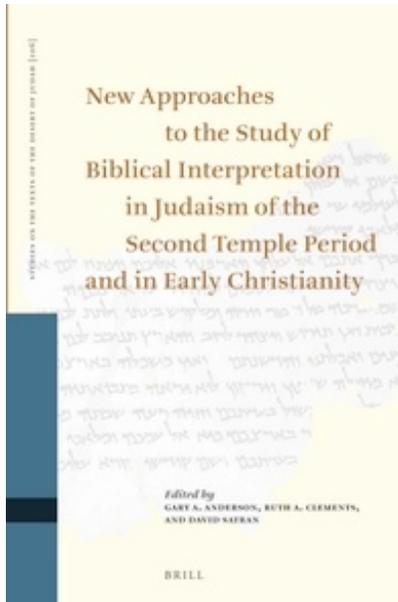


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Gary A. Anderson, Ruth A. Clements, and David Satran, eds.

New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism of the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity: Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 9–11 January, 2007

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As the subtitle indicates, this volume represents a series of papers given at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the summer of 2007 for the Eleventh International Orion Symposium. The goal of the symposium was to “provide a wide-ranging survey of some of the new perspectives that have been brought to the study of early biblical exegesis, highlighting the ways in which these perspectives have begun to transform both our understanding of early Judaism and Christianity and, just as importantly, our appreciation of the manner in which these systems interacted with and influenced one another in these formative early centuries” (vii).

The volume is divided into three sections. The first, “Interpretation in Context,” comprising four essays, focuses on the context of various texts and the social-historical backgrounds from which they spring. The second, “Comparative Studies,” includes three essays that explore potential connections between Jewish and Christian interpretation(s) of select biblical texts. The last two essays, making up the third section, “Interpretive Trajectories,” explore the evolution of certain interpretive impulses as far as the sixth century. A supernumerary essay by Michael Stone, standing outside the three divisions, opens the volume.

Stone's opening essay is entitled "Some Considerations on the Categories 'Bible' and 'Apocrypha.'" Although it contends that the terms "canon" and "Bible" are inappropriate in the Second Temple period, it is really a summation of the *status quaestionis* regarding the canon in the era, highlighting the positions of the author himself. Stone discusses the closing of the three sections of the canon, the relative status of each part, the relationship between the Torah and so-called "rewritten Bibles," then itemizes a few open questions. As expected, Stone has produced a pithy and superb analysis of current scholarly findings. It is worth noting, however, that in his first footnote Stone clarifies that his own position has modified somewhat since 2007. His current views can be found in his *Ancient Judaism: New Views and Visions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

The first section's essays include: Michael Segal, "'For from Zion Shall Come Forth Torah...' (Isaiah 2:3): Biblical Paraphrase and the Exegetical Background of Susanna"; Gregory Sterling, "Different Traditions or Emphases? The Image of God in Philo's *De opificio mundi*"; Maren Niehoff, "The Implied Audience of the Letter of James"; and Serge Ruzer, "James on Faith and Righteousness in the Context of a Broader Jewish Exegetical Discourse." Segal examines three compelling instances of allusion to Isa 2:1–4 in Isa 51:3–5, y. Sanhedrin 1:2 (18d–19a), and OG Susanna 5–6. Segal demonstrates how each redeploys Isa 2:1–4 in a unique way to address issues of community identity. Sterling explores Philo's multifaceted interpretation of the image of God in *De opificio mundi*, in which Philo associates the image with the Logos, the human mind, and the idea of the human being. Following a sophisticated analysis of Philo's exegesis, Sterling concludes that the tensions between the three interpretations are due to Philo's incorporation of earlier exegetical traditions in his exposition. Serge Ruzer addresses the topic of the "parting of the ways" between Judaism and Christianity through the lens of the Epistle of James. Ruzer examines James's references and allusions to a number of biblical texts and traditions (e.g., Abraham, the Decalogue, Prov 3:34) for indications of how the author construed "community" for his audience. He concludes that the author is attempting to reduce the influence of Paul's ethics by pointing out its misinterpretations of scripture. All three of these essays demonstrate the capacity of scriptural reuse and exegesis to conceal or reveal various aspects of an author's social-historical context.

The largest section of the book is the second, in which we find essays by Gary Anderson, Menahem Kister, Naomi Koltun-Fromm, and Ruth Clements. Gary Anderson's "You Will Have Treasure in Heaven" investigates almsgiving in early Judaism and Christianity, with particular focus on its implications for understanding Mark 10:17–31, the story of the rich young man. Always perceptive, Anderson finds surprising points of similarity between the two communities' practices, as well as some differences. Menahem Kister's essay, "Allegorical Interpretations of Biblical Narratives in Rabbinic Literature, Philo, and Origen: Some Case Studies," weighs in at fifty-one pages. Kister locates and analyzes a

number of allegorical interpretations within rabbinic literature and compares their methods and results with those of allegorists such as Philo and Origen. As always, Kister's work is meaty and erudite. He is able to demonstrate a complex relationship of give-and-take between Christian and Jewish writers and to shed light on rabbinic Judaism's simultaneous use and rejection of allegorical interpretation. Naomi Koltun-Fromm examines the interpretation of pentateuchal texts in Aphrahat the Persian sage's eighteenth *Demonstration*, entitled "On Virginité and *Qaddishuta*" (fourth century CE). Her essay, "Hermeneutics of Holiness: Syriac; Christian and Rabbinic Constructs of Holy Community and Sexuality," shows that, although Aphrahat is a Syrian Christian who polemicizes against Judaism and argues for a different notion of holiness than do his rabbinic contemporaries, his exegesis fits within a Semitic milieu. Finally, Ruth Clements, in "The Parallel Lives of Early Jewish and Christian Texts and Art: The Case of Isaac the Martyr," proposes that depictions of Isaac in ancient Jewish and Christian art suggest a common martyrdom tradition for both. She further explores the persistence of this image in each community when martyrdom is not (or seldom) a reality. These four essays reveal surprising lines of continuity and discontinuity between early Jewish and Christian interpretation, as well as very probably lines of mutual dependence that will have implications for future research.

The third and final section of the book includes Richard Layton, "Didymus the Blind and *Philistores*: A Contest over *Historia* in Early Christian Exegetical Argument"; and Sergio La Porta, "Exegeting the Eschaton: Dionysius the Areopagite and the Apocalypse." Layton reconsiders Didymus's mysterious adversaries the *philistores* (fourth century CE). Although they cannot be identified with a known group, Didymus's criticisms suggest that they opposed his exegetical practices. Didymus presented a robust defense of his Origenian approach, particularly the nature of biblical language and the coherence of scripture (under the conviction that the Holy Spirit infuses scripture with certain affects and structures of coherence). La Porta examines exegesis of the Apocalypse of John attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite (late fifth–early sixth century CE). Dionysius, though a rigorous analogical exegesis, rejected the interpretation of the Apocalypse as the end of the cosmos and saw in it a narrative of the eventual triumph of the church and perfection of its hierarchy.

This is a rich and diverse collection of essays by a very able group of scholars. The greatest virtue of the volume is not found in the content of the individual essays but in its design, standing betwixt and between many traditional academic divisions: Jewish studies and Christian studies; early Jewish and early Christian literatures; history and textual studies; church and synagogue. This is synthesis of the highest order.