all humankind becomes suspicious and unsatisfactory.⁷⁶

This is how Smith wants to develop his version of global theology. It should strive to integrate the universally valid and relevant insights and contributions of all particular religious traditions⁷⁷ and also the tradition of critical rationality of the Enlightenment. It should therefore end up being not less Christian, Buddhist, Jewish (etc.) than Christianity, Buddhism, or Judaism. It should rather enlarge the framework of all particular religious traditions, enrich them with illuminating insights of religious others.⁷⁸ Smith doesn’t envision an age when all the religious traditions will merge into one syncretistic synthesis. It is very unlikely, he says. There will always be at least several basic ways of being human, several comprehensive forms of faith,⁷⁹ understood as existential commitment or holistic personal

⁷³ For an illustration of this effort (in relation to the question whether Quran is the Word of God or not) see Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 46ff. See also Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 156.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 132.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 59, 62, 78–79.

⁷⁶ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ Smith, *Faith of Other Men*, p. 88–89. See also Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 137, and also Smith, *Belief and History*, p. 8–9.

⁷⁸ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 121.

⁷⁹ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 61.

relatedness to ultimate reality, several ways of responding to the ultimate mystery, i.e. several ways of salvation from alienation, meaninglessness, nihilism, despair.⁸⁰ All religious believers today have to get used to the obvious fact, says Smith, that for many men and women on this earth the response to the transcendent mystery (or God) has been through other channels than theirs.⁸¹

Conclusion

As we have seen, there are numerous similarities between Pannenberg and Smith in how they envision "global theology."⁸² They both see the contemporary political and cultural situation of a globalized and globalizing world as an imperative for developing a universal theology of human relatedness to the transcendent mystery. They both understand it as a non-confessional theological hermeneutics of the entire religious history of humankind. They both insist that it must be done in dialogue and interactive cooperation of people from all religious and cultural backgrounds.

But for Pannenberg, the conflicting truth claims of different religious traditions are essential. In fact, he sees the entire religious history of humankind as a gradual process of the emerging adequate understanding of the transcendent mystery. An important part of this process is the competition among various interpretive frameworks (carried by diverse religious traditions). This competition is still going on, in fact it is going on exactly in the context of interfaith dialogue, as competing and conflicting truth claims of different tradi-

⁸⁰ Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, p. 168.

⁸¹ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 119.

⁸² Pannenberg actually says about Smith's proposal: "In many ways the procedure I envision corresponds with W. C. Smith's project of a theology of religion. I agree with him that the history of the religions has to be the subject matter of such a study. I further agree that the question of revelation is a historical question, a 'history-of-religion question' ... and that the evidence for God's action has to be looked for in history so that the dichotomy between history and transcendence is overcome. Most important, I agree with Smith that the task of theology in such a study of the history of religions is to determine the truth content inherent in the religious affirmations." Pannenberg, *Religious pluralism...*, p. 105f.

tions are being discussed and as the relative explanatory power or interpretive potential of these traditions in relation to all spheres of reality is confronted and measured. For Pannenberg as a Christian theologian the Christ-event is to be offered as the relatively best candidate for the orienting centre, i.e. the anticipation and foretaste of the ultimate end of the religious history of humankind, it is offered as a hypothesis, open to intersubjective verification.⁸³ Pannenberg, in this sense, is proposing an inclusivist⁸⁴ Christian global theology.

Smith has a very different understanding of religious truth and therefore of the (seemingly) conflicting truth claims of various traditions. For him there may be no real conflict among these claims, if we understand their function and the nature of religious truth properly. For him as a Christian theologian the Christ-event is the orienting centre of religious history, but may be only for Christians, because of its central function in the Christian cumulative tradition and its corresponding form of faith.⁸⁵ Smith therefore proposes a pluralist⁸⁶ Christian global theology. For Pannenberg, Smith's proposal is theologically inadequate.⁸⁷

⁸³ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p. 116.

⁸⁴ Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, New York 2002, p. 63ff.

⁸⁵ Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth*, p. 63, 91. See also Smith, *Faith and Belief*, p. 162.

⁸⁶ Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, p. 109ff.

⁸⁷ Pannenberg says about Smith's book *Towards a World Theology*: "In this book it is not always clear whether Smith is himself conscious of starting (not only personally but methodologically) from the Christian knowledge of God and going on to an awareness of the same God in all human history of religion, ... or whether he claims a knowledge of the one 'transcendent reality' ... independent of the different cumulative traditions. His assertion that 'at first' he starts to interpret other cultures from his Western Christian perspective, but 'less so in the end...' remains ambiguous as to whether the comparative study of religions ends up in providing a completely independent evidence of the unity and sameness of the "transcendent reality" they point to or whether it merely confirms that the God of the Bible is also recognizable in other forms of 'faith.' The second I could sympathize with, while the first seems illusive, even if we postulate a 'universal, corporate, critical self-consciousness' of human beings across the barriers of cultural differences..." Pannenberg, *Religious pluralism...*, p. 104.

Summary: This article explores similar yet different proposals of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Wilfred Cantwell Smith concerning the appropriate theory and framework of interfaith relations and dialogue. They both see the contemporary situation of a globalized and globalizing world as an imperative for developing a universal theology of human relatedness to the transcendent mystery. Both understand it as a non-confessional theological hermeneutics of the entire religious history of humankind, which must be done in dialogue and interactive cooperation of people from all religious and cultural backgrounds. But for Pannenberg Christian faith is to be offered as the relatively best candidate for the orienting centre, the anticipation and foretaste of the ultimate end of the religious history of humankind. For Smith Christian faith is the orienting centre of religious history, but may be only for Christians, because of its central function in the Christian cumulative tradition and its corresponding form of faith.

Keywords: Wolfhart Pannenberg – Wilfred Cantwell Smith – Inter-religious dialog

HISTORY AND/OR OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY: THE QUESTION OF THE “TRADITIONING PROCESS” FROM A PRAGUE PERSPECTIVE

Filip Čapek, Prague

Introduction

In the famous musical *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) composed by Jerry Bock¹ an important question is posed. It concerns the problem how Jews, living in the 19th-century village Anatevka, manage to keep their traditions and customs. One of the inhabitants of this village who wants to know about the very beginning of the common and shared Jewish existence asks ‘*How did this tradition start?*’ The narrator answers simply: ‘*I don’t know, but it is a tradition.*’ In Prague we are pondering over a similar question, that is, over tradition, its shape, its history, and we are engaging a critical reflection on this complex phenomenon. It is especially due to the 60th anniversary of the death of the first Czech Old Testament scholar Slavomil Ctibor Daněk (1885–1946), celebrated a year ago. This scholar was intensively interested in the phenomenon that, in biblical scholarship, is commonly designated as a process of tradition, tradition process, traditioning process² or, according to B. S. Childs, as canonical process.³ Discussion about this phenomenon, its definition and extent has been permeating our home scene until now. Let us now follow briefly this discussion at first chronologically and then with respect to its

¹ The musical follows book of stories written in 1894 by the Russian (in fact Ukrainian) Jewish author Sholom Aleichem (1859–1916).

² Thus for instance Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament – The Canon and Christian Imagination*, Louisville/London 2003, p. 9ff.

³ See Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments – Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible*, London: SCM Press, 1992, p. 70–77.

possible value for the present interpretation of the Old Testament. There are surely resemblances to thinking of other scholars abroad but for this moment we will stay on the Czech ground.

Slavomil Ctibor Daněk (1885–1946)

As mentioned above, the term, “traditioning process” has had specific referential value in the Czech Old Testament scholarship from its very beginnings. The term is connected especially with the first scholar named, S. C. Daněk. Concerning this “process” Daněk was occupied primarily with ‘original’ religious data contained in biblical texts and conveyed by this process. To reach them requires, according to him, to critically read present ‘canonical’ texts against the time axis. As a result, astonishingly new insights about theological thought of Israel might be gained. Traditioning process serves in Daněk’s thinking in the first instance as a line connecting the present biblical text with its religiously fascinating remote past. In other words, this process is not a value *as such* but is to be understood more as a starting point or a springboard to dive as deep as possible into the past meanings that are more or less hidden in the present form of biblical material. This idea is best expressed in the often quoted passage from a slightly enigmatic study *Gedalja*. Here Daněk in his *locus classicus* says:

The biblical material has undergone a long and complex traditional process. During this process the religious character of the material has changed or even become completely lost.⁴ Therefore it is necessary to reconsider its terminology. We have to bear in mind that the genuinely religious meaning of some names has become indistinct or their former religious meaning⁵ has changed without the names themselves being changed. Attention should be paid to characteristic features that – generally – stand out markedly or extraordinarily and are elaborated in the subdetails of the material to an extent that is completely

⁴ Literally: has been bleached.

⁵ Or: affiliation.

disproportionate to the other meagre structure. This suggests that most of them are presumably altered traces of former religious ideas.⁶

How to locate and to interpret this statement? Firstly, because of the period Daněk lived in, this statement is clearly congruent with the main accents of the History of Religion School. Secondly, if we elaborate Daněk's reasoning further, there are six key points to be mentioned in order to understand his concept of traditioning process:

(a.) This traditioning process begins in the moment when there a certain text is „stabilized as a received and accepted text“.⁷ This is a quite clear prerequisite.

(b.) Daněk lays more emphasis on details, terminology and individual words and less on literary complexes. He is especially interested in proper names with their etymological ambiguousness. Traditioning process, according to him, passes on these names as concealed ciphers. The task of a careful theologian and exegete is to decode them and reveal their genuine religious content. This means, for example, that governor Gedaliah, who was appointed by Nabuchadnezzar in Mizpah after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C., was in fact, as perceived by biblical texts, in the first instance not a human but a deity (cf. 2Ki 25:22).

(c.) The process of traditioning has a long but reconstructable and traceable history. This history is primarily the history of the text in its ambiguousness.⁸

(d.) Original religious data are important. They are not lost. There-

⁶ Slavomil Ctibor Daněk, *Gedajla – Illustrace k teorii exegeze*, in: Slavomil Ctibor Daněk, *Vybrané studie*, Praha: Kalich, 1977, p. 30.

⁷ Slavomil Ctibor Daněk, *Literárně-kritický úvod do Starého zákona (přednášky 1929–1930)*, part 1 (without pagination).

⁸ Cf. Josef Bohumil Souček, Slavomil Daněk – Pokus o rozbor jeho theologického díla, in: *Theologia Evangelica* 2 (1950) p. 65–73, 3–4 (1950) p. 132–143, here especially 73: “The fundamental significance of Daněk's scholarly theses might be summarized in following way: The Old Testament bespeaks in the first instance neither about – if at all – history of Israel nor about history of literary complexes and their origins. Old Testament first of all witnesses the history of the text, history of ideas, images and above all history of continuously changing qualities shaped by goal-directed tradition which uniquely synthesized the religion of ancient Near East.”

fore, expressed with the classic means-meant distinction,⁹ what ‘it’ meant originally should not be discarded from the course of investigation. Subsequent history of these data could elucidate how their content has been changed, emptied, resignified etc.

(e.) Traditioning process is read against the course of time for the sake of recovering original religious content. Daněk argues in this sense for an ‘archaeology’ of the text.

(f.) Although the emphasis is laid on the revived religious context of corresponding biblical material, this cannot happen without the present shape of the Old Testament.

Miloš Bič (1910–2004)

Although not that inventive as his preceptor, Miloš Bič (1910–2004) pushed forward the main portion of Daněk’s ideas. For him Daněk’s work was a norm by which he measured events happening in Old Testament scholarship. In his opinion it was Daněk who “was far ahead of his time and who had laid foundation for the work of next generations. He also wasted a lot of his strength and time in controversy with that sort of biblical scholarship that almost became a gravedigger of the Old Testament.”¹⁰

Bič was for instance critical of literary criticism of the nineteenth century, in particular of Julius Wellhausen.¹¹ In sum, he was a loyal pupil of his master. Nevertheless, he was more cautious about affirming the possibility of the reconstruction of original traces and stages of the traditioning process. Bič is more reserved in this respect and asks whether “it is realistic to understand this process in its de-

⁹ For detailed exposition of this relation see Krister Stendahl, *Biblical Theology, ‘Contemporary,’* in: George Arthur Buttrick, (ed.), *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Nashville 1962, Vol. I. p. 418–432.

¹⁰ Miloš Bič, *Novější směry starozákonné vědy*, in: *Křesťanské revue 10 (1965) Teologická příloha č. 5*, p. 100. For more detailed information see Miloš Bič, *Die neueren Ergebnisse der alttestamentlichen Forschung in der Tschechoslowakei*, in: *VT 1 (1951)*, p. 155–160.

¹¹ Cf. Miloš Bič, *Das Alte Testament und das Wort Gottes*, in: Hans Joachim Stoebe et al. (eds.), *Wort – Gebot – Glaube, Walter Eichrodt zum 80. Geburtstag*, Zürich ATANT 59 (1970) p. 143–156.

tails.”¹² This reservation warns us against speaking too quickly about the traditioning process without the recognition that each pre-literary or literary phenomenon – be it religious or not – must be examined from the standpoint of broader history, that is, from standpoint which Daněk himself as if excluded from his interpretation.

Jan Heller (1925–2008)

The third and also the last Prague scholar I mention is Jan Heller (1925–2008). Considering the traditioning process, he himself wants to be in the same boat with his predecessors Daněk and Bič. He also agrees that “the Old Testament material had gone through a long and complex traditioning process.”¹³ Nevertheless, there are apparent differences that should not be overlooked. Heller as compared with Daněk advocates that the result of the discussed process, i.e. the so-called ‘final form’ has substantial theological importance that should be taken in biblical interpretation as a supreme hermeneutical variable. Furthermore, Heller has charted his own reasoning more organically and also less polemically than Daněk and Bič on the map of the European Old Testament scholarship. Imaginary small flags on this map, marking allied places, are also the two citadels of historical criticism: Marburg with scholars like Werner H. Schmidt and Heidelberg with Gerhard von Rad and, then, especially Amsterdam¹⁴ with names like K. Deurloo and others.¹⁵ In spite of these differences

¹² Miloš Bič, Slavomil Ctibor Daněk – K 30. výročí úmrtí a nedožitým devadesátinám, in: Slavomil Ctibor Daněk, *Výbrané studie*, Praha: Kalich 1977, p. 51–64, here 60.

¹³ Quotation from Daněk, *Gedalja*, p. 30.

¹⁴ This Dutch – Czech link has been brought into life in 1980s by Martin Prudký (b. 1960) who is at present successor of Jan Heller in the Departement of Old Testament in Prague. He studied in Amsterdam in 1982–83. For further details see for instance Jan Heller – Martin Prudký, *Die Prager Arbeit am Alten Testament und ihre Analogien zur sog. Amsterdamer Schule*, in: *Summa* 19 (1987) p. 14–19.

¹⁵ Cf. Heller’s proclamation in: *Výročí 237*: “His [i.e. Bič’s] successor at the faculty J. Heller tries to confront ideas elaborated by Daněk with the History of Tradition School as it is represented by M. Noth, G. von Rad and their pupils like W. H. Schmidt. There is a task to be done in future: To confront Daněk’s ideas with the Amsterdam School epitomized by names such as Miskotte, Breukelman, Deurloo and others.” Cf. also Jan Heller, *Bíh sestupující: Pokus o christologii Starého zákona*, Praha 1994, p. 51. For Heller’s more detailed description of the traditioning process see Jan Heller, *Der Traditionsprozess in der Auffassung der Prager Alttestamentler*, in: *VT* 32 (1982) p. 219–224.

Heller pronounces himself to be in immediate contact with his Czech colleagues and asserts that it is precisely the traditioning process that constitutes „the most important core of the Prague Old Testament School.“¹⁶ The diagram below demonstrates accents of our three scholars:

	<i>Slavomil Ctibor Daněk (1885–1946)</i>	<i>Miloš Bič (1910–2004)</i>	<i>Jan Heller (1925–2008)</i>
main accents	etymology, original religious settings, reconstruction	<i>ditto</i> , more reserved towards possible reconstruction of original meanings	original religious setting but also present context given by canonical structure
location on the axis	at the very beginning	<i>Ditto</i>	all over the axis

Critique: If the three are doing the same, is it really the same?

Let us now pursue our three scholars focusing on the question how they deal with the traditioning process and then on the question what they expect from this process as such:

– Daněk focuses on past religious content and here especially on names that are understood as deities, which Israel desacralizes, and destroys. Traditioning process enables him to float against the current of time back to genuine religious content. This process offers a way back to the very beginnings where original qualities of the ancient texts are still pure and devoid of later re-significations.

– Bič is also keen to reconstruct original religious content that is still more or less discernible in the present form of Old Testament texts.¹⁷ Yet, he is less optimistic about success in detailed reconstruction.

¹⁶ Jan Heller, *Výročí Slavomila Daňka*, *Křesťanská revue* 10 (1985) p. 232–3.

¹⁷ See especially Bič's thesis *Haruspicium ve Starém zákoně* (Praha 1936) dealing with the prophet Amos and his "original" profession. According to Bič, Amos was, as the more original version of the text shows, *auspex*. For etymology of this name see also Bruce Willoughby, *Amos, Book of*. In: David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 1, New York/London/Toronto/Sydney/Auckland 1998, p. 203–212.

– Heller counts both with the possibility of looking back to origins which are discernible with the help of historical criticism and also with the fact that main theological accents might be heard from the overall structure of the canon.¹⁸ The petrified shape of the established text of the Old Testament, i.e. the canon, represents, according to Heller, the last phase of the traditioning process that is, as such normative. It is not by accident that in recent years Heller has found an influential ally in the guru of canonical approach B. S. Childs.

What is then traditioning process? Let us imagine this rather elusive phenomenon as a long train slowly running out of the mist as it is beautifully drawn by the English painter J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851) in his famous painting *Rain, Steam and Speed* (1844).¹⁹ Each of the three introduced scholars keeps his own position concerning the studied phenomenon and occupies his favourite place on this train. Daněk is somewhere behind the curve at the very end of the train, in the mist, examining his imagination to be very close to the possible origins of the biblical material. He is scarcely visible. Bič is a bit nearer to us but is doing more or less the same thing. And Heller? He is running inside the train along its whole length and tries to mediate among various past and present meanings of biblical material.

Conclusion

The double-edged title of this article *History and/or Old Testament Theology: the Question of the Traditioning Process* has not been chosen at random. It expresses the very nature of the discussion that is in process and that is not safe from the dangers of vagueness and absence of clear differentiation between theological and historical modes of questioning. The same applies to terminology used by the three Prague scholars. The outcome of this short exposition might be the recognition that the traditioning process has been up to now primarily “collecting terms” for more or less variously connected phenomena. To deepen this concept in terminology and in content is

¹⁸ Cf. Jan Heller, *Pozdní sklizeň*, Praha 2000, p. 61.

¹⁹ See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Image:Rain_Steam_and_Speed_the_Great_Western_Railway.jpg

more than desirable.²⁰ The same applies to the necessity of discussion which might be held in a wider, preferably continental, context. If this becomes our future business in Prague then there is a promising perspective that Czech Old Testament scholarship is going to be a more integral part of the international biblical discourse.²¹ There are many doors wide open for exciting discussion.²² To give some examples: reflection on the dividing line concerning theological and/or historical interpretation of the Old Testament offers longstanding and intensive discussion between B. S. Childs²³ on the one hand and J. Barr²⁴ and J. Barton²⁵ on the other; new proposals on how and where to read on the imaginary time axis of the traditioning process, or, conversely, not to read, are offered in recent theologies presented by E. S. Gerstenberger²⁶ and W. Brueggemann.²⁷ In short, there is still plenty of work to do in Prague.

²⁰ For further discussion see instructive study by Petr Macek, The Prague School of the Old Testament Research and the Canonical Approach to the Scripture – A Preliminary Comparison, in: *Communio Viatorum* 30 (1987) p. 89–97.

²¹ For recent extensive proposal going in this direction see Filip Čapek, *Hermeneutika Hebrejské Bible: Kánon jako interpretační možnost rozvedená na pozadí díla B. S. Childse a J. A. Sanderse*, Jihlava 2005.

²² Cf. Alena Hanzová, *Intencionalita tradičního procesu S. C. Daňka a B. S. Childse*, Praha 2003 (unpublished).

²³ Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, London 1979; A Response, in: *HBT* 2 (1980) p. 199–211; Response to Reviewers, in: *JSOT* 16 (1980) p. 52–60; *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, London 1985; *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments – Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible*, London 1992.

²⁴ Cf. James Barr, Historical Reading and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture, in: James Barr, *The Scope and Authority of the Bible*, London 1980, p. 30–51; *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, Oxford 1983; *The Concept of Biblical Theology – An Old Testament Perspective*, London 1999.

²⁵ Cf. John Barton, The Canonical Meaning of the Book of the Twelve, in: John Barton, David J. Reimer (eds.), *After the Exile. Essays in Honour of R. Mason*, Macon 1996, p. 59–73; *The Spirit and the Letter. Studies in the Biblical Canon*, London 1997; Looking Back on the 20th Century. 2. Old Testament Studies, in: ExpT 110 (1998–1999), p. 348–351; Canon and Old Testament Interpretation, in: Edward Ball (ed.), *In Search of True Wisdom. Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements*, Sheffield 1999, p. 37–52.

²⁶ Cf. Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Theologies in the Old Testament*, Minneapolis 2002. For further discussion see reviews on Gerstenberger in *HBT* 25 (2003).

²⁷ Cf. Brueggemann, An Introduction to the Old Testament, here esp. pp. 1–14, 17–27, 391–402.

Summary: The term “traditioning process” has in Czech Old Testament scholarship from its very beginnings specific referential value which is connected especially with the name of Slavomil Ctibor Daněk (1885–1946) who was the first teacher of the Old Testament at the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague. Concerning this “process” Daněk was occupied primarily with ‘original’ religions data contained in biblical texts. To reach them requires, according to him, to read critically present “canonical” texts against the chronological axis. As a result, astonishingly new insights about theological thought of Israel might be gained. Canonical process serves in Daněk’s thinking in the first instance as a line connecting present biblical text with its religiously interesting remote past. Although not that inventive as his preceptor, Miloš Bič (1910–2004) pushed forward main bulk of Daněk’s ideas. The same applies to Jan Heller (1925–2008) who as compared with Daněk advocates that the result of the discussed process, i. e. the so-called “final form” has its substantial theological importance which should be taken in biblical interpretation as a supreme hermeneutical variable. At the end of the study an opinion is expressed, that the pursued phenomenon of traditioning process ought to be carefully studied in a broader context of contemporary biblical scholarship.

Keywords: Biblical Studies – Old Testament Studies – Czech Theology – Traditioning Process – Slavomil Ctibor Daněk – Miloš Bič – Jan Heller

BEYOND, BEFORE AND WITHIN THE TEXT OF THE BIBLE: ON THE HISTORY AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY. THE CASE OF SLAVOMIL C. DANĚK (1885–1946)

Petr Sláma, Prague

Bible and history: intersections of problem

Thinking about Bible and history, a distinction has to be made between at least three levels of treatment. On the first level, we can ponder the Bible in its final literary and canonical shape and ask whether it really wants to be history. We can ask about the historiographical ambition of the Bible.¹ What else could it be? What implications does the approval or denial of Bible as history have? Another question – another level of thinking about the Bible and history – is, to what extent the historical picture the Bible suggests is true or at least plausible according to the results of modern archaeological research and historiography. In this second case we ask about the historical, referential veracity of the Bible. Finally, quite another question is how the two of them, i.e. the history as depicted by the Bible and the historical picture of Israel's past, do relate to the general concepts of faith as they have been formulated in theology. In this case we ask about the historical concern of theology. For Biblical scholars, it has been the genre of Theology of the Old/New Testa-

¹ This question was thoroughly discussed during the panel “Das Alte Testament – ein Geschichtsbuch?,” held in frame of the great anniversary of Gerhard von Rad in 2001 in Heidelberg. The outcome of the panel has been published in Eduard Blum, William Johnstone a Christoph Marksches, *Das Alte Testament – ein Geschichtsbuch? Beiträge des symposiums “Das Alte Testament und die Kultur der Moderne” anlässlich des 100. Geburtstags Gerhard von Rads (1901–1971)*, Heidelberg, 18.–21. Oktober 2001, Münster 2005. The most pertinent to our theme are the papers by Erhard Blum, John Van Seters Hubert Cancick.

ment, in which the third question would usually be addressed. On the third level we can ask how, if at all, does the Old Testament theology make use of history, i.e. what role does this generalizing attempt to formulate what the Bible is about ascribe to history.

In this article I confine myself to the first and the third levels of the question; or to be precise, to a rather narrow sector of it. To announce it at the very outset of this article, it will not deal with the question of referential veracity of the history as depicted in the Bible. A vast library of historical portraits of biblical past has been written since Heinrich G.A. Ewald's² or Julius Wellhausen's³ seminal books. This library has some red-lettered names in itself since then, e.g. Anton Jirku, Martin Noth, Herbert Donner, Lester Grabbe, Ziony Zevit, Mario Liverani, Angelika Berlejung or Israel Finkelstein⁴ – as a recent example of those successfully communicating the results of recent archaeological research to a broader audience.

None of this is, however the subject of this study. Instead, I'd like to digest briefly the modern discussion on whether the Bible as such understands itself as history. And then, on the third level of our questioning, to pause with Slavomil C. Daněk, the pre-War OT scholar from Prague, and to try to elucidate what was, according to him, the role of history in OT theology.

² Heinrich Georg August Ewald, *Geschichte. des Volkes Israel bis auf Christus*, 5 volumes, Göttingen 1843–55.

³ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israel*, Berlin 1878.

⁴ Anton Jirku, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Leipzig 1931; Martin Noth, *Geschichte Israels*, Göttingen 1950; Herbert Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn in Grundzügen: 1. Von den Anfängen bis zur Staatenbildungszeit*, Göttingen 1984; Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches*, New York/London 2003; Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, Volume 1. Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah*, London/New York 2004; Angelika Berlejung, Die babylonisch-persische Zeit (587–333) and Die hellenistische Zeit (333–63), in: Jan Christian Gertz et al. (ed.), *Grundinformation Altes Testament: Eine Einführung in Literatur, Religion und Geschichte des Alten Testament*, Göttingen 2006, pp.144–171 and 172–185; Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel*, London 2006.

“Ein Geschichtsbuch?”

Dealing with the question of whether the Bible understands itself as history or not, we skip the centuries of theological discussion steered by Eirenaeos from Lyon and Aurelius Augustine and basically understand the Bible as historical report *and* as the history of salvation at the same time. The emerging Enlightenment, as represented by Benedict Spinoza, Richard Simon, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and others put the finger on the tensions and discrepancies within the biblical text itself as well as discrepancies between the picture of the past the Bible is suggesting and the picture of modern historiography. The Enlightenment witnessed the rediscovery of Ancient Near Eastern cultures seemingly surpassing Bible by all measures, the most eloquent and determined proponent of this attitude being Friedrich Delitsch. In a series of lectures delivered at the very outset of the 20th century called “Bibel und Babel” he revolves around the Bible’s borrowings from Mesopotamian culture, this being the proof of Bible’s inferiority. In philosophy the impetus of Georg W. F. Hegel reflected the explosion of knowledge in all fields of human life and progress in technologies, applying the pattern of evolution to all spheres of life. The biblical studies in 19th century follow mostly this pattern. A new genre within the enlightened biblical scholarship emerges, trying to formulate the constant and pure message of the Old Testament *vis-à-vis* its thorough historical and literary criticism, i. e. the genre of Old Testament theology.⁵ Yet from the very outset this new genre has been heavily influenced by and in many cases simply dissolved in outlines of the religion of Israel.⁶ The early 20th century went on in

⁵ As the first Old Testament Theology is generally been considered Georg Lorenz Bauer’s *Theologie des alten Testaments oder Abriss der religiösen Begriffe der alten Hebräer. Von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf den Anfang der christlichen Epoche. Zum Gebrauch akademischer Vorlesungen*, Leipzig 1796.

⁶ The tendency to substitute the theology of Old Testament by history of Israel’s religion would be epitomized in titles of these works, e. g. Bruno Bauer’s *Die Religion des Alten Testaments in der geschichtlichen Entwicklung ihrer Prinzipien*, Berlin 1838. Other times the former simply replaced the latter, as in the case of August Kayser. His *Theologie des AT.s, in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung dargestellt*, published in 1886, would from 1894 go only as *Geschichte der israelitischen Religion*.

this direction. Historical criticism of theologians like Albrecht Alt or Martin Noth seemed to destroy the simple referential faith to the biblical picture of the past by showing how differently the things really happened. Besides, a strange romantic mysticism of history and of origins was raising its voice in Germany in the thirties, providing ideological soil for Nazism. As a reaction to it, a small group of Old Testament scholars in '20s and '30s went out to present their Old Testament theologies in an attempt to throw away the yoke of evolution, the yoke of "the tyranny of historicism."⁷ In 1933 Walther Eichrodt designs his *Theologie des Alten Testaments* around the term *covenant*. He proceeds on three relational levels: on the level of the relation between God and God's people, between God and God's creation, and between God and an individual human person. Similarly, Ludwig Köhler⁸ in his Old Testament Theology follows the tripartite scheme of theology – anthropology – soteriology, i.e. he carries out a systematic and synchronic approach to the Old Testament.

It was a piece of surprise not only for Walther Eichrodt, himself inspired by Karl Barth, when quite a different voice was to be heard from the same theological camp. As early as the early fifties, in a sermon Gerhard von Rad pronounced his assertion that "the Old Testament is a book of history" („ist ein Geschichtsbuch“). The claim was later published in his essay *Typologische Auslegung des Alten Testaments*⁹ and still later it became the tenor of his seminal work, *Die Theologie des Alten Testaments*, published in two volumes in 1957 and 1960 respectively. The emphasis on history overlaps with von Rad's pedagogical and preacher's work in Heidelberg. As a former assistant of Albrecht Alt, he would subscribe to the tradition-historical school, *überlieferungs-geschichtliche Schule*, interested in the pre-literal oral stages of the biblical text. In his habilitation work¹⁰

⁷ Walther Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments I*, Leipzig 1933; in English as *Theology of the Old Testament. Vol. I*, Philadelphia 1961, p. 31.

⁸ Ludwig Köhler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Tübingen 1936.

⁹ Gerhard von Rad, *Typologische Auslegung des Alten Testaments*, in: *Evangelische Theologie* 12 (1952/3), DOPLNIT

¹⁰ Gerhard von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs*, Neukirchen-Fluyn 1938.

von Rad developed the idea that at the very beginning of the development of the biblical texts there were short poems summarizing the historical experience of Israel (or what was later to become Israel). He would call these poems “historical creeds,” finding one in Deu 26:5b-9 and another one in Jos 24:2-15. Assuming these poems as the most original way Israel speaks about its God, von Rad generalizes, that Israel does not define God by what God *is* like (invisible, good, powerful...), but what God *did* and *is doing*. History as described – or to use von Rad’s own word: confessed – in the Bible is, according to von Rad, a kind of display of theophany; and not visions or theoretical reflections or the like. To grasp this kind of history as witnessed by biblical authors, von Rad uses the in 19th century reappearing term of *Heilsgeschichte*. The history the Bible fosters, is interested in and offers to generations of readers is, according to von Rad, the history of salvation. With this theory – that at the very basement of the Old Testament there is a historical experience and historically formulated confession – one understands von Rad’s claim that the Old Testament is a book of history. Quite understandably, the claim aroused waves of reactions. As early as 1963 Martin Honecker asks in his thorough analysis of von Rad’s work about his precise definition of history.¹¹ The distinction we made above between the three levels of a historicity of the Bible, reflects the problem Honecker has with von Rad, who tries to leap over the three levels using the word *Geschichte* in rather undifferentiated way (which the German language, unlike English or Czech, allows him).

Between the article of Martin Honecker and the Heidelberg conference in 2001 a major paradigm shift occurred. The shift can be quite clearly seen in the understanding of history. Objective history that could be gained through study has been stripped as innocent illusion during those years. History is always not just history of someone, but also history for someone. History, instead of being understood in its referential function, is now being redefined as an explanation of why things are as they are by telling chronologically how they successively came to being. This being so, the history has lost its aura

¹¹ Martin Honecker, *Zum Verständnis der Geschichte in Gerhard von Rad’s Theologie des Alten Testaments*, in *Evangelische Theologie* 23 (1963), p. 143-168.

of objectivity. If we define history not as an impartial report of the past, but as an attempt to create meaning, guidance and inspiration for our present decisions by interpreting past, then a much broader field of cooperation between historiography and theology opens. In other words: in this case biblical theology and the history of the Bible overlap in many ways, and the two disciplines can't ignore one another any longer. This attitude, however, seems to be the result of quite a long discussion, a discussion Slavomil Daněk took part in more than a half a century ago.

Slavomil C. Daněk: *facta or verbum?*

Born in 1885 in Uherské Hradiště, Eastern Moravia, Daněk studied theology in Vienna and – with much deeper effect – under Bernhard Duhm in Basel, Switzerland. After ten years of ministry as a village pastor in Libštát, Northern Bohemia, he was called to the newly established Protestant Theological Faculty (then Jan Hus Faculty) in Prague in 1920 and spent nearly three decades teaching there. This time includes the final five years of his life, when the Nazis closed all Czech Universities; the faculty was transformed into an unofficial network of church-run education. He died shortly after the war, in 1946. As for his confession, he was an outspokenly reformed theologian, personally – many of his colleagues would witness – an extremely thorough and consistent thinker, with, unfortunately, a rather incomprehensible way of expression, and despite that, quite a rich bunch of followers among Czech theologians.

Through all his teaching career he would practice (and require) an utmost expertise in Bible in its Hebrew version, in its cognate Semitic languages, in Greek and in other translations, of course following and commenting the scholarly debate of late 19th century. And yet, unlike anybody else in his days, he was passionately refusing the judging role of history characteristic for both pre-War German and to a lesser degree also Scandinavian theological schools. What present day educational strategists celebrate as interdisciplinarity, is something Daněk would have just words of disdain for: “The original sin of the Old Testament Theology is, that instead of grasping the Bible with its own eyes and following its own methods, it has been con-

stantly seeking the judgment of this or that neighbouring discipline, ranging from history, zoology through astronomy...¹²

It is in this essay with telling title *Verbum and facta of the Old Testament* that he takes the marriage between theology and history by storm. I hasten to emphasize: he does not criticize the function of history in the Old Testament theology from a conservative, let alone fundamentalist position. His refusal of history is motivated by his methodological considerations. The Bible, in his view, is but a witness of a religious, even theological struggle with the facts given. Not the facts behind the Bible, but the counterfactual,¹³ subversive (to use Walter Brueggemann's favorite term) message of the Bible is therefore the appropriate business of the theologian. In the same vein as Albert Eichhorn – though he does not mention him, the real matter of interest for the theologian is the so called “traditional – or traditioning¹⁴ – process,” the “why” of particular stories and materials, the reasons that they have been told, reshaped and preserved in the Bible. To trace down, identify, and hear the hidden motion in the Bible means to hear the theological Word, the *verbum*. That is what Daněk is – in a good Reformation manner – exclusively interested in. In his own words: “Any particular form of the [biblical] tradition is but an instrument that has to fulfil certain function. No mere facts, no *factum brutum*, but *why* does the tradition preserve them is decisive.”¹⁵

Apparently, Daněk's extreme mistrust towards the judging role of history was his reaction to historical criticism. Daněk strives to formulate the “Word” of the Old Testament in such a way, that “it will be impossible neither to refute it, nor even answer it.”¹⁶ He does not hide his disappointment about the effort of his teacher Bernhard

¹² Slavomil C. Daněk, “Verbum a fakta Starého zákona,” in: *Ročenka Husovy fakulty*, Prague 1937, p. 11–38; further in this paper quoted as Daněk, *Verbum a fakta*.

¹³ Trying to use Daněk's distinction between *verbum* and *facta*, I am using the term “counterfactual” in a different meaning than is usual in recent historiography. There the modelling of alternative scenarios and developments of various entities provided a singular determining factor would have been changed. All this is carried out OVĚŘIT

¹⁴ See the article of Filip Čapek in this issue. page **DOPLNIT**

¹⁵ Daněk, *Verbum a fakta*, p. 21.

¹⁶ Quoted – or rather summarized – in Czech by Josef B. Souček in his obituary to Daněk, Slavomil Daněk: Pokus o rozbor jeho theologického díla [An attempt to analyze his theological enterprise], in: *Theologia evangelica* (1950), p.142.

Duhm to show (in quite a pioneering way) the Deuteronomists' pen in the book of Jeremiah.¹⁷ It is not the fact that perhaps even a much smaller part of the book of Jeremiah really originates with the prophet himself that bothers Daněk. As his remarks and polemics reveal, he was well aware of the recent archeological research and in his historical judgment he leaned towards very critical consequences. What really irritated him, however, was the idea, that any kind of *ipsissima verba ieremiae* should enjoy higher status than their supposedly secondary amplification. Repeatedly his emphasis on the literary and theological unity of the Bible forbade him to cherish the source criticism.

In this Slavomil Daněk could be seen as a lonely forerunner of two quite conflicting programs of much later days, namely the Canonical approach of Brevard S. Childs,¹⁸ Juda Palache¹⁹ and the later Amsterdam school or the project of rhetorical criticism of James Muilenburg and later Walter Brueggemann²⁰ on the one hand, and of the radical scepticism of some Old Testament historians on the other hand, the so called minimalists, formulating deliberately their reconstruction of Judean past *etsi Biblia non daretur* [as if there were no Bible].²¹ Expressing his doubts concerning historiographical optimism of his German colleagues, Daněk is asking in 1937 – with quite ingenious historical intuition (which he probably would not take as a compliment):

¹⁷ Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, Tübingen 1901.

¹⁸ Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, Philadelphia 1985.

¹⁹ Juda L. Palache, The Nature of Old Testament Narrative, in: Martin Kessler, *Voices From Amsterdam: A Modern Tradition of Reading Biblical Narrative*, Atlanta 1994, pp. 13–22.

²⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *The Text under Negotiation: The Bible and postmodern Imagination*, Minneapolis 1993; Walter Brueggemann, *Retrospect 2: The Contemporary Situation*, in *His Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, Minneapolis 1997, pp. 61–114.

²¹ Selectively about Minimalists Lester L. Grabbe, Can a 'History of Israel' be Written?, Sheffield: *JSOT, VYPSAT??* 1997; Alastair G. Hunter and Philip R. Davies, *Sense and Sensitivity: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll*, London, New York 2002; Joachim Schaper, Auf der Suche nach dem alten Israel? Text, Artefakt und Geschichte Israels in der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft vor dem Hintergrund der Methodendiskussion in den Historischen Kulturwissenschaften* Teil I + II, in: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 2006, 118, s. 1–21 und s. 181–196.

But what if Israel even during the occupation [as narrated by the book of Joshua] was not a nation but an *Amphyktiony*, a sacral union with some Non-Israelites, e.g. Midianites, as Möhlenbrink had suggested. Yes what if Israel was no ethnic entity at all, but really an *ecclesia*? What remains of the “history of Israel,” when we disentangle the fabric of the Old Testament tradition? What if the excavations in Meggido will reveal, that the religious life of Israelite kings was even much more distant from the prophetic claims than we have thought? [...] The conclusion therefore is, that we don’t know the realities of the Old Testament and there is no way how to recognize them.²²

Being this kind of historical agnostic, he embarked on arranging theology for it. There is, again, direct connection to what could be understood as a word of intercession for the minimalists of our time (who also would sometimes be called nihilists²³).

Summa summarum, the facts of the Old Testament go on transmuting, changing and disappearing. *Facta labuntur* [the facts are swinging]. They do not speak for themselves. [Therefore: critical scholarly] destructions of some periods, figures, dates or events has never matched the malignancy of [pseudo scholarly] constructions. This is simply because destruction will never satisfy us fully. The more consequent nihilism, the more extreme gnosis, the wilder speculation, – the more ephemeral they all are. But the false constructions trail behind us millenniums and centuries [...] *Facta labuntur* [the facts are swinging], *sed Verbum Dei manet* [but the Word of God remains], *manet quia fit* [remains, because it is becoming].²⁴

²² Daněk, *Verbum a fakta*, p. 17.

²³ William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know, and When Did They Know it? What Archaeology Can Tell us about the Reality of Ancient Israel*, Grand Rapids, 2001; Gary A. Rendsburg, *Down with History, Up with Reading: The Current State of Biblical Studies*, McGill University 1999, see <http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/jewish/30yrs/rendersburg/index.html>; Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists Are Murdering Our Past*, New York 1996.

²⁴ Daněk, *Verbum a fakta*, p. 19.

In other words: For Daněk it is better if the theology is critical, analytical, yes even destructive in an exaggerated way than if it for pastoral or any other reasons sticks to an explanatory historical model that it is very difficult to get rid of. We encounter here a kind of apophatic theology where the word of God could at best be compared to a fire burning down singular contingent swinging facts of Biblical tradition. Those facts are in his view indispensable, but indispensable just and exactly as the sustenance for the fire of God's Word. Slavomil Daněk, I hope, would not protest against this metaphor, especially if we specify it as the fire of the burning bush in Exodus 3. The bush itself, the swinging facts of the Old Testament, that would be analyzed, yes sometimes destructed, by scholarly analysis, and yet they provide the realm of God's words blaze.

Facta – Verbum or History – Religion

Outlandish and exotic – or ingenious and prophetic – as this may sound, it's clear that Daněk hardly did justice to history in its complexity. In his refusal of history, in his emphasis on God's word, the particular and contingent stories of the Bible tend to be overshadowed by his massive yet motionless theological concept. Unlike the years of his studies before the 1st World War, Daněk seems to have lost touch with (or simply ignored) the theological discussion abroad during his career in '20s and '30s. Taking into consideration the development in German speaking theology, his intellectual home, there is no hint or discussion with theologians who could have been his allies. Above we have seen how Walther Eichrodt understands his Theology as a revolt against “the tyranny of historicism.” No sign of applause was ever heard for Eichrodt from Prague.

Above, his juxtaposition of *verbum* and *facta* of the Old Testament was mentioned.

Facta [the facts] are for Daněk cipher for material history in general. *Facta*, i.e. the history, represent the ephemeral sphere of no interest for the theologian. As such they are juxtaposed to the transforming power of the *verbum* [the Word], the cipher for the implicit theological programme of the Bible. For Daněk, the theologically loaded term Word seems to be equal with the term of religion. Daněk

does not seem to reflect a sharp distinction between faith or word on the one hand and religion as a human attempt of man to reach God on the other, as exactly at this time formulated by early Karl Barth.²⁵ For Daněk, religion as a timeless sphere of God's word has to be sought in the Bible and proclaimed from the pulpits. To understand what Daněk understands under religion, one has to turn to his programmatic exegetical treatise *Gedaliah* from the year 1930. At the beginning Daněk formulates:

“The Old Testament materials in their present form have for sure been preserved and passed on for the reason of religion. The only satisfying kind of exegesis therefore is the one that seeks to discover and grasp the religious substrate and character of all materials of Old Testament. All attempts to look for the reason and meaning of the texts and their contexts elsewhere, e.g. in political, social, cultural, ethical and the like moments are improper, premature and are to be deemed as failed. The OT materials have undergone long process of tradition, that has touched and even bleached their religious flavour. It is therefore necessary to examine the terminology of these materials with the idea that the genuinely religious meaning some terms might have got lost or their religious origin have been changed, if not distorted deliberately.²⁶

²⁵ Karl Barth, *Römerbrief* 1919, p. 576: “Unsere Sache, die ihr kennt und verstanden habt und die wir uns jetzt gemeinsam wieder in Erinnerung gerufen haben, ist keine Religion, sondern das Reich Gottes. Hütet euch vor den Dämonen der Religion, sie könnten wiederkehren! Es könnten auch unter euch solche auftauchen, die das Reich Gottes wieder religiös verstehen, die aus dem Wachstum des Leibes des Christus wieder den Betrieb einer Kirche oder Schule machen, die nach kurzem Zögern doch wieder den Kultus der schönen Seele aufrichten, die dem Wirken des Geistes doch wieder entgegenstellen wollen ein eigenes geistliches oder geistlich-weltliches Wirken, die etwas machen wollen, was dem, das Gott macht, recht ähnlich sehen könnte, und doch das Gegenteil von dem schafft, was Gott will: Zerstörung statt Auferbauung, Zerstreuung statt Sammlung. Der Tod lauert überall, wo Leben ist, ganz besonders aber in allen Dogmen, Satzungen, Methoden, Systemen, Standpunkten, Programmen und Schneckenhäusern, in die die Menschen den lieben Gott immer wieder einschließen möchten, um sich von dem Einen Notwendigen zu dispensieren.” See also Karl Barth, § 6 Die Erkennbarkeit des Wortes Gottes. In *KD* Band I,1 (§§ 1–12).

²⁶ Slavomil C. Daněk, *Gedaliah: Ilustrace k teorii exegese [Gedaliah: An Illustration to the Theory of Exegesis]*, in: *Sborník Husovy fakulty*, Praha: Kalich 1930, pp. 51–98.

Later, in his textbook *The historical background of the Old Testament*, arguing for a relative, auxiliary function of history, Daněk says:

Where the meaning and development of religion is studied, as in case of the theology of the Old Testament (which seeks to grasp religious values forming the substrate of the new and higher religiosity), there the attention to political and cultural conditions has its special importance... Yet unlike mere scholarly search of knowledge, we must not lose the goal from our sight, that is: to highlight the religious elements in the sphere described. As theologians we are interested in political and cultural conditions in Israel only to the extent as they represent the foil of the religious... conditions.²⁷

According to his thesis, the genuinely religious meaning, the religious substrate and character of all the materials is the goal of exegesis. The changing historical terrain, that we may possibly discover and describe, could help us to “measure the distance between political and cultural model as projected by the religion on the one hand and between the reality, comprising the historical situations and occurrences.”²⁸ According to eye- (or rather ear-) witnesses, in some of his remarks and also in his sermons and lectures, Daněk really was able to wind the religious character of the text of the Bible, leaving the listeners with the deep impression of an occurrence of spiritual quality, of an encounter with Infinity.

Mythology and narration

Trying to disclose “the religious substrate and character of all materials of Old Testament,” Daněk remained owing an explanation to his readers, as to why then, out of what motivation and for what reason, was the genuinely religious character of the Bible abandoned, changed for quasi-historical narratives. Is then the process of tradition, whose

²⁷ Edited after his decease as Slavomil C. Daněk, *Dobové pozadí Starého zákona* [= *The Historical Background of the Old Testament*], Praha 1951, p. 8–9.

²⁸ Daněk, *Dobové pozadí*, p. 9.

religious character Daněk advocates, at the same time a traitor, depriving the biblical text of its religious character? The only outcome of the exemplary exegetical essay *Gedalia* is that the exciting biblical story of the rounded character of the Judean Protectorate officer Gedaliah (Jer 40–41) appointed by the Babylonians turns to an encrypted scenario of the Davidide Yishmael's iconoclastic demonstration of loyalty to Israel's monotheistic God. The outcome of this – as I would call it – theologizing allegoresis seems to me rather indigent. In his essay “Mythology under the state of liquidation: Status nascendi of theology”²⁹ from 1920 Daněk reveals his rather opaque understanding of mythos and religion. Unlike Rudolf Bultmann, he does not seem to be disturbed by the mythological character of the Bible. He does not strive to eliminate the mythology by some sort of demythologizing. Rather, his way would be “theologization” of it. Or, as he would put it: “What I learn in the clearest way from Jesus is his way of inner overcoming of mythology and (mysticism) by the values of ‘pure’ religion, that radiates through the garment of timely way of expression, which by the conception was mythological way.”³⁰

Nowhere in his texts did I come across Daněk's distinction, evaluation or even mention of the narrative character of the Bible as a category of some value, distinct from the category of historicity. Having mentioned similarities with Juda Palache from Amsterdam, I cannot, on the other hand, think of a deeper gap between Palache and Daněk in evaluation of the narrative character of the Bible. Narrativity, a neologism trying to pick up the narrative aspect of the Bible as a deliberate way of expressing its agenda, was an unknown category in Daněk's days. It was not until the 1970s that it started to be systematically reflected by scholars realizing the blind branch of historical criticism of the Bible.

In his book *The Eclipse of Narrative*,³¹ Hans Frei, critical towards the sole authority usurped by the Enlightened exegesis, argues that

²⁹ Published as Slavomil C. Daněk, *Mythologie ve stadiu likvidace: Status nascendi theologie* [= Mythology in Liquidation: Status Nascendi of Theology], in: *Dobové pozadí*, p.185ff.

³⁰ Daněk, *Mythologie*, p.186.

³¹ Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Narrative*, New Haven 1974.

the original readers have read the Bible in a realistic mode of perception. It was only during the Enlightenment that the realism of the Bible has been given up and a distinction embraced between the historical and figurative meaning. The either-or relation between the historical and figurative meaning can be, according to Frei, overcome by narrative meaning, the closest analogy to the realism of the reading in antiquity.

Quite recently, Jörn Rüsen has explained in his book *Zerbrechende Zeit*³² that modern historiography is a peculiar combination of two original types of rationality, the rationality of narration and the rationality of explanation. Historical narrative creates meaning with the help of time. The facts narrated in historical accounts like the Bible do create meaning, and this meaning is an alternative to a systematic explanation, an explanation that also strives for meaning of its own kind.

For Hans Frei the term *mythos* bears quite positive connotations. The original meaning of *mythos* is narration. It seems to me that Daněk, on the other hand, fell prey to his own hard dichotomies and polarities. Feeling the theological void of historical criticism, he stressed the religious character of the Bible. Grippled by the dichotomy religion or history, Daněk chooses the first option. Having done so, he helped many of his followers to be more resistant towards the strikes of historical criticism, misused by the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

In his essay *Mythology under the state of liquidation* Daněk shows however, that he was well aware of another feature of history. In spite of his criticism of the role theologians would ascribe to history in judging the veracity of the Bible, he seems to be well aware of the importance history has – not to disclose the world of the Bible behind the text, but to help us to take seriously the world we are living in, in front of the Bible (to its face, to translate literally the Hebrew phrase *li-fney*, “in front of”).³³ To emphasize the theological and spiritual condition of the interpreting community, be it on national, denomina-

³² Jörn Rüsen, *Zerbrechende Zeit: Über den Sinn der Geschichte* [The Fragile Time: On the Meaning of History], Köln, Weimar, Wien 2001.

³³ Daněk, *Mythologie*, p.187.

tional or congregational level, as the most pertinent factor for exegesis, qualifies Daněk as a herald the Linguistic turn of the 1970s that in his days would still have a few decades ahead to come.³⁴

Summary: In this essay the work of the Old Testament scholar Slavomil C. Daněk is introduced and discussed with particular attention to his relation to history. A contemporary of Walther Eichrodt, he also tried to break down the tyranny of historicism. Unaware of the helpful distinction between the historical and narrative character of the Bible, he sought to find the eternal and therefore timeless Word on the ruins of history. On the other hand, he paid due attention to the historical conditions of the readers' community.

Keywords: Old Testament – History – Exegesis of Bible – historical criticism – Czech theology – Daněk Slavomil C.

³⁴ This Text is a result of the grant project GAAV 242185 – “The Hermeneutics of Narrative and Legal Texts of the Old Testament” provided by the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic.

BIBLICAL STUDIES IN HUNGARY TODAY AND IN THE PAST

György Benyik, Szeged

When I opened the 1993 edition of *Who's Who in Biblical Studies and Archeology* I was astonished to realize that there is no such entry as "Hungarian" in the register of nationalities. Although it is indicated in the entry on Géza Vermes,¹ translator of the famous Qumran texts, that he is Hungarian, the lexicon does not even mention the name of Dénes Farkasfalvy,² professor in Dallas, member of the Papal Biblical Commission and there is no mention of the feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza or of the fact that she was Hungarian.³ At the present time, about fifty university professors do biblical studies and live and teach in Hungary and they are familiar with the achievements of German, Italian, English and French biblical studies and have studied in Rome, Vienna, Tübingen (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), London or in the United States. They are

¹ The following books are also published in Hungarian translation: *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, London 1999; *The Changing Faces of Jesus*, New York 2001; *Jesus the Jew*, London 2001; *The Passion*, Penguin Books 2005; *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus*, Allen Lane 2004.

² Farkasfalvy has many publications in English and several in Hungarian also: *Zsoltároskönyv* [Psalm translation] Eisenstadt 1975, second edition: 1976; *Bevezetés a szentírástudományba* [Introduction to the New Testament], Roma 1976; *A római levél, Bevezetés, fordítás és magyarázat* [Letter to Rome, translation and exegesis] Eisenstadt 1983; *Himnuszok. Válogatás a Római breviárium himnuszából* [Hymn translation from the Breviarium of Romae], Budapest 1984; Kardos K. (ed.), *A Teremtő dicsérete* [Creator laudation. Poem translation], Eisenstadt 1985; *Testté vált szó. Evangélium szent János szerint, Első rész (1–6. capitol)*, Eisenstadt 1986; *Zsolozsmáskönyv hívek számára*, Bécs 1986, ²1986; *Testté vált szó. Evangélium szent János szerint, Második rész* [Logos incarnate – Gospel according to John exegesis] (7–12. capitol), Eisenstadt 1987.

³ Geza Vermes and Denis Farkasfalvy with his Hungarian publications had an important impact on Hungarian biblical scholars.

the Hungarian mediators and sometimes creators of the international study achievements.⁴

So why is there this peculiar silence about Hungarians? The cause seems to lie in history and in the quite complex world of church and scientific relationships. Hungary, in the course of history, has had various different geographical changes. Some Hungarian historical centres of culture can today be found in Slovakia, Rumania, Serbia and Austria.

The beginnings, 1042–1526

The first biblical study written in Hungary was put down in Latin. It was written on the book of the prophet Daniel by bishop Gellért (1030–1046), bearing the title *Deliberatio supra hymnum trium puerorum*. It was written during the hot summer of 1042 and it quotes about fifty patristic authors and authors of the Middle Ages, including for example Isidore of Seville. This manuscript was lying in the Bavarian State Library (Munich) until 1724 when Károly Meichelbeck discovered it. However, it was only published in 1790 by the Transylvanian bishop Ignác Batthyányi.⁵

It may not be a well-known fact either that during the course of history the Bible saw about two hundred different Hungarian translations. The first one was made in the locality of Tartos (today in Rumania) in 1446, probably with the intention of converting Bogumil heretics. It survived in the Vienna and in the Munich codices.⁶

⁴ György Benyik, *A magyarországi Bibliikus Irodalom a kezdetektől 1997-ig* [Bibliography of Hungarian Biblical literature from beginning to 1997], Szeged 2000.

⁵ *Deliberatio Gerardi Moresanae ecclesie episcopi Supra Hymnum Trium Puerorum*, Szeged 1999. His lost writings concern a commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews, a commentary on the First Letter of John and a dogmatic writing on the Holy Trinity.

⁶ From the Bible translation see Károly Alexa (ed.): *Magyar Zsoltár*, Budapest 1969; Ferenc Balogh, *A magyar Biblia története* Debrecen 1872; György Benyik, *Jelentősebb magyarnyelvűszentírásfordítások elemzése*, Budapest 1975; György Benyik, *Magyar nyelvűbiblikus irodalom a 19-20.sz.-ban.*, Budapest 1977; Péter Bod, *A Szent Bibliának története*, Szeged 1748; János Bottyán, *A magyar Biblia évszázadai*, Budapest 1982; Károly Erdős, *Az Újszövetség magyar fordítása a reformáció óta*, Debrecen 1937; László Hadrovics, *A magyar huszita Biblia német és cseh rokonága*, Budapest 1994; István Harsányi, *A magyar Biblia*, Budapest 1927; János Mol-

The frontiers of Hungary have been subject to change throughout history. The first greatest changes took place in the eleventh century (during the Turkish reign), second after the Treaty of Trianon, and the last during the Second World War. As a result of this, a number of Hungarian citizens and their cultural institutions worked in different neighboring countries. During the Balkan war the minister of foreign affairs of the United States, Madeleine Albright, stated that “history is condensed in the Balkans.” This statement goes for Hungary, too.

These historical changes made Hungarian cultural and religious relationships quite varied as well. It is important to mention these as they are still showing their effects.

During the Middle Ages we developed relationships with the Universities of Passau (Bavaria), Cluny (France), Bologna (Italy), Prague (Bohemia) and Krakow (Poland). This shows the fact that in Hungary the Latin, the German and the Slavic cultures led to a mixture manifest in a fourth national language of culture, that of the Hungarians.

The Reformation, 1526–1848

The Hungarian cultural relationships saw the first great crisis in 1526 when more than half of the country came under Turkish rule for three hundred years. The great majority of Hungarian catholic bishops died on the plains of Mohács. Practically only the Franciscan monks of Szeged did missionary work between the River Tisza and River Duna and in the region over the Tisza. The different versions (Helvetican, Lutheran, and Unitarian) of the Reformation reached Hungary as well.⁷ The printing of the first theologies and theological books were

nár, György Simon, *Magyar nyelvmélekek*, Budapest 1976; László Musnai, *A magyar Biblia története*, Torda 1925; István Nemeskürthy, *Biblia, szókincs, irodalom*, Budapest 1990; Jenő Zoványi, *Magyarországi Protestáns Egyháztörténeti Lexikon*, Budapest 1977; Péter Újvári, *Zsidó Lexikon*, Budapest 1929; László Péter L.: *Új magyar irodalmi lexikon 1-3 k*, Budapest 1994; Róbert Szentiványi, *A Szentírásudomány tankönyve*, Szeged 1946; János Szombathy, *Tudósítás a magyar bibliáról (Pethe féle bibl. előszava)*, 1794

⁷ The most important theological institutes in order of foundation: 996 Pannonhalma Bencés Apátság (Benedict Abbey), 1530 Debreceni Református Kollégium (Calvinist College of Debrecen), 1531 Sárospataki Református Kollégium (Calvinist College of Sárospatak), 1557 Evangélikus Hittudományi Egyetem (Lutheran Theo-

realized in Transylvania, the most liberal state of contemporary Europe. The very first printed and full version of the Bible in Hungarian was made by the reformed preacher Gáspár Károli and his companions in Vizsoly in 1590.⁸ As this translation and its corrected versions were accepted by the editor's program of the British and various other foreign Bible Societies and these were transported for many years, this version became a strong basis and determined the old literary language in Hungary, just like the King James Version did in England.⁹

This version was presently followed by a Catholic one. György Káldi,¹⁰ a Jesuit monk, made it in 1607, probably with the help of a

logical University), 1563 Győri Hittudományi Főiskola, (Catholic Theological College of Győr), 1566 Egri Rk. Hittudományi Főiskola (Catholic Theological College of Eger), 1566 Esztergomi Rk. Hittudományi Főiskola (Catholic Theological College of Esztergom), 1622 Kolozsvár, Protestáns Teológia (Reformed Theological College of Cluje), 1635 Nagyszombati Egyetem, hittudományi, bölcsészettudományi, jogi kar, később orvosi kart is kapott (Catholic Theological Faculty in University of Nagyszombat) (New foundation 1995), 1698 Kolozsvár, Római Katolikus Teológiai Fakultás (Catholic Theological Faculty in University Cluj), 1742 Pécsi Római Katolikus Hittudományi Főiskola (Catholic Theological College of Pécs), 1753 Gyulafehérvári Római Katolikus Hittudományi Főiskola (Catholic Theological College of Alba Iulia), 1805 Központi, Papnevelő Intézet Catholic Central College for Priest), 1844 Rabbiképző Országos Intézet (Union Rabbinical Seminary), 1855 Ráday Kollégium (Ráday Calvinist College), 1896 Baptista Teológiai Akadémia (Baptist Theological Academy), 1930 Görög Katolikus Hittudományi Főiskola (Union Theological College for Hungarien orthodox Church), 1930 Szegedi Hittudományi Főiskola (Theological College of Szeged), 1995 Sapientia Szerzetesi Hittudományi Főiskola (Sapientia Theological College).

⁸ Bibles and manuals used during his translation: F. Vatablus (1547), Pagnino Santes (1486), Sebastian Munster (1488-1552), *Biblia Hebraica*, Basel 1534-35, Basel 1537, E. Tremellius (1510-1580), *Rudimenta linguae hebraeae*, Vienna 1541; *Syra Novi Testamenti hebraici typis descripta*, Paris 1569; *Biblia sacra sive libri canonici latini recens ex Hebraeo facti*, Frankfurt 1579, London 1580.

⁹ Károli editions and revisions: Albert Szenczi Molnár, *Teljes rev*, Hanau 1608; Sámuel Köleséri, *Teljes rev*, Várad 1657; Sámuel Köleséri, Várad 1661; Miklós Misztótfalusi Kis, Amsterdam 1685; György Komáromi Csipkés, Leyden 1675 (1718); Mátyás Bél, New Testament, Leipzig 1717; Antal Löwe, Basel 1770; Ferenc Pethe, Utrecht 1794; Miklós Szigethy, Debrecen 1799; László Füstküti Márton, Pest-Pozsony 1804; Ferenc Pethe, Pest 1817; Károly Károli-Szász: Budapest 1884. Czeglédy-Rafay, Budapest 1938.

¹⁰ The most important editions and revisions of the Káldi Bible: György Káldi, Nagyszombat 1732; Káldi-Szepessy, Pozsony 1835; Káldi-Végh, Prediger Esztergom 1827; Káldi-Szabó, Pest 1851; Káldi-Tárkányi, Eger 1865; Catholic Theological Academy, Budapest 1915; Catholic Theological Academy, New Testament revised, Budapest 1928; Szent István Társ, *Teljes rev*, Budapest 1934; Káldi-Toldi-Talabér, Budapest 1884; New Testament revised, Budapest 1930.

manuscript written by István Arator. Both used various sources, not only the Catholic Káldi but the reformed Károli as well; although Luther's Bible and Erasmus' New Testament had an influence on him, he was strongly influenced by the Vulgate. The area of Hungary that was not under Turkish rule (the Uplands – today in Slovakia) joined the Austrian empire. German and Latin became official languages; preaching, however, in churches was in Hungarian and even Latin Gregorian songs were translated into Hungarian in this region.

German and Swiss melodies were added to the psalms of Albert Szenczi Molnár and integrated in a book of church songs in Protestant churches, a melody in great part adopted from the song book of Theodore Beza. From this time on, Hungarian Catholic and Protestant liturgies have been quite different in their melody culture. We need to add that the first translation of psalms from Hebrew was done by the Sabbatarian Simon Péchi on the basis of Jewish commentaries.¹¹

I will not speak about the baroque era as it did not see any changes from the point of view of biblical studies. However, from the time of the Reformation on, the cultural relationships of the different churches became quite divided. Catholics developed relationships with the universities of Rome, Paris and Leuven. Evangelicals have traditionally turned towards the universities of the Netherlands (Franeker)¹² and Germany (Wittenberg, Tübingen, Berlin). Calvinists following the Helvetian faith have built relationships with the universities of Bern, Switzerland, England and recently with Harvard. The Hungarian Orthodox Church has relationships with the universities of Saint Petersburg and Thessalonica.¹³ From among the Hungarian

¹¹ Simon Péchi, *Psaltériuma Szilárdy Áron kiadása*, Budapest 1913. For literature see Sámuel Kohn, *A szombatosok*. [Sabbatical], Budapest 1889.; Tibor Klaniczay, *A magyar későreneszánsz problémái és a barokk* [The Hungarian Late Renaissance and Baroque], Budapest 1961; Róbert Dán, *Az erdélyi Szombatosok és Péchi Simon* [The Transilvanian Sabbatical and Simon Péchi], Budapest 1987; Róbert Dán, *Humanizmus, Reformáció és a héber nyelv Magyarországon* [Humanism, Reformation, Renaissance and the Hebrew Language in Hungary], Budapest 1973.

¹² Many Lutheran pastors in the 17th century brought their wives from the Dutch Franeker to Hungary, the most famous was Aletta van der Maat, wife of János Apáczai Csere (1625–1659).

¹³ In Hungary there just existed one small Hungarian Orthodox Church from beginning to Hungarian Empire.

small churches Baptists have mainly turned to the Southern Baptist theology.¹⁴

The rise of the middle class, 1848–1944

The expulsion of the Turks and the Catholic Restoration under the Habsburgs strengthened German and Austrian influence. Emperor Joseph II wanted to create an imperial Catholic Church and so he supported sending Catholic priests to the University of Vienna instead of Rome. Concerning biblical studies this meant that Catholic priest-teachers were taught Hebrew and Greek as well, and they could also become familiar with the evangelical biblical results in Vienna; however, they could not really use this knowledge in Hungary. The Hungarian Academy of Science founded in the Reform era had not created a department of religion – so theologians holding a degree could only enter scientific and academic circles as historians of ancient times or as linguists of eastern languages and not as biblical scholars.

After long debates, Catholic, Reformed and Evangelic educational theology were established. The most outstanding Catholic schools were located in Pannonhalma and Zirc and run by monks. Having had good theological libraries, they became quite effective. The Catholic professors got a degree in Vienna, in Rome or in Budapest at the theology departments joined to the faculty of Arts and Humanities of the Pázmány Péter University of Science. At this time the German educational model and system was in use in Hungary too.

It is important to mention the foundation of some further church institutions of higher education: 1895, the Protestant College of Religious Studies, Cluj (today in Rumania); 1899, the Baptist preacher school, Budapest which translated many English books inspired by the Bible; 1877, the Rabbi Training School, Budapest, founded by József Eötvös (1813–1871) minister of religious affairs. He was a pioneer of religious equal rights and he made the Neology Jews a legal entity.¹⁵ The Rabbi Training Institute sent its degree-holding

¹⁴ It published many spiritual sermons inspired from biblical literature.

¹⁵ The most famous rabbis teaching in Budapest were: Vilmos Bacher, Sámuel Bloch, Dávid Kaufmann, Sámuel Brüll, Sámuel Deutsch, Miksa Klein, Ignác Goldziher, Sámuel Kohn, Lajos Venetianer, Mihály Guttmann, Mózes Feldmann, Lajos

rabbis either to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Pázmány Péter University or to Berlin to get a degree. Between the years 1890 and 1914 about thirty Hebrew-Hungarian grammar books and several Hebrew-Hungarian dictionaries were published. Great philological discourses were born about the Targum of many biblical books.

An effective study of the east started in Hungary. An example of this was an Uragit-German Dictionary compiled by a Budapest professor, József Aisleitner.¹⁶ The Catholic biblical studies were restricted from 1906 by the declarations of the Papal Biblical Commission. These did not permit the application of historical-critical methods for Catholic biblical scholars until 1915. A real change only came with the *Dei Verbum* constitution of the Second Vatican Council; this could not, however, really have an effect in Hungary because of the communist regime.

The communist era, 1945–1990

The communist culture policy put an end to all this great development. György Lukács declared psychology, the sciences of classical philology and theology as retrograde sciences. Later in the Rákosi era theological and monastic libraries were merged into the Széchenyi Library. Some of them – for example a part of the Sárospatak Library¹⁷ – were taken as loot by the Soviet troops. Many basic theological issues of the Middle Ages and of modern history were formally destroyed; Hungarian theologians were not allowed to keep in touch with western universities and conferences could only be attended by professors who were politically committed. In Hungary the publication of theological and biblical books became almost impossible and Hungarian scholars could not publish their works abroad.

Balu, Bernát Heller, Bertalan Edelstein, Gyula Fischer, Simon Hevesi, Ármin Hoffer, Miksa Weisz, József Bánóczy, Károly Stein, Henrick Bloch, Salamon Schritt, Imre Csetényi, Móric Bercsényi, Vilmos Hausbrunner, Sándor Scheiber.

¹⁶ *Ein Opfertext aus Ugarit mit Exkurs über kosmologische Beziehungen der ugaritischen Mythologie 1–2 k*, Budapest. 1954–55; *Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft der Ugaritischen Sprache*, Berlin 1963; *Die mythologischen und kultischen Texte aus Ras Schamra*, Budapest 1964.

¹⁷ A part of the library of Sárospatak was returned back with the help of Russian President Putin in 2006.

Hungarian theology and within it the level of Bible education sharply decreased. Trained biblical scholars, if they were Reformed or Evangelicals, got employed in the country as ministers and if they were Catholics they did not get an invitation to the Theological Academy.¹⁸ Hungarian Catholics cooperated with Eastern German and with Polish theologians. In the 1960s many Hungarian theologians learned Polish because it was the only way to get acquainted with biblical and systematic theological literatures. From the 1970s cardinal Hans Kőnig and professor Jakob Kramer founded the Colloquium Biblicum in Vienna, which was the only possible meeting place for eastern European (i. e. Polish, Eastern German, Croatian, Slovenian, Hungarian and Rumanian) Catholic biblical professors. There were not any mutual scientific forums for Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars. The ancient history studies at universities lacked biblical education as well as patristic literature or both were restricted to footnotes. At the ancient history department there were some pages written about the society criticism of the prophet Amos and the study on Josephus Flavius was only a repetition. Only the natural scientific part of the education of the Middle Ages was touched upon and from the codices only the agricultural, medical, fishing or historical chronicles were studied. From the 1960s the political system was becoming less and less severe and from the 1970s some scholarships were awarded for studies abroad. German and Austrian relief funds started to supply the Catholic Church with technical books. The H. Haag Biblical Lexicon was published in Hungarian and in 1974, following the initiation of the Reformed Church, an ecumenical “Jubilee” commentary was published. In 1973 a new Catholic translation of the Bible came out, based on the Jerusalem Bible.

Among the theological institutes (besides the Catholic seminaries of the country) there were some other institutions with university-level education: the Academy of Religious Studies in Budapest, which nowadays constitutes the Faculty of Theology of Pázmány Péter Catholic University and the Reformed Károlyi Gaspar University in Budapest, the Reformed Theology in Debrecen, and the Evan-

¹⁸ Many religious orders were dissolved and in higher religious education no one could participate in any activity, except of three orders.

gical Academy of Theology in Budapest. The small churches ran minister training schools together. There were university-level biblical studies and education in these schools, too.

After the political changes, 1990–2000

This state of things changed during the time of the political changes in Hungary. One sign of this change was the SBL conference held in 1995 in Budapest, thanks to the invaluable organizing work of Ida Fröhlich.¹⁹

After the political changes, five church universities were founded with a faculty of biblical studies and also twenty colleges where college-level biblical studies are run. Besides this at the faculties of Arts and Humanities of several universities the frame of education has been expanded and biblical history and the history of the period are studied within the subject of Ancient History. Pázmány Péter Catholic University has extended its relations with other Catholic universities all around the world. The Calvinist Church has developed relations with Protestant universities in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Oxford and the United States. Through the Rabbi Training School professors of the Hebrew University teach regularly for shorter or longer periods in Budapest. The Lutherans got in touch with the universities of Vienna, Helsinki and many universities in the United States. The colleges run by universities make use of the possibilities of student exchange offered by their respective university. The Orthodox Church sends its students to Thessalonica.²⁰

The state accreditation system demanded the employment of trained professionals, which has been beneficial considering the qualification of the professorate. Most lecturers hold a PhD and habilitation is in progress, which is unimaginable without scholarships abroad.

¹⁹ The Qumran texts in a complete Hungarian translation were made by Ida Fröhlich, *A Qumráni szövegek magyarul*, Studia Orientalia Piliscsaba 2000.

²⁰ In the communist era its theological students had even to study theology in Lenin-grad or Moscow.

Problems and achievements

This part of my paper will admittedly be subjective as I cannot undertake to list all details. I am going to underline some achievements that I believe to be important in theological education, which in the period after the political changes significantly enhanced the Hungarian readership of theological literature. This is especially true within the Catholic Church. The greatest problems are constituted by the chronic lack of technical books and the still not adequate level of foreign languages in Hungary.

The Rádai Library in Budapest, the library of the Theological Faculty of Pázmány Péter Catholic University and the Theological library of the Evangelicals are among the best biblical studies study libraries in the country. The latter, thanks to the donations of the Archeological library of Roloff and D. Conrad, has developed a great deal. The National Széchenyi Library and the University Library of Budapest are surprisingly poor with regard to biblical studies. Because of the reasons stated above, the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is also quite poor in this respect.

I made a precise list of basic volumes which were lacking in the church libraries in 2005; I am at the disposal of anyone interested in donating any of these books to us. The other great problem lies in the fact that the cyclopedia accumulated is hard to spread across the university boundaries of each congregation.

I founded the Szeged Ecumenical Biblical Conference in 1988 to nurse European relations and to enhance scientific communication between denominations, where invitation is open to all who are adequately qualified²¹. In the past nineteen years we have organized

²¹ The following visiting professors participated in Biblical Conferences programs: Adorján Z., Balogh K., Beilner, W., Bissoli, C., Božo Lujčić, Brachet, J.Y., Braulik G., Broz, J., Chirila, I., Cifrak M., Corti G-L., Dugandžić I., Eynikel, E., Farkasfalvy D., Flichy O., Gémes, I., Geréb Zs., Gjorgjevski, G., Gnilka J., Grozdanoski, R., Hausmann, J., Holtz, T., Hoppe, R., Horn, F., Jakab, A., Jakubinyi Gy., Kähler, C. H., Kertelge, K., Kozma Zs., Krakolis, Ch., Kremer, J., Laban, M., Lindemann, A., Liptay Gy., Luz U., Maton J., Meiser, M., Müller, P., Hohnjec N., Ordon, H., Peres I., Plevnik, J., Pommert, K., Rasco E., Rau, E., Rebić A., Richter H. F., Rokay Z., Schmidt, W.- R., Schmithals, W., Schreiber, S., Schwank, B., Sellin, G., Serra, A., Spinetoli, Da O., Suomeka, A., Tökés I., Zulehner P., Untergassmair, F. G., Vanni, U., Vermes, G., Vese E., Vojnovic T., Vygintas G., Weigand, P., Weismahr B., Wrege, H.Th., Zamfir K.

218 lectures on a yearly basis and the results were published in fourteen volumes. Sixty-nine lecturers have come from beyond the Hungarian border. The fewest lecturers have come from English-speaking countries, mainly because of the distance. The conference has had 2435 attendees in the past nineteen years.²²

At Pázmány Péter Catholic University it is Ida Fröhlich who leads the translation program of the Pseudepigraph Literature of the Old Testament, where texts are translated from the original. In Pápa there is an intertestamental study being carried out. At the Károli University of Budapest the translation work of the New Testament Apocrypha led by János Bolyki has been finished. The commentary on the Gospel according to Saint John by Bolyki is a significant scientific achievement, too. The studies of the intertestamental era led by professor Zsengeller are connected to the Reformed College of Pápa.²³ The hermeneutics institute led by Tibor Fabinyi mainly deals with the history of interpretation.²⁴

At the Lutheran Religious Studies University the study of the literature of wisdom and that of the psalms (and also the *Palästina-kunde*) are underlined and at the Reformed Theology of Pápa intertestamental literature studies have been started.

The most neglected area is biblical archeology.²⁵ Although Hungarian Egyptology studies are quite remarkable, valuable relations

²² The following proceedings were published: *Apocalyptic and Resurrection*, Szeged 1993; *Acts of the Apostles – Letters to Corinth*, Biblical Conference Szeged, Szeged 1995; *The Question of Messiah*, Biblical Conference, Szeged 1997; *The Childhood narrative and Mariology*, Biblical Conference, Szeged 1997; *Parable*, Biblical Conference Szeged, Szeged 1998; *The Miracle Narrative*, Biblical Conference Szeged 1998, Szeged 2000; *Macht and Charisma*, Szeged 2003. *Secularized Community and Religious Community*, Biblical Conference Szeged, Szeged 2004; *Biblical Interpretation Methods*, Biblical Conference Szeged, Szeged 2005; *Mission*, Biblical Conference Szeged, Szeged 2005.

²³ The conference papers are published each second year in *Acta Theologica Pa-pensia* since 1990.

²⁴ 12 volumes published the most interesting papers from this and two conference proceedings in English: *The Bible in Literature and Literature in the Bible*, Piliscsaba 1955, and *Interpretation of Texts Sacred and Secular*, Zürich-Budapest 1999.

²⁵ The Catholic professor László Gyürki, and Lutheran Sándor Czeglédi published many articles. The most interesting translation into Hungarian is G. Kroll, *Auf den Spuren Jesu*, Leipzig 1980, Budapest 1982.

with the biblical archeological centers have not been established. The Saint Paul Academy has published a good Biblical Atlas.²⁶

The preparations for the first Bible Scholars' Lexicon are being carried out in Szeged. The greatest achievement of the Hungarian Catholic Church has been the translation of the New Jerome Biblical Commentary into Hungarian. This anthology type work was the first important book to be published which was translated from English and which is available to a wide range of interested persons.

The latest biblical studies periodical in foreign languages was founded in Cluj (Rumania) entitled *Sacra Scriptura*.²⁷ Its executive editor is Korinna Zamfir, and there are representatives of Hungarian and foreign universities in the editorial board. Ulrich Luz (Bern), Erik Eynikel (Nijmegen), Ed Noort (Groningen), Steve L. McKenzier (Rhodes College, Memphis), Imtraud Fischen Graz, Loveday Alexandr (Univ. Sheffield), and Gerd Theissen (Heidelberg); I am a member of this editorial board myself.

Bible studies articles are published in Jeromos Füzetek (Jerome booklets), in Foglia Theologica (review of the Catholic theological faculty), in Confessio (reformed theological review), in Evangélikus élet (Evangelical Life) and in Theologia. The two Bible societies are quite active, too. The Catholic Saint Jerome Bible Society²⁸ is led by professor Béla Tarjányi and the Ecumenical Bible society is presided over by Zoltán Kustár. Both societies lead scientific translator programs. Biblical studies are published in Hungary in theological reviews and in the Jewish-Christian Annual.²⁹

²⁶ Johanan Aharoni, Michael Avi-Yonah, *Carta*, The Israel Map in a Hungarian version, Budapest 1999.

²⁷ The Babes-Bolyai University Center for Biblical Studies: *Sacra Scripta*, Journal of the Center for Biblical Studies, Year IV, 2006, 1-2, Cluj-Napoca.

²⁸ Since 1990 Catholics biblical scholars publish annually a Jerome publication.

²⁹ József Szécsi is the editor of the Jews Christian Annual, publishing yearly since 2002 one volume.

Summary: This article aims to fill the gap in knowledge in international circles about the tradition of biblical studies in Hungary. The early beginnings go back to the Middle Ages. The Reformation profoundly influences the level of the discipline in the country, which had a large reformed community. Also the 19th and 20th centuries had either an encouraging or a restrictive impact on the state of biblical studies in Hungary. At present scholars are engaged in many projects and participate in the international community of biblical researchers.

Keywords: Biblical Studies – Hungary – History

THE INSIDER/OUTSIDER DEBATE AND THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

Márta Cserháti, Budapest

Introduction

Several years ago, writing my dissertation on the so-called “Third Quest of the Historical Jesus,” I was struck by the distance that separated two groups of historical reconstructions of the life of Jesus: one was working with interdisciplinary models and approaches “borrowed” from other disciplines such as cross-cultural anthropology and social theory, and the other using primarily religious categories and/or the classic tools of historical criticism. This difference was expressed quite openly in a book written by two leading historical Jesus scholars, Marcus Borg and NT Wright, entitled *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*. Towards the end of the book, Tom Wright summarizes his views as follows:

I persist in believing that it is historically far more useful to use “emic” categories than “etic” ones (that is, categories the subjects themselves would have recognized rather than the categories we impose upon them). We are much more likely to get into the minds of our subjects that way. And when we do so, the categories that Jesus’ own world offered to describe someone doing and saying the sort of things Jesus was doing and saying were: prophet, messiah, martyr.¹

His dialogue partner, Marcus Borg, adds to this his own remarks:

The foundational categories with which we develop our sketches of Jesus are quite different. My categories – namely, the five

¹ N. T. Wright and Marcus Borg, *The Meaning of Jesus*, London 1999, p. 226.

primary strokes of my sketch of Jesus as Spirit person, healer, wisdom teacher, social prophet, movement initiator – are drawn from the cross-cultural study of religion, Tom uses categories native to the Jewish tradition: Jesus as messiah, a prophet of the kingdom of God, the need for the real return from exile, Israel’s vocation to be light to the nations and so forth. We both agree that Jesus was a deeply Jewish figure, but we follow different strategies as we seek to describe him; Tom uses emic categories (categories from within the culture), I am using etic (categories from outside the culture).²

This dialogue made me curious about the dichotomy of emic and etic categories, used somewhat loosely in the quotations above. Do they refer to a distinction between an insider and an outsider point of view, or is it the judgment of the actors or subjects themselves (whether they would recognise these categories or not) that creates the difference? Note that Wright identifies etic categories as ones that we impose upon our subjects, while Borg simply uses the outside/inside distinction.

Etic and emic

The terms “etic” and “emic” were coined by the American linguist Kenneth Pike, and are indeed the truncated versions of the distinctive linguistic categories phonemic and phonetic. A phonemic analysis examines the significant sounds in a given language, those complex sounds that differentiate meaning in the language and build up the words of the language. The phonetic representation of the sound units in a given language is a system of cross-culturally useful notations based on an outsider’s attempt to transcribe and compare these sounds in relation to a system of written characters that can be used in the study of all languages. According to Pike, the “etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system, the emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from inside the system.”³

² Ibid. p. 230.

³ Kenneth Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*, The Hague 1967.

This distinction raises a number of important questions with a much wider range of applicability than linguistics, first and foremost in the study of human society, culture and religion. Is the assent of insiders the ultimate criterion of the validity of a description or theory, or is it the development of scientifically testable hypotheses that is the goal of our study, regardless of what the people that we study think? In other words, to whom do scholars of human behaviour answer?

The usefulness of this distinction was soon noticed by anthropologists, most importantly by Marvin Harris, who has argued that the goal of scholarship is the explanation of human action and behaviour, and not the determination of insider intentions and meanings. While emic statements are those regarded as appropriate by the actors themselves, etic statements are judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers. The distinction must not be equated with subjective versus objective approaches, since both etic and emic can be either subjective or objective; neither is it identical to the insider/outsider dichotomy, since insiders of a culture can be at the same time observers, while not all outsiders are observers at the same time.⁴

The linguist Kenneth Pike privileges emic approaches over etic ones, because he thinks that our criteria must be chosen from inside the system we study. These criteria should be discovered during our analysis, and not imposed upon the other culture from the outside. According to Pike, the etic criteria that appear scientific and objective are in reality often part of an emic understanding that is rooted in the researcher's own cultural experience, so they are etic only with respect to the other culture. As the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss famously suggested, the nature of things is emic, not etic. Thus authorizing etic as opposed to emic categories can easily become the expression of cultural arrogance.

So, it seems that a major criticism directed against the etic approach is that we assume the views we have been enculturated into to be universally valid and generally applicable across cultures. As Pike suggests, etics are in reality the emics of the subculture of the

⁴ Marvin Harris, *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture*, New York 1979.

scientific community, superimposed on the inside view. Instead, we should respect the self-image of the local culture by immersing ourselves into its values, stories and intentions, so we, as outsiders, can learn to act like insiders. To understand other people in this view means to become like them. The validation of the emic knowledge gathered in this way will come from the consensus of native informants.

It is easy to see the validity of the emic viewpoint, especially in view of the all too frequent situation when blatantly culture-specific assumptions operate with the paraphernalia of scientific terminology, thus giving the impression of being generally valid statements about aspects of human culture and society (or, for that matter, about the historical Jesus or early Christianity). However, we should try to avoid overgeneralization here. It is true that scientists, by virtue of being human, are also enculturated individuals, prone to consider their view of the world as “naturally” given, but we should not underestimate the capacity of science and scholarship for the “distancing of the self”⁵, a readiness for self-correction, and the willingness to expose oneself to the scrutiny of one’s scientific or scholarly peers. Also, there are some built-in mechanisms in science designed to filter out irresponsible or simply useless theories, criteria such as comprehensiveness, accuracy, falsifiability and observer-independence.

The necessity for etic analyses in the study of human culture derives from the fact that identifying the intentions and purposes of the insiders of a culture does not answer questions concerning the causes and effects of major social and cultural changes, since “there are larger forces and dynamics of which people are only dimly aware.” Conscious meaning systems and symbolic universes are more often than not shaped by hidden causes and motives. Moreover, it is a commonplace in the social sciences that many of the forces shaping human societies have a vested interest in remaining hidden and are designed, so to speak, to remain unnoticed by the inhabitants of the culture.

⁵ Urged in e.g. Halvor Moxnes, The Theological Importance of the ‘Third Quest’ for the Historical Jesus, in: W. Arnal and M. Desjardins (eds.), *Whose Historical Jesus?*, Ontario 1997, p. 140.

In addition, there are cases when obtaining emic information is simply impossible, and so there is no alternative to an etic account, most clearly in the case of “nonliterate people who lived in the past.”⁶

It seems that both the emic and the etic perspectives are indispensable in the study of human culture. They need not be mutually exclusive and, to use a term borrowed from linguistic analysis, they are in complementary distribution. Emic knowledge is essential for an intuitive and emphatic understanding of a culture, while etic knowledge concerns general regularities applicable across cultures.

Emic and etic in biblical studies

In the second part of my article I concentrate on the relevance of the etic-emic debate for the study of religion in general, and the study of biblical texts in particular. There are two aspects of this problem, suggested by the anthropologist Marvin Harris, that I consider especially relevant from this perspective: one is the question of unintended consequences and the other is the problem of the closed hermeneutic circle. In Harris’ view, the importance of etic analyses lies in the fact that in human societies the relationship between thought and action, intention and result are far from straightforward. Not only is it the fact that we humans are perfectly capable of saying one thing and doing another, but also that every culture contains “emic constructions that prevent people from seeing” the connection between thoughts, actions and their large-scale consequences.⁷ Thus very often there are unintended social consequences that become independent from the conscious intentions of any one individual, or even social group. I think that there is a close parallel to this state of affairs in the relationship between the presumed intentions of biblical writers, and the reception history of their texts in later interpretation. Examples abound; let me just draw attention to the story that frames the account of Job’s suffering in the Book of Job. Here an “emic” cultural convention is used in presenting a theological statement (in this

⁶ Marvin Harris in: T. Headland, K. Pike and M. Harris (eds.), *Emics and Etics. The Insider/Outsider Debate*, London 1991, p. 76.

⁷ M. Harris, *ibid.*, p. 58.

case the problem of innocent suffering) – by setting the scene in terms of a bargain between God and Satan. This is a dramatic device which serves to ascertain that readers know without a doubt from the outset that Job is innocent, and that their job is not to decide between the argument of Job and his friends. Thus the readers are in a position to deconstruct the friends’ arguments as falling short of a view of God as infinitely greater and more mysterious than the friends allow for. However, the nature of this framing scene has been misinterpreted as a theological statement to the effect that Satan is in a bargaining position with God, with the unintended consequence that suffering people may view their troubles as the result of their “having been handed over” to Satan, being the subject of a bargain between God and Satan, which, though this idea has influenced some classical theodicies, is still incompatible with the statement that God and Satan are adversaries, and not equal bargaining partners.

Marvin Harris also suggests that etic perspectives serve as necessary correctives to emic ones because operating solely with emic categories leads to a closed hermeneutic circle which needs to be broken open. This latter statement – or other statements to this effect – has been vigorously opposed by philosophers and theologians. The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre questions the possibility of even arriving at an understanding between sceptics and believers, much less breaking open each other’s hermeneutic circles.⁸ MacIntyre suggests that sceptics and believers speak such different languages and have such widely differing assumptions that their perspectives are incommensurable. It is easy to see what this state of affairs would mean for the insider/outsider problem in the study of religion. If outsiders and insiders cannot hope to understand each other, if the two have their own emic viewpoints, then there is simply no etic vantage point from which to make judgments about either. The theologian John Milbank argues following a similar logic in his very influential book *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Although Milbank concedes that theology itself is to a large extent “a contingent historical construct emerging from and reacting back upon par-

⁸ As argued e.g. in “The Logical Status of Religious Belief” in: S. Toulmin, R. W. Hepburn, Alasdair MacIntyre, *Metaphysical Beliefs. Three Essays*, London 1957.

particular social practices conjoined with particular semiotic and figural codings,”⁹ it should not allow other disciplines, especially social theories, to become the “metadiscourse” (that is, the etic analysis) of the study of religion, thus allowing secular theories “to police the sublime.”¹⁰ One reason is, according to Milbank, that there is “no social or economic reality that is permanently more ‘basic’ than religion.” That means there is no way to go behind religion, to abstract a society behind religion, therefore one is only able “to narrate religions.”¹¹ Moreover, the distinction between society and religion does not appear at the level of biblical texts. This latter remark, to my mind, shows that Milbank is committed to the emic viewpoint: to him, there is no going behind the world of the text to a pretextual level about which etic statements could be made. Anyway, for Milbank the so-called etic approaches of the social sciences are themselves theologies or anti-theologies capable of making only declarations of faith; that is, emic perspectives of will-to-power masquerading as etic science.

These criticisms notwithstanding, I think that social-scientific “outsider” perspectives are now a useful and necessary part of biblical research, although not, of course, in the sense of becoming the “metadiscourse” from which other (theological, literary, etc.) interpretations could be judged.

Firstly, as far as the objection of Alasdair MacIntyre is concerned, one could suggest that the gulf between outsider and insider perspectives in the study of religion is not absolutely unbridgeable. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz argues that these are not polar opposites; rather, the challenge is “to take the experience-near concepts of our informants and to place them in illuminating connection with experience-distant concepts theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life.”¹² Thus, constantly oscillating between etic

⁹ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory. Beyond Secular Reason*, Oxford/Cambridge 1993, p. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 106.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 109.

¹² Clifford Geertz, From the native’s point of view: On the nature of anthropological understanding, in: K. Basso and H. Selby (eds.), *Meaning in Anthropology*, Albuquerque 1976.

and emic perspectives, one can reasonably hope that the end result of the analysis will be a “derived etic” perspective that fruitfully combines original cultural perspectives with the ones learned in the encounter with the other culture. This involves continually stepping inside and outside of the world of the other culture or the text that represents it, making the strange familiar and the familiar strange.

Secondly, etic approaches in biblical research are necessitated by the fact that feedback from our informants is rather complicated to obtain, given the fact that they are all dead. It is true that the texts that they left behind are still here, containing their own perspectives that should be respected. At the same time, biblical texts were written in what anthropologists call a “high context” society, one in which people share a broad range of common experience; writers can expect readers to fill in the gaps in the text, to understand the references, to decode the symbolism in the writing. What this means for contemporary readers, however, is that in order to avoid anachronism and ethnocentrism, they must recontextualize the texts by seeking access to the social systems available to the original audience. To get closer to the way these social systems operated we need to complement our emic readings with the etic model and methods of social scientific analysis. In the case of New Testament research, the most important model has proved to be one based on a cross-cultural analysis of advanced agrarian societies in the Mediterranean region organized around the principal values of honour and shame, and operated by an intricate network of a reciprocal exchange between patrons and clients. Of course, working with such a model cannot account for the regional, historical and religious individuality of first century Jewish Palestine, neither can it replace the theological interpretation of texts, and thus it cannot become the “metadiscourse” of New Testament research in the Milbankian sense, trying to explain everything in social and economic terms, in a reductionistic manner.

All this is, of course, commonplace to anyone familiar with the present state of New Testament Studies, yet I feel that sometimes stating the obvious is necessary. Until recently, biblical scholarship in Central and Eastern Europe has been characterized by an almost exclusive emphasis on emic approaches to biblical texts, focusing on authorial intention and major theological and religious concepts and

themes, and all coached in terms of an insider understanding. I do not mean to say that the social history of the tradition has been disregarded, as a lot of fruitful work carried out with respect to the influence of Greco-Roman culture on New Testament texts testifies, but the kinds of explicit etic models used by social scientific criticism have not really taken root in our scholarly communities.

In a way, a reluctance to use etic models is more than understandable in view of the fact that the memory of a destructively dominant etic approach still looms large in this region. I refer, of course, to the Marxist critique of religion.

Still, I find it worrying that an exclusively emic concentration might cut off theology and biblical interpretation from a lively and ongoing discussion with other branches of scholarship. We need the outsider point of view for our own sake, but also for the sake of our respective faith communities.

With the loss of the universal validity of many of the old meta-narratives, there is a danger for groups that define their identity by means of different metanarratives to defend their self-image by cutting themselves off from dialogue with other groups. These communities might even require their scholars to shield their identity from outside influences, whether it is their national, religious, ethnic or gender identity. In their insightful book *Telling the Truth about History*, American historians Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob remind us that “through the ages, history has always served two conflicting and equally fundamental human needs: ‘...the psychological need for comprehending experience which calls for accuracy, as well as the human drive for personal recognition that encourages myth making.’”¹³ I submit that this double task is equally true of theologians and biblical scholars: the ways in which we interpret the sacred texts of our tradition has a direct bearing on the well-being of our communities and it is answerable to them. And what our communities here in Central and Eastern Europe need is fresh insight from the outside as much as a strengthening of our distinctive identities.

¹³ Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, New York/London p. 261.

Summary: This article explores the significance and validity of using emic and/or etic categories in studying biblical texts. Can we use a terminology from another (e.g. modern) context to understand some text or do we have to use only a terminology from the context of the text itself? The author comes to the conclusion that they do not exclude each other.

Keywords: Biblical studies – exegesis – emic – etic – anthropology

INTEREST (USURY) AND ITS VARIATIONS IN THE BIBLICAL LAW CODICES

Miroslav Varšo, Vienna

Can the law proclaimed by God himself be changed, developed or reinterpreted?¹

Some very specific biblical laws show that the constitutional religious Beliefs are changing along with the changing society. One example is the laws concerning interest and usury. They seem to be far from any religious thought. That is but the first impression. In the Bible there is no biblical law Code without mentioned interest prescriptions. The interest seems to be a kind of religious barometer, showing how honestly religious contents are not just believed but also practiced.

To see the real importance of such a strange law and its practices in the Bible, a short overview of the attitudes of ancient civilizations towards usury has to be given. Some representative examples try to give general outlines of practices in the Ancient Near East. After a specific phenomenon known as *mīšārum treaties* will be given, because of their close relations to certain biblical laws of release of the debts as well as interests.

The main piece of the work will investigate the three formulations of the interest laws in the codices of the Bible: Ex. 22:24–26; Lev. 25:35–38; Dt. 23:20–21.²

Texts will be approached from the perspective of motivation: Why charging interest or why not charging? The different motivations show the changing face of one of the most important pillars of the biblical faith, which is the option for the poor.

¹ Cf. Helmuth Pree, The Divine and the Human of the Ius Divinum, in: Rik Torfs (ed.): *In Diversitate Unitas: Monsignor W. Onclin, Chait*, Leuven 1997, p. 23–41.

² Interest is mentioned in the rest of the Bible in Ps 15; Ezek 18:5–18; 22:6–12; Neh 5:1–13; Prov 28:8.

Interest and Usury in the Ancient Near East

Both interest as an accepted limited profit from lending money or products and usury as a forbidden enrichment from lending were practiced in the ancient Near East. The rule regarding interest is attested to in several ancient legal sources in the form of restrictions on interest-taking.

One of the first legal sources dealing directly with loans and interest is the Law Code from the Old Babylonian Period – Eshnunna Laws. The code is named after the Northern Mesopotamian kingdom of Eshnunna³ and is probably relatable to the reign of Dadusha (ca. 1770). The scholars divided the Laws into sixty paragraphs.⁴

The text dealing with interest is to be found in the laws 18A to 21 as follows:

§ 18A. Per 1 shekel (of silver) he will add one sixth of a shekel and 6 grains as interest; per 1 kor (of barley) he will add 1 (pan) and 4 seah of barley as interest.

§ 19. The man who gives (a loan) in terms of his retake shall make (the debtor) pay on the threshing floor.

§ 20. If a man lends out money to the amount recorded, but has the corresponding amount of barley set down to his credit, he shall at harvest time obtain the barley and its interest, (namely) 1 (pan) (and) 4 seah per 1 kor.

§ 21. If a man lends out money in terms of its initial (amount), he shall obtain the silver and its interest, (namely) one sixth (of shekel) and 6 grains per 1 shekel.

The Eshnunna Law set the limit rates on interest-taking to 20 % for money and 33 1/3 for grain. They regulate when and where inter-

³ The City Eshnunna under the mound of Tell Asmar was excavated by an American team led by Henri Frankfort in the 1930s.

⁴ Raymond Westbrook, A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law, in: Raymond Westbrook (ed.), *Handbook of Oriental Studies. The Near and Middle East*. Vol. 72. No. 1; Leiden 2003, p. 361.

est should be taken (§ 19 on the threshing floor), how it should be paid (§ 20 money or grain) and how to deal with a straight loan of money (§ 21).

The limitation of interest to 20 % for money and 33,33 % for grain endured with few exceptions⁵ throughout ancient Near-Eastern history.⁶ The contracts usually contain phrases such as “normal rate,” “interest of Šamaš,” “interest according to the city,” etc.⁷

The limitation to 20 or 33,33 % does not mean that the interest could not be lower. Examples are the temples in Babylonia. They granted just 20 % instead of 33,33 % of usual interest for grain. The interest could also be paid by offering food to the God from whom the loan was taken (a good meal for the servants of that God).

Some of the temple-loans allowed the debtor to pay the interest whenever he had the money, according to the statement of the temple-loan from Sippar: ... *When Šamaš will give (the debtor) (enough) money, he (the debtor) will give it to him (Šamaš).*

Such a formulation fits well with old Oriental law codices seeking to improve the condition of the debtor by limiting profits on loans.

For an opposite attitude to the debtor taking usury as a kind of hard-lined enrichment, misusing the borrowing in order to exploit the debtor is attested to in documents from the 7th century BC.⁸

⁵ The Nimrud Tablets (around 658) from the period of Assyrian Empire legitimate the rate in the case of silver at 25% and the rate for the grain at 50 %.

⁶ Related to the Code of Hammurabi *Series ana ittišu* from the late third millennium BC (Benno Landsberger, *Die Serie ana ittišu*, Rome 1937; Code of Hammurabi (1728–1686 BC) § 48–51; § 66; § 88–91; § 93. For an Example of the Documents from Neo-Babylonian Period see Michael Jursa, Debts and Indebtedness in the Neo-Babylonian Period: Evidence from the Institutional Archives, in: Michael Hudson, Marc Van De Mierop (ed.), *Debt and Economic Renewal in the Ancient Near East. International Scholars Conference on Ancient Near Eastern Economies*, Vol. 3, Bethesda 2002, p. 197–220. Also in Neo-Babylonian Period the interest rate of 20 % was the most common, although there are lists of examples with lower or higher rates (Jursa 2002, p. 199).

⁷ Robert Maloney, Usury and Restrictions on Interest-Taking in the Ancient Near East, in: Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 36 (1974), p. 13.

⁸ Cornelia Wunsch, Debt, Interest, Pledge and Forfeiture in the Neo-Babylonian and Early Achaemenid Period: The Evidence from Private Archives, in: Michael Hudson, Marc Van De Mierop (eds.), *Debt and Economic Renewal in the Ancient Near East. International Scholars Conference on Ancient Near Eastern Economies*. Vol. 3, Bethesda 2002, pp. 221–255, esp. 234–238.

Exceptions: *mīšārum*

In the Mesopotamian royal decrees an expression involving concrete „socio-economic enactments“ – *mīšārum* is attested. This term means social justice in general. The second meaning associates a legislative act to remedy economic malfunction. Such releases existed in Mesopotamia throughout the ages: from the middle of the third millennium to the end of the first millennium B.C.E.⁹ Expressions like *mīšāram šakānum* („to establish justice“), *simdat šārrīm* („royal remittance“), *(an)durāram šakānum* („to establish liberation“) or *kunukkat/tuppat matim ihpu* („to break the [debt] tablets of the land) are well attested in various documents from Ancient Mesopotamia.¹⁰

A representative document regarding social enactments coming from the Old Babylonian period is the proclamation of King Ammisaduqa (1646–1626 B.C.E). The document is accompanied by the formula: “because the king has established *mīšārum* in the land,” which appears in 8 of 22 paragraphs. Paragraph 3 contains the following text: “Whoever gave grain or silver to an Acadian or an Amorite as a loan with interest... and wrote a tablet in this regard, since the king has established *mīšārum* for the land, the tablet shall be broken; he may collect neither grain nor silver on the basis of this document.”¹¹

The existence of *mīšārum*-Edicts shows the tendency to support the debtors in hard times. It seems, however, that the main intention of the *mīšārum* was „to maintain the economic system, not to change it.“¹² On the other hand, the *mīšārum* -Edicts were in force occasion-

⁹ Moshe Weinfeld, Proclamations of “Freedom,” in Mesopotamia and their Reflections in Ancient Israel, in: Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1995, p. 77; Eckart Otto: Soziale Restitution und Vertragsrecht. *Mīšaru(um)*, *(an)-durāru(m)*, *kirenzi*, *parā tarnumar*, *šēmittā* und *d^rrōr* in Mesopotamien, Syrien, in der Hebräischen Bibel und die Frage des Rechtstransfers im Alten Orient, in: *Revue d’assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale*, Vol. 92 (2000), p. 125–160.

¹⁰ Moshe Weinfeld, Proclamations of “Freedom” in Mesopotamia and their Reflections in Ancient Israel, in: Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, Jerusalem 1995, p. 90.

¹¹ Item.

¹² J. P. J. Olivier, Restitution as Economic Redress: The Fine Print of the Old Babylonian *mīšārum* -Edict of Ammisaduqa, *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte*, Vol. 3 (1997), p. 24.

ally, when the economic system required them to be. The motivation behind them is obviously an economic one, maintaining the power and the politics of the governing classes.

Interest (Usury) in the Biblical Law Codices

There are some important differences in the formulations concerning interest and usury between Near East law Codices and the Biblical Laws. In the Biblical law texts there is no difference between interest and usury, both of which are strictly forbidden. Another important fact is that the restrictions were in force continuously, they were a fixed part of Israel's societal rules. The authority standing behind the legitimacy of Laws is that of God (through Moses).¹³ He is also guarantor of the obedience by the law. The divine authority is explicitly present in those laws dealing with interest and usury.

One more important difference consists of the exhortative formulation in the conclusion of the restrictively formulated interest and usury laws. This is best shown in the deuteronomic formulation of the law instruction on behalf of interest.

The three Texts have different formulations. Each of them describes the same law-restriction with different key words and with different motivations. Such a variability in the juridical formulations of the same topic should explain how and why a part of a theological doctrine needs to be reformulated, if the historical or social context changes.

Exodus 22:24–26

If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him. If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in

¹³ Jean-Louis Ska, *Le droit d'Israël dans l'Ancien Testament*, in: Françoise Mies (ed.), *Bible et droit. L'esprit des lois*, Namur 2001, p. 30.

what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

The interest law in Exodus is placed in the first biblical Code known under the name “Covenant Code,” which is the text of Ex. 20:22–23:33. The laws of the Covenant Code are not homogeneous. They were formulated and added to the Code reflecting the requirements of the proper time and society.¹⁴ The law formulations and law practices presuppose an equal tribal society as known from the origins of Israel.¹⁵

The laws concerning interest and usury in Covenant Code belong to the group of the laws regulating the behavior towards poor people (there are the laws as Ex. 23:11 regulating the rights of the poor in the time of the harvest or Ex. 23:3, 6 warranting the justice for the poor in the court). These laws have no more traditional casuistic form of formulation, typical of the most laws of Covenant Code. The laws concerning interest are parenetic (Lohfink 1991: 39). The following sentences show the meaning of parenetical character of the formulations typical for the book of Exodus.

In Ex. 22:24–26 is the subject of the lending עִמָּךְ אֶת־עַמִּי “any of my people with you who is poor.” In the following reification with the coat is the “any of my people” signposted as “friend of yours.” In the original Hebrew meaning the word signifies a close family member from the side of the father.¹⁶ The conclusion that JHVH equates the poor with the family member should be right. Such a poor of “my people” must receive help as a close relative, in this case by not charging and simultaneously lending him what he needs to live.

Another typical formulation of Exodus is אֶת־עַמִּי “any of my people.” The personal ending refers in each case to JHVH, which trans-

¹⁴ The different age of the laws in the same law code is a phenomenon known since the oldest time (the code of Hammurabi contains the laws of a span from about 500 years).

¹⁵ Gianni Barbiero, *L'asino del nemico. Rinuncia alla vendetta e amore del nemico nella legislazione dell'Antico Testamento* (Es 23,4–5; Dt 22,1–4; Lv 19,17–18), Analecta biblica 128, Rome 1991, p. 57.

¹⁶ Gianni Barbiero, *L'asino del nemico. Rinuncia alla vendetta e amore del nemico nella legislazione dell'Antico Testamento* (Es 23,4–5; Dt 22,1–4; Lv 19,17–18), Analecta biblica 128, Rome 1991, p. 63.

forms the people into chosen people “my people.” All that happened in Egypt is in some relation to the “my people” in some difficult situation in the Book of Exodus. God speaks and acts by resolving all difficulties. The recipient of God’s speech in such a case is, with just one exception, the Pharaoh. Only in 22:24 can it be anyone from Israel. This is significant. There is a possibility that a member of Israel’s community can comport himself as a “Pharaoh – money-lender.” In such a case he is the subject of God’s forbidding speech.

There is another fact reminiscent of the Egyptian sojourn. That is the following word creating a couple with the previous one: *העני* “who is poor.” The word recurs four times in the Book of Exodus. Three times as a substantive: (3:7.17 and 4:31). In three texts it has the meaning of poverty in Egypt because of the Egyptian oppression. Just in 22:26 the term is used as an adjective in a situation, in which the oppression could come from Israel itself.

In two of four occurrences the term *עני* “poor” has a particle of a direct object *את* *t*: In 3:7 (with a substantive) and in 22:24 (with an adjective), in both cases in a close relation to the clause “my people.” In 3:7 it reads “my people living in Egyptian oppression,” but in 22:26 it is someone living within the Israel society.

The immediately following sentence (22:26) “cry to God that hears” reminds one directly of Ex. 3:7, the text where God decided to help the people crying to him – the beginning of Exodus.

The following words “for I am compassionate” appear one more time in Exodus by God’s self-presentation to Moses in Sinai Epiphany (Ex. 33:19b).

Ex. 22:24-26

אם־כסף תלוה
את־עמי את־העני
עמך...
כִּי־יצַעֲקֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי וְשִׁמְעֵתִי
כִּי־דַחֲנוּן־אֲנִי

Ex. 3:7

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רֵאֵה רָאֵה רְאִיתִי
אֶת־עַנֵי עַמִּי
אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם
וְאֶת־צַעֲקָתָם שִׁמְעֵתִי
מִפְּנֵי נַגְשֵׁיו כִּי יִדְעֵתִי אֶת־מַכְאֲבֵיהֶם:
Ex. 33:19b
וְדַחֲנֵתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲדַחֵן
וּרְחַמְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם:

Both texts – the Announcement of the Exodus as the Self-revelation of God to Moses – are highlights of God’s presence in front of a human being in the Book of Exodus.

The heavy argumentation in the prohibition of not taking interest related to the mentioned laws concerning the poor seems to be consciously selected in order to fortify the motivation to give attention to the poor one.

Social argumentation

In the short text one can hear a strong accentuation of the social affiliation. The subject of the Law is living עִמָּךְ “with you (in between you).” “To him” you could not be a moneylender and “from him” you could not take the interest. The following application of the prescription once more stresses the close relationship between the borrower and the lender through the word רֵעֶךָ “friend of yours” with the personal pronominal ending.

These are the grammatical signals of the solidarity in the group named “my people.” The relationships between the members of this “my people” are characterized by the solidarity. A member of “*my people*” does not live *beside* the others, but lives *with* the others, as a member of the community. The community members have ties towards each other, in this case towards a poor one, because he is “one of my people” or “friend of yours.”

The description of the concrete case goes far beyond the definitions of the Law, which defines, that the cloak must be given back before sunset. The limits of the law are transferred by the same prescription: taking the cloak, which must be returned at the very same day as interest, is a symbolic act. It actually means taking interest without any interest. It is as to say: I lend you what you need for interest, which I will return to you at the same day. I lend you what you need.

The restriction regarding interest in Exodus has from the beginning “a poor one of my people” as object. Such a poor one must be helped. What follows is not a sanction, but a motivation. As already described, the cloak must be returned to the poor one and the money lent or one will have to deal with the God of Exodus.

These basic concepts are retained in the formulation of the same law in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy.

Motivation

God of Exodus is the basic motivation grounded on the personal relationship to God. God is the highest moral authority setting the standard for what is justice and right. He is to be loved and followed. The event par excellence showing God as worthy to be loved is the Exodus. The highest ethos of God acting for the poor is unrolled in the narrative way in Exodus. God in Exodus created through the liberation of his own chosen people a society of liberty as an opposite to the oppressive society.¹⁷ In this connection is each kind of oppression of the poor the negation of that event.

Along with the personal motivation the Exodus-event also presents a historical one (Kaiser 1983: 33). This motivation introduces both formulations of the Decalogue (Ex. 20:2 and Dt. 5:6) and is repeated in many of the individual laws as in the case of charging interest.

The allusion in the beginning of the Exodus and the liturgical formulation at its end in connection with the interest on the poor in the Israel community shows an abnormal interest in a strong motivation.

Leviticus 25:35–38

If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you. Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you. You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.

¹⁷ Cf. Norbert Lohfink, Poverty in the Laws of the Ancient Near East and of the Bible, in: *Theologische Studien* Vol. 52 (1991), p. 42.

The Holiness Code presents a very special vision of a liberated society and her world. The laws of the Holiness Code are incorporated in the reflexive theological doctrine which is typical for the circles of the priests of the Jerusalem Temple after the Exile. According to their theology the people of Israel were liberated from Egyptian slavery to be a “holy people” separated from any other nation. The identity of the community depends on religious institutions, which were then the Law and the Temple. To be holy or to be separated from other nations meant to keep him pure in keeping the law prescriptions and this mostly in the everyday life.¹⁸ Israel remains holy by keeping the commandments of the law. Any violation of the law makes Israel unholy – similar to other nations, especially to the Egyptians and their land.

The laws concerning the poor of the Israel community are connected directly to the liberation from Egypt and to keeping their own sanctity. The near context of the formulation of Interest in Lev is a special programme known in the biblical terminology as “Biblical Jubilee.”¹⁹ It is a proposal of continuous social reform in land,²⁰ based on the religious motivations along with social and humanitarian concepts, not excluding the practical agrarian aspects.²¹

The formulations remind of the divine authority that is of a sacral nature. Lev 25 has three main parts:²²

- 1 2–22 The Jubilee: a sabbath for the land
- 2 23–38 The Jubilee: and the redemption of property
- 3 39–55 The Jubilee: and the redemption of slaves

The law about restrictions of interest is a part of the text which describes a process of gradual economical disaster. The law of inter-

¹⁸ Cf. Jean-Louis Ska, *Le droit d’Israël dans l’Ancien Testament*, in: Françoise Mies (ed.), *Bible et droit. L’esprit des lois*, Namur 2001, p. 214ff.

¹⁹ Cf. Robert North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee*, AnBib 4, Rome 1954, p. 109–134; Jean-François Lefebvre, *Le jubilé biblique. Lv 25 – exégèse et théologie*, OBO 194, Fribourg 2003.

²⁰ Cf. Jeffrey Fager, *Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee. Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the Sociology of Knowledge*, JSOT.S 155, Sheffield 1993.

²¹ Gregory Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, JSOT.S 141, Sheffield 1993, p. 310.

²² Chirichigno, p. 322.

est restriction provides the maintenance of the basic economical conditions for a worthy life in the land. Once more the terminology used is important to understand the basics of the functioning solidarity in Israel in those times.

The sentence כִּי־יָמוּךְ אֶחָיִךְ “If your brother becomes poor” is attested to only in Lev in the nearest context: Lev 25:25.35.39 and 47. They all deal with specific cases of becoming poor. The כִּי-Formulation is introducing each new case of impoverishment. It is a typical juridical formulation followed by a description of the case. Also immediately defined is the rule regulating the mentioned situation. In each of these specific cases the Israelites should keep a very concrete regulation in order to reduce social injustice in the community. In any case the poor brother must be helped. Like in Exodus a limitation of the obligation to help is given: not any Israelite but the brother going to be poor.

The word אֶחָיִךְ “your brother” is to be found in the Holiness Code with one exception (19,17) in chapter 25. It has a strong humanitarian tone. All occurrences have to do with an appeal to solidarity anchored in the bond of brotherhood.²³

The sentence וִירָאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ “fear your God” is to be found in Lev 19:14.30 and 25,17.36.43.²⁴ All of them are rules of the relations between the members of Israel. They regulate the approach to socially disadvantaged people. In Lev 19:14 there is a blind man, in 19:30 an old man. In Lev 25 there are different kinds of poor people, and nobody should exploit their weak position. It is possible to see how much in common the two chapters of Lev have.

To fear God is definitely in close connection to the weak or poor. Otherwise, the poor and weak in Lev have to remain on God, who has to be feared if not correctly conducted towards them.

²³ Gianni Barbiero, *L'asino del nemico. Rinuncia alla vendetta e amore del nemico nella legislazione dell'Antico Testamento* (Es 23,4-5; Dt 22,1-4; Lv 19,17-18), *Analecta biblica* 128, Rome 1991, p. 324.

²⁴ The word “fear” appears in three more units: Lev 19:3,30 and 26:2. It's always almost the same phrase, just in the first occurrence (19:3) there is the couple Father and Mother in the place of sanctuary: It seems that Father and Mother enjoyed the same authority as the sanctuary or the institution of Sabbath in the Law.

Motivation

For this case, chapter 25 has a refrain-motivation: “I brought you out of the land of Egypt.” This can be heard with some variations in v. 38.42 and 55 concluding the text-block Biblical Jubilee.

In the Book of Leviticus this Motivation refrain is to be found only in the Holiness Code. This allowed the following conclusion: The basic motivation of keeping the regulations in the law regulating the behavior toward a poor one is the liberation from Egypt. Freedom is the main motivation. A person liberated from slavery cannot enslave a member of the same “my people” without taking the risk to lose his or her freedom.

There is another motivation: humanitarian feeling with the brother – an affiliation creating a firm ground of solidarity.

The basic theological context of the texts dealing with interest as well as the whole chapter dealing with the poor brother is the theology of freedom. That is obvious from the repeated strong theological motivation of being set free from Egyptian slavery. In the Holiness Code it is repeated no less than eight times, seven times followed by “I am the Lord (your God).”

Such a motivation has a special importance for the Israelites. If they consequently live according to the prescriptions, they resemble their God. They are like liberators from slavery and oppression for their brothers, creating a new world for the poor brother, where the basics for a worthy life are available, even more; where the sharing community is established (“he shall live with you”).

On the other hand, if the Israelites ignore their poor brothers, they become oppressors and take the risk that the redeeming action of Israel’s God turns against them. The Israelites should not behave as in the land of Egypt, because they were liberated. They are now living in the new world created by the liberation. In this world the new rules are to be kept, different from those valid in Egypt and Canaan (cf. Lev 25:38).

In such a way the law about interest receives an extreme importance putting it on the same level as slavery or freedom, values standing on the top in the Israel community. Here one can see the social realization of Holiness, the most important sign of newly liberated

members of JHVH's in the Holiness Code nation "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev 19:2).

Deuteronomy 23:20–21

You shall not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest. You may charge a foreigner interest, but you may not charge your brother interest, that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

Although the Law Corpus of Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code have many marks of editorial interdependency, the world of Deuteronomy is different from that of Leviticus and also from Exodus. The laws in Deuteronomy constitute a law system creating and keeping an alternative society of liberated people in life, standing next to enter the Promised Land, where the ideal should be lived and realized. Historically, this is the High point of the Exodus Event – the fulfillment of liberation.

The laws related to the poor were created and embodied in the Law Corpus of Deuteronomy as a system that allows each Israelite to participate in the full life. The intention of such laws, including the law of interest, is to change the society from the inside in a way to fulfill the process of the creation of the promised alternative society or God's righteous society.²⁵

The law considering the interest is formulated in the Deuteronomic Law Code in an exact legal terminology.²⁶ There is just one word used for interest נִשְׁכַּ nš̄k. The word recurs seven times in the text, a typical way to formulate important topics in Deuteronomy.²⁷ The

²⁵ Norbert Lohfink, Poverty in the Laws of the Ancient Near East and of the Bible, in: *Theologische Studien*, Vol. 52 (1991), p. 44.

²⁶ Georg Braulik, Weitere Beobachtungen zur Beziehung zwischen dem Heiligkeitsgesetz und Deuteronomium 19–25, in: Georg Braulik, *Studien zum Buch Deuteronomium*, SBAB 24, Stuttgart 1977, p. 213.

²⁷ Cf. Georg Braulik, Die Funktion von Siebengruppierungen im Endtext des Deuteronomiums, in: *Georg Braulik, Studien zum Buch Deuteronomium*, SBAB 24, Stutt-

subject of the law restriction is no longer the poor, but each Israelite²⁸ as becomes clear from the following specification: “You may charge a foreigner interest, but you may not charge your brother interest.” They are the typical Deuteronomy formulations giving to the law of interest a specific face.

In Deuteronomy the word אָח *“brother”* is used for the member of the עַם *“people.”* The formulation putting the opposite to the *“brother”* in the term נָכְרִי *“a foreigner”* (23:21) shows the exclusivity of using the term just for the member of Israel. To be a brother or to be a foreigner has a very clear consequence: “You may not charge your brother with interest, but you may do so with a foreigner.” A foreigner was a non-Israelite living outside of Israel’s community.²⁹

The other peculiarity in the Law of interest within the frames of the Book of Deuteronomy is its character of admonition based more on the solidarity and God’s blessing than on the legal formulations. There is a certain paradox – the juridical formulations have a homiletic style. In the place of sanction there is exhortation, instead of a juridical obligation there is religious motivation.

Motivation

The law forbidding charging interest on the brother is without any sanction like similar laws dealing with the relations to the members of Israel in Deuteronomy (cf. Dt. 22:1–4; 24:7.14 or 25:3). The main motivation here is the blessing of the “Lord, your God in all that you

gart 1977, p. 63–80; Georg Braulik, Die sieben Säulen der Weisheit im Buch Deuteronomium, in: Georg Braulik, *Studien zu den Methoden der Deuteronomiumsexegese, SBAB 42*, Stuttgart 2006, p. 77–109.

²⁸ Cf. Brauliks accurate observation about “... *gesellschaftlicher Radikalisierung: Gilt das Zinsverbot nach Ex 22,24 gegenüber dem נָכְרִי im Volk Jahwes und in Lev 25,35 gegenüber dem ‘verarmenden Brüder,’ so in Dt. 23,20–21 explizit gegenüber jedem Israeliten.*” (Braulik 1977, p. 213f).

²⁹ For a non-Israelite living in Israel’s community in the Bible the word נָכְרִי *gr* *“stranger”* is used as in Lev 25:35. Strangers living in Israel could be considered a member of Israel’s community. In such a case the interest could not be withheld, because well organized foreign interest systems could therefore destroy Israel’s social system. (cf. Georg Braulik: Deuteronomium II 16,18–34,12, in: Josef Plöger, Josef Schreiner (ed.), *Die Neue Echter Bibel. Altes Testament*, Vol. 28, Würzburg 1992, p. 174).

undertake.” The blessing as the observance of the Law will be in force after entering the land, as for all laws in Deuteronomy. Such a parenthetic character of the interest prohibition is common to all three biblical codices. There are however some significant differences in the rhetoric of the motivation with regard to the motivation in Exodus and in Leviticus.

In Exodus motivation is oriented towards the future with negative consequences: If the neighbor cries to God because of injustice, he will hear him. That should have heavy repercussions for the Lender.

In Lev the main Motivation is the liberation in Exodus – the recall of the past. Interest as causing slavery should not be taken, because liberty was given to each Israelite. This Israel’s God did to the Israelites; this should Israelites do to each other.

For Deuteronomy it is the immediate future. What the brother could gain from charging interest will be given to him in the blessing of God.

In Deuteronomy there is another difference referring to the cause of the motivation. In Ex and similarly in Lev there is the main experience of the Exodus – Liberation from Egypt, in broad terms any slavery like Egypt. The context of the law in Deuteronomy seems to be different. It is no more the basic event of the liberation but the realization of a new society distinct from any other. Because keeping and doing the law of God is what makes the people of Israel peculiar, like the introduction to the Law Code (Dt. 4:6) reads:

Keep them (statutes and rules) and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

Conclusion

The investigation of the Law of interest and usury in the three biblical Law Codices show it to be a necessity to reformulate and to reinterpret the important aspects of the doctrine. The example of the biblical Law of not taking interest makes visible how the option for the poor in a religious society is reformulated and reinterpreted and is

dependent on the changes that the society undergoes in time and also in the structure of its inner organization. The basic Law was preserved or submitted to very few changes as the specifying in Dt. 23:20–21 shows. On the other hand, the motivation could change massively for the purpose of retaining the actuality and validity of the important law.

Summary: This article discusses the rules and practice for interest and usury in the Old Testament at the background of the practice in Ancient Near East. The example of the biblical Law of not taking interest makes visible how the option for the poor in a religious society is reformulated and reinterpreted and is dependent on the changes that the society undergoes in time and also in the structure of its inner organization.

Keywords: Biblical Studies – Old Testament – Law of Interest – Usury

VOM POSITIVEN UMGANG MIT FEINDEN

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In der Hebräischen Bibel ist häufig von Feinden die Rede, meist geht es um Feinde Israels oder Feinde eines einzelnen Menschen. In der Regel werden diese Feinde negativ skizziert. Entweder handeln sie böse oder sie erleiden Böses. Mir sind vier Stellen individueller Feindschaft aufgefallen, die von einem positiven Umgang mit Feinden handeln, und zwar Spr 24,17f; 16,7; 24,21f und Ex 23,4f.

1. Sprüche 24,17f

Diese beiden Verse sind Teil der Worte von Weisen in Spr 22,17-24,22 (III).¹ V. 17 schliesst durch die Verben נפל und כשל an V. 16 an.

17 בנפל אויבך אל־תשמח
ובכשלו אל־יגל לבך
18 פן־יראה יהוה
ורע בעיניו
והשיב מעליו אפו

- 17 Fällt dein Feind, freue dich nicht,
strauchelt er, jubele dein Herz nicht,
18 damit der HERR es nicht sieht,
es in seinen Augen böse ist
und er seinen Zorn von ihm abwendet.

¹ Zur Gliederung siehe E. Zenger (Hg.), *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Stuttgart 2006⁶, 372f.

V. 17 ist ein synonymer Parallelismus,² gebildet aus zwei Zusammengesetzten Nominalsätzen³ (ZNS) mit je vier Wörtern. Beide Sätze des Bikolons beginnen mit einem Infinitiv, der jeweils das Schicksal des Feindes beschreibt. In V. 17a folgt ein Substantiv und eine verneinte Imperfektform als apodiktische Aufforderung an den Menschen, in V. 17b ist es umgekehrt. Das Substantiv *byEa* ist in V. 17b elliptisch, fällt also aus, und das Substantiv *ל* isokolisch, ergänzt also die Lücke. Der konditional angefügte Verbalsatz (VS) in V. 18 zählt wie V. 17 acht Wörter und beginnt mit einer verneinten Imperfektform, die die mögliche Reaktion JHWHs beschreibt, und setzt sich mit zwei Konsekutivperfekten fort. Inhaltlich geht es um ein Dreiecksverhältnis zwischen einem Menschen, seinem Feind und JHWH. Der Feind fällt oder strauchelt aufgrund des Handelns JHWHs. Wenn der Mensch deshalb Schadenfreude empfindet, wäre das in den Augen JHWHs verwerflich und JHWH liesse den Feind wieder erstarken, indem er aufhörte, ihn fallen oder straucheln zu lassen. Das Schicksal des Feindes hängt also vom Verhalten des Menschen ab. Verhält sich der Mensch gegenüber dem fallenden oder strauchelnden Feind neutral, hat der Feind keine Macht. Freut sich der Mensch über den Untergang des Feindes, wächst dessen Macht wieder an. Oder anders gesagt: Wer den am Boden liegenden Feind ärgert, reizt ihn zu erneuter Energie. So entspricht es der Lebenserfahrung.

2. Sprüche 16,7

Dieser Vers steht in der zweiten salomonischen Sammlung in Spr 10–22,16 (II). Das Verspaar 6–7 thematisiert Sühne und Vergeltung im Kontrast zu Unheil und Strafe in V. 4–5. Explizit von Feinden ist nur in V. 7 die Rede.

7 ברצות יהוה דרכי־איש
נס־אויביו ישלם אתו

² Die Begriffe synonymer und synthetischer Parallelismus werden hier vereinfacht gebraucht. Zu einer präzisen Analyse s. A. Berlin, *The dynamics of biblical parallelism*, Bloomington 1985.

³ Ich verwende die Begrifflichkeit von W. Schneider, *Grammatik des biblischen Hebräisch: ein Lehrbuch*, München 2001.

Gefallen dem HERRN die Wege eines Mannes,
lässt er seine Feinde mit ihm Frieden schliessen.

V. 7 ist ein synthetischer Parallelismus. Die konditionale Konstruktion besteht aus einem Nominalsatz (NS) und einem ZNS mit je vier Wörtern wie in 24,17. An der Spitzenposition des ZNS steht das Substantiv אֹיְבֵי, d. h., es wird eine Aussage über eben diese Feinde gemacht. Wieder geht es um ein Dreiecksverhältnis, diesmal zwischen einem Mann, seinen Feinden und JHWH. Ähnlich wie im ersten Beispiel hängt das Schicksal der Feinde von dem Verhalten des Mannes ab. Lebt der Mann nach der Weisung JHWHs, findet JHWH daran Gefallen und veranlasst die Feinde, mit dem Mann Frieden zu schliessen. Lebt der Mann nicht nach der Weisung JHWHs, wirkt JHWH auch nicht als Friedenstifter. Oder anders gesagt: Wer ein „gutes“ Leben führt, schafft sich keine Feinde. Das entspricht ebenfalls der Lebenserfahrung.

3. Sprüche 25,21f

Die beiden Verse stehen in der dritten salomonischen Sammlung in Spr 25-29 (V).

21 אִסְרַעֲב שְׁנַאךְ הָאֲכַלְהוּ לַחַם
וְאִם-צָמָא הִשְׁקֵהוּ מַיִם
22 כִּי גַחְלִים אַתָּה חַתָּה עַל-רִאשׁוֹ
וַיְהִי וַיִּשְׁלַם-לְךָ

- 21 Wenn dein Hasser hungrig ist, gib ihm Brot zu essen,
und wenn er durstig ist, gib ihm Wasser zu trinken.
22 Denn so häufst du glühende Kohlen auf sein Haupt,
und der HERR wird es dir vergelten.

V. 21 ist ein synonymer Parallelismus, der aus zwei konditionalen ZNS gebildet ist. Der nominale Anfang der Sätze besteht jeweils aus einer Konjunktion, einem Adjektiv und einem Substantiv, das in V. 21b elliptisch ist, und einer verbalen Fortsetzung mit Imperativ und substantivischem Objekt. Hier ist das zu אִיבֵי synonyme Substantiv

וַיִּשֶׂה verwendet. V. 21a zählt fünf Wörter, V. 21b vier. V. 22, ein synthetischer Parallelismus, ist ein Konditionalgefüge, bestehend aus einem NS und einem ZNS; beide Sätze zusammen zählen wie in V. 21 neun Wörter. Auch hier geht es um ein Dreiecksverhältnis, bestehend aus einer Person, ihrem Hasser und JHWH. Wer seinen hungrigen und durstigen Hasser mit Brot speist und mit Wasser trinkt und ihm damit besonders positiv begegnet, wird ihn – in der Metapher der brennenden Kohlen auf dem Haupt gesagt⁴ – erregen, d. h. im vorliegenden Fall zur Reue veranlassen. Dies entspricht der Lebenserfahrung. Wer Gegnern Gutes erweist, kann mit einer positiven Reaktion rechnen (s. 2 Kön 6,22f).

4. Exodus 23,4f

Die beiden kasuistischen Verse sind Teil diverser sozialer Vorschriften in Ex 23,1–9, ein Abschnitt, der seinerseits Teil des Bundesbuches ist.

4 כי תפגע שׁוֹר אִיבְךָ אִי חִמְרוֹ תַעַה
הִשָּׁב תִּשְׁיבֵנוּ לוֹ
5 כִּי־תִרְאֶה חִמּוֹר שְׂנֵאֵךְ רִבִּץ תַּחַת מִשְׁאוֹ וְהִדַּלְתָּ מֵעֵיב לּוֹ
עֵיב תַּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ

- 4 Begegnest du dem verirrtten Rind oder Esel deines Feindes, führe es sogleich zu ihm zurück.
- 5 Siehst du, dass der Esel deines Hassers unter seiner Last liegt, – und du enthältest dich, es ihm zu überlassen –, erlasse [die Last] sogleich mit ihm [deinem Hasser].

Das Konditionalgefüge von V. 4 besteht aus zwei VS mit zusammen zehn Wörtern. Der erste Satz ist mit der Konjunktion *yk* eingeleitet und verbal fortgesetzt, der zweite Satz eröffnet mit einer *figura etymologica*. Das Konditionalgefüge von V. 5 besteht aus drei VS mit

⁴ Für V. 22a werden in der Auslegung die unterschiedlichsten Vorstellungen diskutiert, s. H. F. Fuhs, *Sprichwörter*, NEB, Würzburg 2001.

zusammen dreizehn Wörtern, wobei der erste und dritte analog zu den beiden Sätzen in V. 4 gebildet sind. In V. 5 ist wieder das zu אֵיבֹן synonyme Substantiv אֵיבֹן verwendet.

Exkurs: Ex 23,5ab-b

V. 5αβ-b gilt als schwer verständlich.⁵ Es sind vor allem zwei Probleme, die seit langem diskutiert werden:⁶ 1. Steht V. 5αβ syntaktisch auf der gleichen Ebene wie V. 5b, sind die beiden Sätze also von כִּי abhängige Nachsätze (A. Ibn Esra,⁷ U. Cassuto,⁸ H. B. Huffmon,⁹ A. Cooper,¹⁰ Einheitsübersetzung) oder setzt V. 5αβ syndetisch V. 5a fort (so z. B. Raschi,¹¹ S. R. Hirsch,¹² B. Jacob,¹³ C. Houtman, H. G. M. Williamson,¹⁴ Elberfelder Bibel [1985])? 2. Kann עֵיבֹן auch „helfen“ bedeuten und gibt es ein עֵיבֹן II? 3. Hinzu kommt die Frage, worauf sich לוֹ in V. 5αβ und עָמְרוּ in V. 5b beziehen, auf שְׂנֵאָדָה, „dein Hasser“, oder auf הַמִּזְרֵר „Esel“?

Zu 1.: Das Perfectum consecutivum zu Beginn von V. 5αβ signalisiert m. E., dass V. 5αβ und V. 5b syntaktisch nicht auf der gleichen Ebene liegen. W. Schneider¹⁵ zufolge hat die Konjunktion וּ vor Verben in der Regel eine verbindende Funktion, das heisst, dass V. 5αβ V. 5a fortsetzt; so signalisiert es auch die massoretische Verseinteilung. Hinzu kommt eine andere Beobachtung. Der mit Perfectum consecutivum eingeleitete VS steht zwischen zwei mit Imperfekt ein-

⁵ Die neue Zürcher Bibel (2007) verzichtet sogar auf eine Übersetzung von V. 5b.

⁶ Zur Diskussion s. C. Houtman, *Exodus. Deel III. Exodus 20–40*, Kampen 1996, 247–249, und N. Leibowitz, *Studies in Shemot (Exodus), Part II Mishpatim – Pekudei (Exodus 21,1 to end)*, translated by A. Newman, Jerusalem 1981, 425–436.

⁷ *Abraham Ibn Esras langer Kommentar zum Buch Exodus*, Bd. 2, eingel., übers. und komment. v. D. U. Rottzoll, Berlin 2000, 726f.

⁸ *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, Jerusalem 1967.

⁹ „Exodus 23,4–5: A Comparative Study“, H. N. Bream, R. D. Heim, C. A. Moore (eds.), *A Light Unto My Path, Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers*, Philadelphia 1974, 271–278.

¹⁰ A. Cooper, „The Plain Sense of Exodus 23:5“, *HUCA* 59 (1988), 1–22.

¹¹ *Raschi-Kommentar zum Pentateuch*, Basel 1975.

¹² *Der Pentateuch. 2. Teil: Exodus*, Tel-Aviv 1986.

¹³ *Das Buch Exodus*, Stuttgart 1997.

¹⁴ „A Reconsideration עֵיבֹן II in Biblical Hebrew“, *ZAW* 97 (1985), 74–85.

¹⁵ *Grammatik*, 243.

geleiteten VS. Dieser Tempuswechsel kann als ein Hinweis auf Hintergründinformation zu V. 5a gesehen werden.¹⁶

So verstanden ist die Struktur von V. 4 und V. 5 einschliesslich der Anzahl Wörter gleich – bis auf eben V. 5αβ als Zusatzinformation. Ein weiteres Argument für die Zusammengehörigkeit des ganzen V. 5a nennt Dohmen in seinem Exoduskommentar: „Der Satz in V 5ab stellt... eine Ellipse dar, weil für das ‚Lassen‘ oder ‚Entfernen‘ das Akkusativobjekt fehlt. Es heisst wörtlich nur: ‚...du willst Abstand vom Entfernen nehmen ...‘ (והדרלת מעיב). Was in dieser Ellipse zu ergänzen ist, kann sinnvollerweise nur die am Ende des vorausgehenden Satzes (5aa) erwähnte Last des Esels sein.“¹⁷

Zu 2.: Die Bedeutung „helfen“ ist für עזב nicht belegt und die Annahme eines עזב II ist mit guten Gründen bestritten worden.¹⁸ Muss man folglich an der gleichen Bedeutung von עזב an allen drei Stellen in 5ab–b festhalten, ist der Text nur dann verständlich, wenn man ein semantisches Wortspiel¹⁹ hinsichtlich der Bedeutungen (über)lassen und (er)lassen annimmt.²⁰

Zu 3.: Grammatisch kann sich לו in V. 5ab sowohl auf שניאך, „dein Hasser“, als auf הַמֵּוֹר, „Esel“, beziehen. Dohmen meint, dass לו von der Sache her auf den Esel zu beziehen sei, denn er liege unter der Last zusammengebrochen am Boden.²¹ In diesem Fall muss die Empathie mit dem gestürzten Tier als vorrangiges Motiv zur Hilfe verstanden werden. Houtman bezieht לו zurück auf den Feind.²² Diese

¹⁶ Siehe Schneider, *Grammatik*, 190.

¹⁷ Ch. Dohmen, *Exodus*, 2. Teil, Freiburg 2004, 184.

¹⁸ Siehe Williamson, „Reconsideration,” 74–85, E. S. Gerstenberger, „עזב“, *TWAT*, V, 1200f und *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* / W. Gesenius, Berlin 1987–18.

¹⁹ Ein Wortspiel kann hier auch nach Jacob, *Exodus*, 721, beabsichtigt sein.

²⁰ Jacob, *Exodus*, interpretiert die Stelle von einem עזב II (Neh 3,8), „aufrichten“ her. Seiner Meinung nach könnte der Besitzer des Esels das Tier leicht alleine von seiner Last lösen oder einen Riemen lockern, aber damit wäre dem Besitzer noch nicht geholfen. Um den Weg fortsetzen zu können – darin bestehe die eigentliche Hilfe –, sei es nötig, den Esel richtig zu beladen, die Last richtig zu schichten und beidseitig zu verteilen. Dafür werde eine zweite Person benötigt. Diese Interpretation beruht auf rabbinischer Kombination von Ex 23,5 und Dtn 22,4 (הקים חקיו עמו). LXX, Vulg., TO, TPsJ, TNf und SamT übersetzen עזב in V. 5αβ und V. 5b jeweils mit verschiedenen Verben.

²¹ Dohmen, *Exodus*, 184; so auch LXX; TO, TPsJ, SamP (= MT) sind uneindeutig, Vulg. übersetzt לו nicht.

²² So auch TNf und Ibn Esra.

Interpretation passt gut zum gesamten Kontext der Vers 1–9, in denen es um gerechtes mitmenschliches Verhalten geht, und ist deshalb wahrscheinlicher.²³ עָמוּר kann sich sinnvoll nur auf שֶׁנֶאֱמָר beziehen, denn es ist nicht zu erwarten, dass der Esel selbst daran mitwirkt, entlastet zu werden.

Cooper meint, dass sich לוֹ zwar auf den Esel bezieht, der Esel jedoch nur unter seiner Last ruhe²⁴ und jeder Beobachter sich vom Esel seines Feindes entfernt halten soll, um nicht den Eindruck zu erwecken, er wolle die Last stehlen. Konsequenterweise bezieht er auch עָמוּר auf den Esel.

5 When you see your enemy's ass crouching under its load, and you would refrain from leaving it, you must leave the animal alone.²⁵

Diese Interpretation hat den Vorteil, dass עָמוּר mühelos an allen drei Stellen gleich verstanden werden kann, hat aber absolut keinen Anhalt in der Auslegungstradition. Ausserdem setzt sie voraus, dass V. 5a und V. 5b zwei von כִּי abhängige Nachsätze sind.

Anders als in den drei zuvor genannten Stellen kommt JHWH in Ex 23,4f nicht explizit, sondern implizit vor. Als derjenige, der Israel aus Ägypten führte, ordnet JHWH alle Gebote des Bundesbuches an, also auch Ex 23,4f. Wenn Israel die durch Mose vermittelten Gebote hört und tut (23,22), liegt darauf Verheissung (s. Ex 23,20–33). V. 4 skizziert einen leichteren Fall von Umgang mit dem Feind als V. 5. Wer ein verirrtetes Rind oder einen verirrteten Esel zu seinem Feind zurückbringt (V. 4), kann das Tier vor dem Haus anbinden, weggehen

²³ M. Noth, *Das zweite Buch Mose*, Göttingen 1961², 153, meint, es gehe in den V. 1–9 um Rechtsstreitsfälle und in den V. 4f um einen Rechtsstreit, den jemand mit seinem Gegner „hat oder gehabt hat oder mit dem vielleicht auch erst ein Rechtsstreit bevorsteht“. Demgegenüber vertritt C. M. Carmichael, „A Singular Method of Codification of Law in *Mishpatim*“, ZAW 84 (1972), 19–25 die Ansicht, dass es bei den Geboten (gemeint sind Ex 21,2–23,19) nicht im strikten Sinn um Rechtsfälle geht, sondern um Gebote, die sich primär an das Gewissen richten, dass diese Gebote nicht unbedingt logisch verknüpft sind, sondern häufig mnemotechnische Aspekte eine Rolle spielen und dass das lose Arrangement der Gebote dicht bei dem Arrangement der Gebote in Sprüche steht.

²⁴ „a resting animal“, Cooper, „The Plain Sense“, 14.

²⁵ Cooper, „The Plain Sense“, 13–16.

und eine Begegnung vermeiden. Oder er kann es dem Feind wortlos oder in knappen Worten übergeben. Wer den Esel seines Feindes zusammengebrochen liegen sieht und seinem Feind hilft, den Esel zu entladen und auf die Beine zu bringen, wird mit ihm eine Zeit lang konkret zusammenarbeiten müssen und ins Gespräch kommen. Eindrücklich hat diese Szene B. Jacob beschrieben:

Es gehört eine anständige Gesinnung dazu, seinem Feinde das verirrte Tier wiederzubringen, zumal es mit Zeitverlust verbunden ist. Jedoch man braucht dabei mit dem Feinde nicht persönlich zusammenzutreffen. Aber in dieser Lage ist es nicht zu vermeiden, obgleich der Mann שׂוֹנֵא ist, ein Mensch, mit dem man (s. z. Gen 37,4) „aus Feindschaft (אִי־בָהּ) seit mindestens drei Tagen nicht mehr spricht.“ עֵיבַר hat beide Male dieselbe Bedeutung: Wenn du seinen Esel unter der Last liegen siehst, so könnte dein erster Gedanke sein, davon abzustehen, ihm den Dienst des bz[zu leisten. Wie, *ihm* soll ich helfen, der *mir* Böses angetan hat? Darauf die Tora: *Neben ihm, mit ihm* zusammen sollst du es tun! Magst du dich vor dir selber ausreden, daß du es nicht ihm, sondern dem Tiere zulieb tust, das an eurer Feindschaft unschuldig ist und Mitleid fordert. Zu Anfang wird man bei der Hilfeleistung stumm bleiben, dann fällt notwendigerweise das eine oder andere Wort zur Sache, anweisend oder ermunternd. Damit ist das Eis gebrochen, und zum Schluß kann der andere nicht umhin, sich zu bedanken und die Brücke ist geschlagen, daß die Feinde wieder Freunde und Brüder werden. Sie haben ja schon dem „Haß“ durch die Tat abgesagt. Was sie zusammenbrachte, war nicht eine gemeinsame Not, sondern die Bedrängnis nur des einen und in dieser das gemeinsame Anfasen. Das ist ein Unterricht in praktischer Nächstenliebe.²⁶

Rabbi Alexandraj weiss TanB zufolge sogar, dass die beiden ehemaligen Feinde nach verrichteter Tat in ein Gasthaus gingen und zusammen assen und tranken.²⁷ Letzteres ist vielleicht ein besonderer

²⁶ Jacob, *Exodus*, 722.

²⁷ TanB, IV, 1; vgl. MTeh 99,3

Glücksfall. Was Jacob beschreibt, entspricht wie bei den vorausbehandelten Stellen aus Sprüche wieder der Lebenserfahrung. Wer einem Gegner in schwieriger Situation hilft, wird mit ziemlicher Sicherheit das gespannte Verhältnis entkrampfen. Auch wenn Ex 23,4f nicht explizit von positiven Folgen der Gebotserfüllung spricht, liegt der Gedanke auf der Hand.

Bei all dem geht es nicht um den Feind um seiner selbst willen, sondern um das Verhalten der Person, die einen Feind hat und diesen um ihrer selbst willen positiv behandelt. Es geht also nicht um Feindesliebe, sondern um ein praktisches Verhalten, dass das Zusammenleben möglich und vielleicht sogar erquicklich macht. Die Hebräische Bibel geht damit weniger weit als Jesus in den Seligpreisungen (Mt 5,44). Sie bietet aber eine realistische Perspektive, wie mir angesichts der jahrelangen Zusammenarbeit mit einer Person deutlich wurde, die mir ist, was Schammai dem Hillel war.²⁸

Summary: This article discusses four particular texts from the Hebrew Bible which about enemies in a positive way. They do not speak about love for the enemy, but suggest in a practical way how to deal with your enemy in order to live together as good as possible.

Keywords: Old Testament – Biblical Studies – Hebrew Bible – Enemy – Love

²⁸ Wie fast jeder Vergleich hinkt auch dieser. Weder ist mein Verhältnis zu besagter Person noch das zwischen Schammai und Hillel von persönlicher Feindschaft bestimmt, sondern von Gegnerschaft in der Sache.

Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew*, WUNT II/216, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006, 446 pages, ISBN 3161488768.

The study “Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd,” published in 2006 is an unabridged version of Chae’s dissertation written at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Illinois, USA) under the supervision of Dr. Eckhard J. Schnabel. In this book Chae argues that the author of Matthew’s Gospel used the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism shepherd traditions in order to present Jesus as the therapeutic Davidic Shepherd who fulfils not only the role of YHWH, the eschatological Shepherd of Israel, but also the role of Davidic Shepherd-Appointee over the one eschatological flock.

In the Introduction (1–18), after a brief overview of previous research, Chae argues that Matthew’s puzzled association of the title ‘Son of David’ with healing is not to be explained on the background of Solomon as exorcist tradition (Duling) or as a result of the correlation of the Royal Son of David with the Hellenistic ‘divine man’ tradition (Burger), but that “the healing activities of the Son of David are better associated with the shepherd image.”¹ According to Chae, “Matthew presents Jesus as the eschatological Shepherd and as the Davidic Shepherd-Appointee according to the pattern of the OT Davidic Shepherd tradition, while echoing some significant developments of the tradition during the Second Temple period.”² Thus Matthew’s presentation of Jesus “is a result of his intense dialogue with the Davidic Shepherd tradition (esp. Mic 2–5; Zech 9–14; and Ezek 34–37).”³

In order to be able to demonstrate Matthew’s usage of the Davidic Shepherd tradition, Chae first (chapter 1, 19–94) focuses on “The Davidic Shepherd Tradition in the Old Testament.” After the analysis of the usage of the shepherd imagery in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament (Mic 2–5; Zech 9–14; and Ezek 34–37), Chae

¹ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 5.

² Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 5.

³ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 5.

comes to the conclusion that while in the cult and mythology of Near East societies the shepherd imagery was used widely as a royal metaphor to describe the care and protection provided by both gods and earthly kings, “the Old Testament tends to reserve shepherd imagery for YHWH and, significantly, extends its use only for YHWH’s Davidic Appointee (Mic 5:2–4 [5:1–3]; Jer 3:15; 23:4–6; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; cf. Zech 13:7)”⁴ – the eschatological figure which will emerge on the side of YHWH in the time of his coming. This coming is according to Chae in the OT accompanied by the inauguration of eschatological restoration, characterized by the return of YHWH’s presence among his flock (demonstrated in the setting up of the Shepherd like David), and YHWH’s fatal confrontation with the wicked shepherds of Israel (Ezek 34:2–16; Zech 10:1–6; cf. Jer 23:1–8).

In the second chapter, called “The Davidic Shepherd Tradition in Second Temple Judaism” (95–172), Chae demonstrates how the eschatological activities of the Shepherd in Ezekiel 34–37 (seeking, rescuing, gathering, healing, feeding the flock) set out the criteria for the later shepherd imageries; further how the Davidic Shepherd tradition was developed and expanded in various Jewish texts, such as 1 Enoch 85–90, Psalms of Solomon 17–18, 4 Ezra, Targum on Ezekiel, and various Qumran texts; and how the image of a new David was further shaped, a shepherd-king and prince expected to seek and rescue the lost, gather the exiles, heal the wounded, teach the Law and save the flock from injustice and unrighteousness.

In the third chapter, “Matthew’s Textual Interaction with the Davidic Shepherd Tradition,” (173–246) Chae tries to demonstrate how Matthew in his Gospel interacts with the Davidic Shepherd tradition. Chae argues that Matthew’s explicit quotation of Mic 5:2 in Matt 2:6 and of Zech 13:7 in Matt 26:31 lay a firm foundation for the Evangelist’s conversance with the Davidic Shepherd tradition and its intentional usage in the portrayal of Jesus. Chae concludes that, “Many allusions (Matt 9:36; 10:6, 16; 15:24; 25:31–46) and images (7:15; 12:9–14; 18:10–14) in the Gospel, mostly indebted to Ezekiel’s rich shepherd/sheep images, suggest that Jesus assumes the role of YHWH the eschatological Shepherd whose mission is to seek, heal, gather,

⁴ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 26. Cf. *idem*, p. 90.

and judge his scattered yet rescued flock...⁵ and that “this mission is characteristic of unparalleled compassion and authority.”⁶

In the fourth chapter (247–326), titled “Seeking the Lost and Healing the Sick: Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd,” Chae focuses thematically on the two main aspects of Jesus’ shepherding mission, namely on the seeking of the lost (Matt 9:10–13) and the healing of the sick (Matt 9:10–13; 9:27–31; 12:22–24; 15:21–28; 20:29–34; 21:1–19). Chae argues that “Matthew’s Gospel presents the earthly mission of Jesus as the mission of YHWH as the eschatological Shepherd for his lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus’ mission of seeking the lost is the critical sign of the inauguration of the promised Shepherd’s theocracy over his flock. Ezekiel 34 and 37 help us to understand the significance of Jesus’ mission to seek the sinners as well as their identity primarily as the lost and the outcast. Jesus’ conflict with the Pharisees signifies YHWH’s judgment upon Israel’s shepherds that eventually results in his raising up of the new Davidic Shepherd over the restored flock.”⁷ According to Chae “Jesus’ healing the sick demonstrates that he takes up the role of YHWH as the eschatological Shepherd for the sheep without a shepherd.”⁸

In this chapter Chae also focuses on the association of the messianic title “Son of David” with healing in Matthew’s Gospel and argues that the texts such as 4Q521 2, 2:7–13, CD-A 13:9–10, 4Q504 1–2, Apoc. Ezek. 5, and most importantly Ezek 34–37 prove “that this particular association was no anomaly but rather was an integral part of the mission of the eschatological Davidic Shepherd.”⁹ Chae therefore refuses the Solomon-as-exorcist tradition as irrelevant for the interpretation of the figure of Jesus, the therapeutic Son of David, as well as other concepts (divine man, suffering servant), rooting the Matthean Jesus’ healing ministry in the Davidic Shepherd tradition.

In chapter five, “The Rise of the One Davidic Shepherd: Echoes in Matthew 27:51b–53 and 28:16–20” (327–371), Chae further stresses other explicit textual interactions of the Gospel with the Shepherd/

⁵ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 245.

⁶ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 245.

⁷ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 324.

⁸ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 324.

⁹ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 325.

Davidic Shepherd tradition and argues that “Matthew’s narrative follows exactly the pattern laid out in Ezekiel’s vision...: the coming of the eschatological Shepherd and the consequential appointment of the Davidic Shepherd over the rescued flock.”¹⁰ Chae demonstrates, that “Matthew’s enigmatic depiction of Jesus’ death and resurrection in Matt 27:51b-54 turns out to be an integral piece of the whole picture of Jesus as the eschatological Davidic Shepherd.”¹¹ In pointing out common themes shared by Ezek 34 and 37 and Matt 28:16–20, such as the theme of authority, commission of teaching, the nations and promise of divine presence, Chae further strengthens his thesis: that the Gospel of Matthew embraces the Davidic Shepherd Tradition. “The risen Shepherd completes his role as YHWH the eschatological Shepherd for his own flock. The restoration of Israel reaches its ultimate end...”¹² The shepherding image, then, is extended to “under-shepherds” (disciples – cf. Matt 28:16–20) who further carry out the shepherding role.

In chapter six, “Matthew’s Narrative Strategy and the Davidic Shepherd Tradition” (372–386), Chae evaluates the influence of the Davidic Shepherd tradition on Matthew’s Gospel and argues that Matthew adopts the shepherd language and images from Mic 2–5, Ezek 34–37, and Zech 9–14, “and interprets and modifies ‘the pattern’ implied in the vision primarily in Ezek 34–37. It is not merely Ezekiel 34 but the entire vision of Ezek 34–37 that guides and unifies Matthew’s shepherd motifs and related themes.”¹³ Chae concludes that “Matthew’s emphasis on the title ‘Son of David’ in the infancy narrative, the Evangelist’s distinctive portrait of Jesus as ‘the therapeutic Son of David’ in the main body of the Gospel, the figure of the smitten shepherd in the passion narrative (26:31–32), and the puzzling background of the portrait of Jesus in the closing scene of 28:16–20 with its correspondence to 1:23 (divine presence), all indicate that the Evangelist shapes his narrative structure as he deeply interacts with the Davidic Shepherd tradition.”¹⁴

The final “Conclusions” (387–395) contains the summary of

¹⁰ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 370.

¹¹ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 370.

¹² Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 370.

¹³ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 385.

¹⁴ Chae, *Davidic Shepherd*, p. 386.

Chae's thesis and findings on the one side, and introduces some topics for further research on the other side.

Chae's study, "Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd," represents an important attempt to demonstrate the influence of the Shepherd tradition as preserved in Mic 2-5, Zech 9-14 and especially in Ezek 34-37 as well as in later Jewish literature, on Matthew's portrayal of Jesus, and to explain the association of the title "Son of David" with healings in Matthew's Gospel on one side with the help of YHWH Shepherd and Davidic Shepherd-Appointee tradition on the other side. At this point it contributes to the ongoing academic debate in the field of Matthean Christology.

The main shortcoming of this attempt, however, is sometimes a quite visible tendency to read the Davidic Shepherd imagery/motifs into the texts. This is most obvious with respect to several healing stories in Matthew's Gospel. Thus when Chae in his analysis of Matt 12:22-24 claims that the question of the crowds, "Could this one be the Son of David?," is addressed to the Pharisees who as the shepherds of the crowds "must decide whether to approve or refute what the crowd witnessed"¹⁵, namely whether Jesus is the eschatological Davidic Shepherd, he goes far beyond the text, not to speak about the historicizing of the crowd's reaction he also makes. Similarly overestimated is Chae's exegesis of Jesus' act of healing in the temple (Matt 21:14-17) in which he sees the bringing back of the outcast and lost by the eschatological Shepherd, the restoration of Israel and even reversion of the exilic curses and renovation "of [the] whole covenantal community."¹⁶

Similarly problematic is Chae's tendency to explain the main theological lines in Matthew's Gospel solely with the help of the Shepherd tradition, as well as his sometimes too quick transgression or rejection of other traditions which may have influenced Matthew's final portrait of Jesus (e.g. Solomon-as-exorcist tradition). Chae's book is thus to be read with a critical approach. Nevertheless, it still represents a solid, although sometimes too detailed, work which can serve as a basis for further critical discussion.

Jiří Dvořáček

¹⁵ Chae, Davidic Shepherd, p. 310.

¹⁶ Chae, Davidic Shepherd, p. 322. Cf. *Idem*, p. 319-323.

Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640–1700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 449 pp., ISBN 10052187735.

In this important study Jon Parkin presents the reader with a chronological analysis of the critical reception of Hobbes' religious and political thought between 1640 and 1700. The intended effect is to re-contextualise Hobbes' readers and critics, who read and confronted his works within specific religious and political contexts. We in turn gain a broader understanding of these texts, their reception and their immense controversy. One of Parkin's main concerns in this study is to show how the highly charged nature of Hobbes' texts was dealt with and defused, thus "Taming the Leviathan." Another theme in this study is the absorption and assimilation of many of Hobbes' ideas into mainstream public thinking as critics accepted some of the tenets of Hobbes' doctrines which suited their political or religious purposes whilst trying to refute others they disagreed with. Curiously, the twin processes of rejection and appropriation branded the philosopher as a villain and, at the same time, established a place for him as an extremely influential political thinker.

Chapter 1 devotes attention to early works before *Leviathan*. Apparently, the way to controversy had already been paved by works such as *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*. Despite considerable intellectual acclaim for *De Cive*, even amongst some of the clergy, its religious doctrines (for example, the sovereign's right to judge religious controversy; its inherent materialistic determinism etc.), became the pretext for considerable criticism both on the Continent and in England. Parkin also shows that many of the main politically offensive features of Hobbes' later works, such as his state of nature, de factoism, absolutism, extreme Erastianism, among numerous others, had already become evident in outline in the 1640's. Besides engaging his opponents, Hobbes would also try to repackage some ideas to make them more acceptable (though he knew how unorthodox his thinking was), a process that would repeat itself in later years. Thus, by the time of the second edition of *De Cive* in 1647, Hobbes had already acquired a reputation as a potentially subversive thinker,

whose books were full of dangerous paradoxes, but who nonetheless attracted an intellectually erudite readership. Here Parkin brings out one of his study's central themes: the contrast between the controversy which Hobbes' pregnant and provocative doctrines were fraught with on the one hand, and the clandestine following and covert approval they attracted on the other.

Chapters 2–6 deal mostly with *Leviathan* and the complex process of its reception by both critics and covert supporters alike. Parkin develops important themes broached in Chapter 1, outlining the main arguments of *Leviathan* in Chapter 2, now adding and pointing out some of the more subtle elements of the book that added to its power. Some readers may discern the development of a theme explored by Samuel Mintz in his 1962 classic *The Hunting of the Leviathan*, which held the thesis that Hobbes' opponents were forced to formulate their best rational arguments as well as absorb Hobbes' doctrines in order to effectively argue against them. Parkin's study brings an interesting, new approach by saying that Hobbes's opponents tried to deconstruct him by using his own arguments against him in the language-game of *Leviathan* as it attracted enmity from all sides. Drawing on Quentin Skinner's recent research in the use of rhetoric in Hobbes, Parkin suggests that its masterful use in *Leviathan* not only made it a masterpiece, but also created a sort of language-game which its foes and clandestine allies alike often unconsciously played. Other elements of the very attraction of *Leviathan* included its colourful prose, unusual combinations of ideas, ambivalence, unusual juxtapositions and paradoxes, which further led many of its readers to employ its idiom. Parkin broadens and deepens this theme masterfully, delving into the complex processes of polemics and refutation between Hobbes and his opponents on one hand, and opposing sides of the religious and political fence on the other. These would frequently emphasise those arguments in *Leviathan* suiting their purposes against one another, while trying to refute others they viewed as dangerous. Paradoxically, the similarity of many of Hobbes' opinions to those of his opponents was what made his *Leviathan* so subversive and necessary to be "tamed." Selective and often disingenuous use of his doctrines backfired, making *Leviathan* a book that addressed political and religious pluralism, yet defied being saddled with their

respective meta-narratives. Such themes, informed by linguistic-philosophical and post-modern thought, lie latently below the surface of Parkin's chronological treatment; they become discernable from a broader perspective as Parkin critically analyses primary sources that held a polemic with *Leviathan* and its author.

The deconstructive nature of *Leviathan* applied equally to arguments put forward by authors who were seeking to have Hobbes branded as an atheist. Although many readers discerned what they felt were determinist or materialist concepts (the theory of motion, the impossibility of incorporeal spirit and Hobbes' doctrine of representation among others), Hobbes' highly unorthodox interpretation of scripture filled with ambiguities rendered his text unusable to anyone trying to brand its author as an overt atheist. Most critics, such as Bramhall, More and Cudworth either tried to deduce atheism by abstract inference, often applying scholastic or rational arguments against him; or they tried to refute him on other grounds, such as his natural law theory, contractarianism, absolutism and de factoism. The reductive nature of many works against Hobbes tended rather to oversimplify his thought. Hobbes' anti-university position attracted some of the most systematic and damaging assaults from the newly-formed Royal Society. These scientists, such as Wallis and Boyle, needed to destroy Hobbes' status as a natural scientist in order to distance themselves from his dangerous position in which the universities, bred on Aristotelian political doctrine, figured as a breeding ground for sedition. Besides political liability, Parkin also brings out the interesting dilemma of the Royal Society's own anti-Aristotelianism against the background of their bitter polemic with Hobbes, another anti-Aristotelian and advocate of nascent modern science. Parkin also gives the reader a glimpse at clandestine Hobbism, most curiously in Oxford and Cambridge, giving detailed treatment of admirers such as Scargill and others, such as Locke whom he influenced. The Scargill affair is of particular interest for its importance in the characterisation of Hobbes by his enemies as the patron of libertinism. Hobbes' thought was conveniently blamed as being the direct cause of the rakish life led by Scargill.

The last chapters of *Taming the Leviathan* deal with the period following Hobbes' death in 1679. The dearth of published Hobbes

works and the wealth of reductive and frequently distorting characterisations of his thought by opponents led to two interesting developments both during Hobbes' life and after his death: There was a fashionable, if superficial, appropriation of certain selective anti-clerical tenets of his works by atheists, libertines and free-thinkers; on the other hand, more sophisticated polemical works as Cudworth's *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* made a condensed, user-friendly set of neatly-delineated atheist arguments available for deists and materialists, paving the way for the Enlightenment free thought. Parkin thus ably argues that polemical literature against Hobbes had only achieved part of its purpose. By 1700, Hobbes was notorious, but also far better known to the public than he might have been had he been ignored. Moreover, the selective use of his doctrines in fact emphasised, and thus enhanced the impact of his thought. Indeed, the contrast between the official condemnation and the intellectual interest his thought provoked is one of the most prominent themes of this study.

The emergent finish is a wide-ranging and multi-levelled tapestry, weaving its compact text and arguments into a historical background, giving the reader an exciting overview of the intellectual, religious and political pluralism that was the reality of Hobbes' time. The book is well informed both by primary sources and more recent Hobbes scholarship, and is equipped with detailed notes, bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and an index. All these make it a valuable addition to scholars or students interested in this problematic.

Pavel Šuba