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Ruling the *rûaḥ*: Emotional Experience and Expression in Ancient Hebrew

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Abstract: Emotions are one of the most fascinating and difficult aspects of human experience, and have received significant attention in biblical studies. This paper explores how one Hebrew lexeme, *rûaḥ*, provides a point of entry into the complex world of how emotions are expressed in ancient texts. Drawing from some insights of Cognitive Linguistics, it examines the use of *rûaḥ* to express the experience of impatience and patience, and arrogance and humility. This paper then challenges a long-held but simplistic equation of *rûaḥ* with *anger*, and argues that a more nuanced and complex relationship exists between lexeme and emotion than most citations in scholarship suggest.

Keywords: emotions, ruah, breath, anger, patience, arrogance, semantics, metaphor, cognitive-linguistics

טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר
Better patient than a mighty warrior; and one who rules his rûaḥ than one who takes a city.
(Prov 16:32)

1. Emotion in Human Life and the Bible

It is difficult to consider the human person without attention to *emotion*. The affective dimension is central to our experience as humans and provides an interesting perspective to bring to the Bible—an opportunity to better understand something of the people within and behind these texts.[1] This paper will shed light on a new pathway into understanding the emotional experiences expressed in the Hebrew Bible by focussing on the lexeme רוח.

This paper benefited greatly from the interaction at the "Biblical Anthropology — a Message for Contemporary People" virtual conference in October, 2021. My thanks also go to Rev. Craig McCorkindale of Phnom Penh Bible School for his rigorous feedback on earlier drafts, and the two reviewers who corrected several errors and encouraged me to improve and strengthen my arguments throughout.

1 Emotion studies is a rapidly growing subset of biblical studies. Helpful orientating surveys and approaches can be found in M.R. Schlimm, "Emotion, Embodiment, and Ethics: Engaging Anger in Genesis," *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (eds. S.T. Kamionkowski – W. Kim) (LHBOTS 465; New York: Clark 2010) 146–158; P.A. Kruger, "Emotions in the Hebrew Bible: A Few Observations on Prospects and Challenges," *OTE* 28/2 (2015) 395–420; F. Mirguet, "What

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In Classical Hebrew, רוח exhibits a high degree of polysemy, used in reference to phenomena ranging from the meteorological (*wind*, Eccl 1:6; Ps 1:4), the divine (*Spirit*, Judg 3:10; Isa 61:1), other beings ('*spirits*,' 1 Kgs 22:21), and in diverse ways to humanity. It is within this complex sub-structure of the anthropological uses of רוח that we observe its relationship with emotion. רוח often refers to human *breath* (Gen 6:17; Job 9:18), and relatedly, *life*—especially as that imparted to humans by God (e.g., Ps 104:29; Eccl 12:7; Job 34:14).[2] The רוח is typically localised within the human person, leading to provocative associations between it and the source of human actions and speech—what we might refer to as its *volitional* use, or perhaps more broadly (if at the risk of anachronism), the *internal self*.[3] Many of these possible uses could relate to the expression of emotion (e.g., the relationship of breathing patterns with emotion), and so it is not surprising that רוח has been associated with affective experience for some time.[4] However, this usage of רוח is often described either in quite vague generic terms such as "temperament," "disposition," "psychic forces," or with reference to quite specific experiences, especially "courage" and "anger." The tendency towards lexicographical brevity (what is a "psychic force"?), polysemous translational glosses such as "temper" (which may refer in English to both a person's general emotional situation or the specific experience of anger), and very limited textual support (the sense "anger" is asserted based on three out of approximately 378 instances of רוח in the Hebrew Bible), indicate that the nature of the relationship between רוח and emotion is ripe for more rigorous attention.

We propose to begin this reappraisal by drawing from the insights of frame semantics, cognitive scripts, and a kind of cognitive metaphor/metonymy to demonstrate the use of spatial figurative language in the depiction of PATIENCE/IMPATIENCE and HUMILITY/ARROGANCE, and use these as a point of reference to question the casual equation of רוח with ANGER.[5]

Is an 'Emotion' in the Hebrew Bible?: An Experience That Exceeds Most Contemporary Concepts," *BibInt* 24 (2016) 442–465. More widely in ANES, M. Jaques, "The Discourse of Emotion in Ancient Mesopotamia: A Theoretical Approach," *Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East* (ed. S. Kipfer) (OBO 285; Fribourg: Academic Press 2017) 185–205.

2 The conceptual relationships generated by רוח's potential reference to divine and human (and beyond) often makes precise semantic categorisation possible. This ambiguity is put to good use by the authors of biblical texts.

3 For a recent exploration of some of the connections between רוח and the category of selfhood, see C.A. Newsom, *The Spirit within Me. Self and Agency in Ancient Israel and Second Temple Judaism* (AYBRL; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2021) chs. 2–3.

4 See *BDB s.v.* "רוּחַ," 3; *HALOT s.v.* "רוּחַ," 7; *CDCH s.v.* "רוּחַ," 3b(3, 5, 7); M.V. Van Pelt – W.C. Kaiser, Jr. – D.I. Block, "רוּחַ," *NIDOTTE* III, 1071–1072; "the psychic component of the complex notion of vitality," C. Westermann – R. Albertz, "רוּחַ," *TLOT* III, 1210; "expressions of temperament … emotions … moral dispositions … psychological forces," H.-J. Fabry – S. Tengström, "רוּחַ," *TDOT* XIII, 389; A.R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*, 2 ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales 1964) 25–33; É. Dhorme, *L'emploi métaphorique des noms de parties du corps. En Hébreu et en Akkadien* (Paris: Libraire Victor Lecoffre 1923) 81.

5 Most readers will recognise these approaches to language as belonging to the family of Cognitive Linguistics. While we will address some particulars of these approaches as part of our study below, those seeking a helpful orientation to the field may refer to C.H.J. van der Merwe, "Biblical Hebrew and Cognitive Linguistics:

2. רוח and PATIENCE/IMPATIENCE

The first group of texts we will examine employs רוח to express the experience of PATIENCE and IMPATIENCE in terms of spatial LENGTH.

Proverbs 14:29

ארך אפים רב־תבונה וקצר־רוח מרים אולת׃

The "long of nostrils" are great of understanding, and the "short of *rûaḥ*" exalt stupidity.[6]

Job 21:4

האנכי לאדם שיחי ואם־מדוע לא־תקצר רוחי׃

Is my complaint against a human being? Or why should my *rûaḥ* not be shortened?

Exodus 6:9

וידבר משה כן אל־בני ישראל ולא שמעו אל־משה מקצר רוח ומעבדה קשה׃

Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses because of their "shortness of *rûaḥ*" and because of their harsh labour.

Micah 2:7

האמור בית־יעקב הקצר רוח יהוה אם־אלה מעלליו הלוא דברי ייטיבו עם הישר הולך׃

Should this be said, house of Jacob? Is the "*rûaḥ* of Yhwh shortened"? Are these his deeds? Do not my words do good to the one who walks uprightly?

Ecclesiastes 7:8

טוב אחרית דבר מראשיתו טוב ארך־רוח מגבה־רוח׃

Better the end of a thing than its beginning; better the "long of *rûaḥ*" than the "high in *rûaḥ*."

Sirach[A] 5:11

היה ממהר להאזין ובארך רוח השב פתגם׃

Be quick to hear but in "length of *rûaḥ*" speak your answer.

A General Orientation," *New Perspectives in Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew* (eds. A.D. Hornkohl – G. Khan) (Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures 7; Cambridge: University of Cambridge & Open Book 2021) 641–696. For the most comprehensive "state-of-the-art" for the field more generally, see V. Evans, *Cognitive Linguistics. A Complete Guide*, 2 ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2019). In keeping with conventions within Cognitive Linguistics, concepts are in small caps to distinguish them from the lexical units used to evoke such concepts in language use. Thus, ANGER is that evoked in various ways by *anger*, *colère*, אף, etc. While these words share sufficient semantic overlap to be frequently offered as cross-linguistic equivalents, each language differs in its conceptualisation and categorisation of feelings.

6 Unattributed translations are my own. In all translations, the transliteration *rûaḥ* has been substituted for all English glosses, and quotation marks mark intentionally "wooden" glosses pertinent to our analysis.

The figurative language common across these texts is of the relative "length" or relative "shortness" of the רוח. To understand how this metaphor expresses emotion, it is necessary to examine the function of the SHORT/LONG model in light of other anthropological metaphors—especially קצר + נפש—as well as consider the usage of רוח in this model.

The root קצר often profiles the schematic lack of length or act of shortening something.[7] When used in reference to time, it suggests a prematurely shortened period (with יום, Ps 65:46; 104:24; Job 14:1; with שנה, Prov 10:27). It also regularly appears with anthropological nouns, such as יד "hand" (Num 11:23; Isa 50:2a; 59:1) referring to the loss or lack of power.[8] Perhaps most semantically relevant for understanding רוח, קצר appears with נפש in Num 21:4; Judg 10:16; 16:16; and Zech 11:8. These anthropological nouns are closely related in this metaphor but they should not be treated as fully synonymous (see below).[9] The SHORT metaphors involving רוח and נפש depict the lack or loss of capacity of a person or group within the text to endure an event. How this is presented is a matter of perspective, with either the person or group perceiving the situation as intolerable—what we might call *impatience* (e.g., Zech 11:8)—or the discourse itself evaluating the event and depicting it as unbearable—what we might call *exhaustion* (e.g., Exod 6:9).[10] This metaphor may be characterised as SPATIAL LENGTH IS CAPACITY TO ACT. When depicting the experience of IMPATIENCE, the texts demonstrate the lack of the text's "self" (i.e., the proverbial self, Job, Israel) to control themselves or their circumstance. The verbal instantiation of this figurative depiction likely indicates a premature restriction of capacity that should otherwise exist (analogous to the usage with TIME nouns above), while the adjectival and nominal uses of the roots likely characterise the resultant state of incapacity. There are few explicit metaphorical mappings present beyond the central correlation of LENGTH and CAPACITY, but there are some hints at a *cognitive script* for this emotion. These scripts are complex culturally-embedded conceptual frames. A *frame* is any systems of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them, one must understand the whole structure. In language, when a linguistic element evokes a conceptual element, all the other related elements within the frame are made cognitively available by it.[11] Emotional scripts are abstracted

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7 With both קצר and ארך what the relative "length" is measured against is not inherent to the lexeme itself, it is provided by the context or relies upon a general cultural "landmark" for what counts as long or short.

8 With יד standing metonymically for POWER, J. Bergman – W. von Soden – P.R. Ackroyd, "יָד," *TDOT* V, 418–424.

9 Robert D. Haak's seminal essay ("A Study and New Interpretation of *qṣr npš*," JBL 101 [1982] 161, https://doi.org/10.2307/3260715) is frequently cited as evidence of קצר + נפש and קצר + רוח as functionally synonymous. More recently, see the equivalence assumed in Katrin Müller's otherwise excellent work, *Lobe den Herrn, meine "Seele". Eine kognitiv-linguistische Studie zur* næfæš *des Menschen im Alten Testament* (BWANT 215; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2018) 146–147. Haak's study errs on several points, including functionally equating distinct anthropological terms, failing to note the importance of internal or discourse perspective, and over-confidence in his reading of UDB 1.16 6 34. On the Ugaritic texts, see M. McAffee, *Life and Mortality in Ugaritic. A Lexical and Literary Study* (EANEC 7; University Park: Eisenbrauns 2019) 104–107.

10 Contra Haak's suggestion ("A Study and New Interpretation of *qṣr npš*," 162) that "impatience" and "weakness" are entirely distinct uses of the phrase.

11 C.J. Fillmore – C. Baker, "A Frames Approach to Semantic Analysis," *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis* (eds. B. Heine – H. Narrog) (OHL; Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) 313–339; Evans, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 394–401.

from language data and seek to describe the expected sequence (i.e., related conceptual information) of an experience within a culture, such as the events that typically give rise to an emotion, expected physiological or behavioural corollaries of the emotion, the usual objects, subjects, and moral evaluation of the emotion, etc. For IMPATIENCE, the causal event is often a perception of imminent death (see the presence of למות in Num 21:5, and potentially comically in Judg 16:16) or grave injustice (Exod 6:9; Judg 10:16; Job 21:4; Zech 11:8). This often leads to COMPLAINT (Num 21:5; Job 21:4; Zech 11:9) but may also result in resistance to action (Exod 6:9; Judg 10:16?).

The opposing LENGTH metaphor is significantly rarer, and likely is an explicit and playful inversion of the SHORT metaphor.[12] The רוח that can be "shortened" in IMPATIENCE, can also be conceptualised as "long" in PATIENCE. In Eccl 7:8 this is evaluated as ethically superior to the related HEIGHT metaphor we will explore below.

The use of רוח and נפש as compatible lexemes suggests this was a valid and active metaphor in ancient Hebrew.[13] It also suggests that there is some semantic compatibility between רוח and נפש that motivates their common use. The most obvious semantic overlap between the lexemes is the concept of LIFE. However, the stativity implied in Exod 6:9 and divine referent of Mic 2:7 and Judg 10:16, combined with the clear respiratory parallel ארך אפים in Prov 14:29 suggests that the common semantic reference may be to the related sense, *respiration.*[14] Normal breathing rhythms are associated with the normal functioning of the self, and represent complete control of one's actions. Abbreviated breathing patterns indicate the loss of such control, i.e., a loss of capacity to act appropriately (either in IMPATIENCE or EXHAUSTION). Alternatively, the "lengthening" of breathing patterns expresses the presence of self-control, i.e., the experience of PATIENCE. This is consistent with the widespread observation in many languages that physical and expressive responses of an emotion are used to metonymically take the place of the emotion.[15] The link between respiratory lexemes and the realm of self-control indicates at least one point of intersection between the internally-located רוח and the realm of VOLITION, the internally-located capacity to act or restrain action.

12 There is one further curious Aramaic parallel in 4Q550 1 3–4, בה בשתא 4 ארכת רוחה די אעְׂל, which is part of a complicated court narrative and is often construed as *appeasement* (perhaps, the "lengthening" of capacity?), see "l'esprit du Roi s'apaisa," E. Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4-XXVII. Textes araméens, deuxième partie. 4Q550–4Q575a, 4Q580–4Q587 et appendices* (DJD 37; Oxford: Clarendon 2009) 13–15. The only instance of ארך and נפש (Job 6:11) appears to profile נפש as *life* and so does not evoke the emotion metaphor.

13 P.D. King, *Surrounded by Bitterness. Image Schemas and Metaphors for Conceptualizing Distress in Classical Hebrew* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick 2012) 96.

14 Nominal נפש rarely relates directly to *breath* in Hebrew, although the verbal root in Exod 23:12; 31:17; 2 Sam 16:14 as well as the potential metonymic relation between *throat* and respiration (Job 41:13) make it at least plausible. On נפש as BREATH, see Müller, *Meine "Seele,"* 126–141, esp. 136–138. Édouard Dhorme (*L'emploi métaphorique,* 111) correlates רוח and נפש as BREATH, but then understands this to mutually refer to the INTERNAL SELF (appealing to Isa 26:9).

15 While long observed in emotion and literary studies, this particular cognitive metonym was first stated as such in Z. Kövecses, *Emotion Concepts* (New York: Springer 1990) 134.

We cannot say with certainty why נפש and רוח are used to evoke the same metaphor—although the distribution of texts makes chronological or lectal explanations unlikely. Perhaps it is a matter of lexical focus, wherein instances where the respiratory motivations for the metaphor are more salient prefer רוח as it is more centrally-evocative of BREATH/BREATHING. By contrast, the stronger association between נפש and LIFE may lend itself to other uses. Alternatively, the lexical selection may be motivated by the textual context, where other uses of רוח may be leveraged in the broader discourse. For example, רוח in Mic 2:7 becomes more significant in light of the characterisation of Micah as "filled" with רוח for justice; or the semantic associations of רוח with SPEECH prompt its use in Job 21:4 or Sir 5:11.[16] Indeed, the use in Eccl 7:8 allows for the spatial play of LENGTH and HEIGHT to be explored below.

3. רוח and ARROGANCE/HUMILITY

The juxtaposition of a LONG and HIGH רוח in Eccl 7:8 introduces the second emotional expression in our study: the depiction of ARROGANCE/HUMILITY as relative HEIGHT.

Proverbs 16:18–19

18 לפני־שבר גאון ולפני כשלון גבה רוח:
19 טוב שפל־רוח את־עניים מחלק שלל את־גאים:

18 Before destruction, arrogance; before stumbling, "height of *rûaḥ*."
19 It is better to be of a lowly *rûaḥ* among the poor, than to divide plunder with the arrogant.

Proverbs 29:23

גאות אדם תשפילנו ושפל־רוח יתמך כבוד:

The arrogance of humanity brings humiliation; but the lowly of *rûaḥ* obtain honour.

Ecclesiastes 7:8

טוב אחרית דבר מראשיתו טוב ארך־רוח מגבה־רוח:

Better the end of a thing than its beginning; better the "long of *rûaḥ*" than the "high in *rûaḥ*."

Isaiah 57:15

כי כה אמר רם ונשא שכן עד וקדוש שמו מרום וקדוש אשכון ואת־דכא ושפל־רוח להחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים:

For thus said the High and Exalted One, who dwells forever, and whose name is holy: "On high and in holiness I dwell, yet with the crushed and lowly of *rûaḥ*, to revive the *rûaḥ* of the lowly and to revive the heart of the crushed."

16 On Mic 2:7 and 3:5–8, see J.R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2009) 41–47.

To understand the emotions being expressed in these texts, we must pay attention to the conceptual structure of the metaphor they evoke—especially the cultural script of the circumstances that lead to and arise from HEIGHT—as well as the semantic contribution of רוח to these figurative expressions.

HEIGHT is highly metaphorically productive in Ancient Hebrew, as it is in many languages.[17] When the "high" entity is a person, there is a frequent association between spatial height and social status (SOCIAL STATUS IS PHYSICAL HEIGHT).[18] To be "high" is to be counted as in authority and worthy of honour, and conversely, to be "low" is to be considered of lesser status.[19] The discourse provides the perspective from which this status is to be evaluated. The root גאה is used in reference to Yhwh's exaltation in Exod 15:1, 21, and is considered an appropriate "elevation" by the wider discourse context. However, the "elevation" of the proverbial figure in Prov 16:18–19 is considered inappropriate and is characterised negatively.[20] The discourse perspective determines the sub-metaphor, ARROGANCE IS BEING HIGH or EMINENCE IS BEING HIGH. The same perspectivisation occurs with other anthropological nouns in similar metaphors. "Lifting" (נשא) the eyes (2 Kgs 19:22) or head (Job 10:15) are presented negatively as arrogance when performed by the person possessing those bodily members but are presented positively when performed by another to the person (Gen 40:3; Ps 3:3). With גבה, elevated אף "face" (Ps 10:4), לב "heart" (Prov 16:5; 2 Chr 32:25–26), and עינים "eyes" (Ps 101:5) are all similarly associated with inappropriate self-evaluation.[21] It seems likely that this pattern of perspectivisation and evaluation is maintained when רוח is elevated entity. To have a "high" (גבה) רוח does not indicate superior status, but rather the self-perception of superior status. The typical internal location of רוח in the person likely motivates its use in this metaphor, approximating what we might call the "internal self."[22] The self is being located in relation to others, and thus SOCIAL STATUS IS PHYSICAL HEIGHT becomes morally weighted as ARROGANCE IS BEING HIGH.

While the LENGTH metaphor with רוח displayed a preference for SHORT over LONG values, the HEIGHT metaphor appears equally valid at either end of the scale. Prov 16:19 preferences the category of שפל־רוח over the arrogant. Just as a person may locate themselves

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17 L. Ryken *et al.* (eds.), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1998) *s.v.* "High, Height, High Place."

18 See N.L. Tilford, *Sensing World, Sensing Wisdom. The Cognitive Foundation of Biblical Metaphors* (AIL 31; Atlanta, GA: SBL Press 2017) 163; more widely, Z. Kövecses, *Metaphors of Anger, Pride, and Love. A Lexical Approach to the Structure of Concepts* (PB 8; Amsterdam: Benjamins 1986) 45.

19 In Hebrew, the verbal forms of roots such as גאה, גבה, שפל, etc. are used of spatial location (confirming the metaphor), but the nominal forms commonly carry the figurative meaning (suggesting this metaphor is deeply embedded).

20 Similarly, גבה appears positively of Yhwh in, for example, Isa 5:16, but negatively in Prov 16:18–19, Isa 3:16.

21 R. Hentschke, "גָּבַהּ," *TDOT* II, 359. The one exception to the negative evaluation is 2 Chr 17:6, where Jehoshaphat is described as having a "high heart in the ways of Yhwh." This supports our proposition above regarding the importance of discourse perspective.

22 Nicole L. Tilford (*Sensing*, 151) suggests that in such metaphors, the inner nature of the experience preferences proprioceptive motivations, given the close relationship between an individual's awareness of themselves in space and their "sense of corporeal being."

as superior to others (depicted as BEING HIGH), they may similarly locate themselves as inferior to others: HUMILITY IS BEING LOW. There are wider metaphorical associations between a low position on a VERTICAL scale and being in a state DISTRESS.[23] This conceptually aligns HUMILITY with the potential or reality of suffering as indicated even in our passages by עניים (Prov 16:19) and דכא (Isa 57:15).

In Prov 16:18–19 and 29:23 we see a highly-compressed emotion script for ARROGANCE/HUMILITY. When the discourse agent (i.e., the person in view in the text) moves themselves up the VERTICAL scale, there is an expectation that they will “fall” downwards to the bottom of the scale: arrogance (= height) inevitably leads to destruction (= low status/distress).[24] The inverse is also shown in which “low” things are eventually lifted from their state to a place of greater esteem by another, usually divine, agent (Prov 29:23; Ps 9:14; 30:2; 40:3; 113:4–8; Isa 57:15). This metaphorical scale, and the script it assumes, warns against self-elevation. To evaluate yourself beyond what is spiritually and social advisable is to invite an inevitable correction. Indeed, it is judged wiser to adopt a “lower” position and self-estimation than invite the “fall” that awaits the “high of רוח.”

4. רוח and ANGER

We began by arguing that the role of רוח in emotional expression has been long recognised but insufficiently studied. So far, we have demonstrated how רוח is used in the expression of two distinct emotional experiences that are depicted using spatial figurative language that leverage the polysemy of רוח in subtle and poignant ways. The final part of this exploration is also the most speculative: reappraising the relationship of רוח and ANGER.

רוח has been closely associated with the specific emotion of ANGER, as widely attested in English translations, standard lexica, and textual commentaries.[25] While ANGER is one of the most studied emotions in linguistic and biblical studies, there has been very little work

23 King, *Surrounded*, 100–132. דכא instantiates a further metaphor where DISTRESS IS FRAGMENTATION.

24 Philip D. King (*Surrounded*, 114–126) demonstrates how VERTICALITY is productive in depicting DISTRESS, which may explain the description of the endpoint of the “fall” due to pride as שבר “destruction.” For ANES parallels, see also G. Zisa, “Going, Returning, Rising: The Movement of the Organs in the Mesopotamian Anatomy,” *Kaskal* 16 (2019) 453–476.

25 For example, “temper, especially anger,” *BDB s.v.* “רוּחַ,” 3c; “ill temper, rage, wrath,” *HALOT s.v.* “רוּחַ,” 7f; “anger,” *CDCH s.v.* “רוּחַ” 3b(7); “directly, rûaḥ indicates only impulsive, life-strengthening psychic forces such as anger, rage, courage, perseverance … even more intense arrogance, as sometimes even manifest directly in excited breathing,” Westermann – Albertz, “רוּחַ,” *TLOT* III, 1210; “the person’s own rûaḥ is the source of phenomena associated with aggressiveness, whether anger or courage as the virtue of one’s own spiritual strength,” Fabry – Tengström, “רוּחַ,” *TDOT* XIII, 389. Further, Johnson, *Vitality*, 26; “breath as the hard breathing through the nostrils in anger,” C.A. Briggs, “The Use of חור in the Old Testament,” *JBL* 19 (1900) 133; “physical strength, courage, and anger, and viewed sometimes as the seat or source of all of these and especially of violent agitation,” W.R., Schoemaker, “The Use of רוּחַ in the Old Testament, and of *Πνευμα* in the New Testament: A Lexicographical Study,” *JBL* 23 (1904) 18; “ce qui a permis cet usage, c’est l’influence de la colère sur la respiration,” Dhorme, *L’emploi métaphorique*, 81.

done in clarifying the nature of its relationship with רוח.[26] In addition to the terse glosses provided by lexica, previous studies referred to "psychic vitality," "physical powers," or "one's own spiritual strength," that when present in abundance manifest as ANGER.[27] These descriptions are rooted in often unexpressed theories of human composition and behaviour that limit their ability to elucidate these uses of רוח.

To evaluate the nature of the relationship between רוח and ANGER two groups of texts need to be examined. The first group are often peripherally cited as evidence of this meaning for רוח and include Isa 25:4–5, related passages such as Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; Job 4:9, and Job 15:12–13. We will argue that some of the texts in this first group *do* involve רוח in the expression of ANGER, but as part of larger metaphorical or metonymic constructs involving meteorological source frames. The second group are those passages that are most frequently presented as evidence that רוח directly evokes the experience of ANGER: Prov16:32; Eccl 10:4; and Judg 8:3. We will seek to demonstrate that closer attention to these texts suggest alternative readings of this second group of texts that are at least equally, if not more, persuasive than *anger.*

4.1. Texts Occasionally Cited as Evidence of רוח as ANGER

This first group of texts are only occasionally referenced when discussing רוח as ANGER. Typically, this group includes Isa 25:4–5, and sometimes related passages such as Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; and Job 4:9. While only mentioned in the *TDOT* article and rarely in commentaries on other related texts, we also suggest Job 15:13 belongs in this category.[28]

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26 See, for example, C. Ostermann, *Cognitive Lexicography. A New Approach to Lexicography Making Use of Cognitive Semantics* (Lexicographica. Series Maior 149; Berlin: De Gruyter 2015) 143; Z. Kövecses, "The Concept of Anger: Universal or Culture Specific?," *Psychopathology* 33 (2000) 160; originally developed in G. Lakoff – Z. Kövecses, "The Cognitive Model of Anger Inherent in American English," *Cultural Models in Language and Thought* (eds. D. Holland – N. Quinn) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987) 211–214. Within biblical studies, earlier studies such as P.A. Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation of the Emotion of Anger in the Hebrew Bible," *JNSL* 26 (2000) 181–193 and E.J. van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies. When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2009) 62–72 have been criticised for adopting too much from American English analyses, and more culturally and linguistically situated models developed in response. See Z. Kotzé, *The Conceptualisation of Anger in the Hebrew Bible* (Diss. Stellenbosch University; Stellenbosch 2004); Z. Kotzé, "Humoral Theory as Motivation for Anger Metaphors in the Hebrew Bible," *SALALS* 23 (2005) 205–209; M.R. Schlimm, *From Fratricide to Forgiveness. The Language and Ethics of Anger in Genesis* (Siphrut 7; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2011) 51–52.

27 Westermann – Albertz, "רוּחַ," *TLOT* III, 1208; Johnson, *Vitality*, 26; Fabry – Tengström, "רוּחַ," *TDOT* XIII, 389.

28 Where רוח is commonly glossed as *anger*, É. Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 2 ed. (EBib; Paris: Libraire Victor Lecoffre 1926) 194; F.I. Andersen, *Job. An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 14; Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press 1976) 191; D.J.A. Clines, *Job 1–20* (WBC 17; Dallas, TX: Word Books 2006) 341; G.H. Wilson, *Job* (UTB; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2012) 164; L. Wilson, *Job* (THOTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2015) 92.

Isaiah 25:4–5a

4 כי־היית מעוז לדל מעוז לאביון בצר־לו מחסה מזרם צל מחרב כי רוח עריצים כזרם קיר 5 כחרב בציון

4 For you are a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the rainstorm, a shade from the heat; for the *rûaḥ* of the ruthless is like a rainstorm against a wall, 5 like heat in a dry land.[29]

The proximity of other meteorological terms such as זרם and חרב exerts significant contextual constraint on how we understand רוח, namely, as *wind*.[30] Several times throughout Isaiah, divine ANGER is portrayed as *wind* (Isa 11:4, 15; 17:13; 27:8; 30:28; 32:2; 40:7; 41:16; 59:19). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, this is more typically and specifically expressed as ANGER IS A HOT WIND—an image grounded in the experience of the sirocco/'east wind' and the sudden destruction it could cause to crops.[31] The metaphor conceptually aligns humanity with vegetation exposed to the hot and dry wind, suffering and wilting as the objects of intense and destructive divine anger (Isa 11:15; 27:8; 30:27–28; 40:7; similarly, Ps 11:6; 83:14–16; Amos 1:2; Ezek 19:12; Jer 4:11; 13:24; 18:17).[32] Notably, all these texts present a divine subject of the experience of ANGER, directed towards human agonists. Here in Isaiah 25, the imagery is inverted such that human subjects (עריצים) are unleashing their ANGER as a destructive wind against a divine agonist—to no effect.[33]

Other related texts rarely cited in support of רוח as ANGER reflect a similar cluster of metaphors. Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; and Job 4:9 are closely related lexically and syntactically, especially in explicitly joining רוח and the divine אף (Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; Job 4:9) and נשמה (Ps 18:16; Job 4:9). These collocations suggest that divine respiration is in view, evoking a further metaphor WIND IS DIVINE BREATH.[34] This metaphor blends with ANGER IS WIND/HOT WIND to form the metaphorical complex above with its typical divine subject.

These texts demonstrate that רוח can be used in the expression of ANGER. However, overwhelmingly, רוח is used in conjunction with other lexemes to evoke BREATH (as part

29 While emending קיר "wall" to קור "cold, winter," is plausible, קיר makes sense within the characterisation of God as refuge and enjoys the support of Targ. and Isa 28:17, so J.N. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39* (NICOT 1; Grand Rapid, MI: Eerdmans 1986) 468; B.S. Childs, *Isaiah. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2001) 181; J.D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Rev. ed. (WBC 24; Nashville, TN: Nelson 2005) 385. Given the pairing of *storm* and *heat* earlier in the verse, it seems likely that the start of Isa 25:5 should be included as the parallel comparative clause to 25:4c, so Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 462.

30 On contextual constraints to semantic construal, see W. Croft – D.A. Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (CTL; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 101–103.

31 D.M. Swanson, "East Wind," *EDB* 362. Without articulating its metaphorical nature and effect, John Wright ("Rûaḥ: A Survey," *The Concept of Spirit. Papers from The Concept of Spirit Conference Held at St. Paul's College, University of Sydney, 21–24 May 1984* [eds. D.W. Dockrill – R.G. Tanner] [Prudentia; Auckland: University of Auckland 1985] 10) notes the east wind is frequently an "instrument of God's judgement and refining."

32 Kotzé, *The Conceptualisation of Anger*, 170.

33 Although the potential wordplay of ציון with "Zion" hints at the close relationship between Yhwh and those he protects. This may evoke a more complex cultural frame involving God's foundation of, dwelling in, and protection of the city of Zion, see J.J.M. Roberts, *First Isaiah. A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress 2015) 322.

34 See the overlapping meteorological lexemes in Ps 18:11–15.

of WIND IS DIVINE BREATH) or WIND (as part of ANGER IS WIND/HOT WIND) to express divine ANGER. The exception to this divine subject in Isa 25:4–5 is likely an intentional poetic inversion of this metaphor and its expectations so as to emphasise God's protective role.

Job 15:12–13

מה־יקחך לבך ומה־ירזמון עיניך:
כי־תשיב אל־אל רוחך והצאת מפיך מלין:

[12] Why let your heart carry you away, and why let your eyes flash, [13] that you turn your *rûaḥ* against God, and bring from your mouth such words?

This text may be another inversion of the use of רוח for divine ANGER, reversing the roles of divine subject and human object to accuse Job. Yet, the syntax and discourse context suggests otherwise. In Job 9:18, hiphil שוב appeared with רוח in reference to the relentless of the divine assault upon Job, restricting Job's life by preventing the return of his *breath* (see similar collocations in Judg 15:19; 1 Sam 30:2).[35] The similar syntax in Job 15:13 suggests that a similar meaning for רוח is present, *breath*. This is supported by the immediate context of Job 15:7, where Eliphaz evokes a complex cultural frame, the first human. In the Hebrew Bible and in the ANES more widely, this cultural concept was understood to have been formed of *breath* and *dust* (Gen 2:7; Eccl 3:19–20; 12:7; Ps 104:29–30). However, Eliphaz does not appear to be referring to Job's *life* in this instance, but rather to how he is using his God-given *breath* to speak against God—corroborated by explicit references to speech in the b-colon.[36] Arguably, this use of רוח appears in an broader experience of ANGER, but as with Isaiah and the Isaiah-like texts above, רוח does not directly refer to the experience of ANGER itself.

The first category of texts, peripherally cited as evidence for understanding רוח as ANGER, demonstrate that the lexeme can appear in such expressions but only as part of wider figurative networks that express the emotion. As Matthew Schlimm notes when commenting on lexical associations with ANGER: "although there are cases in which [רוּחַ] has connections with anger … רוּחַ is not innately connected with anger."[37]

4.2. Texts Centrally Cited as Evidence of רוח as ANGER

This second category of texts are those that are most commonly cited as indicating an innate connection between רוח and ANGER: Prov 16:32; Eccl 10:4; and Judg 8:3.

35 Schlimm (*Fratricide*, 73) notes that when שוב appears in contexts of ANGER, it most commonly refers to the cessation of the emotion.

36 So Targ., Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 193–194; *pace* A.B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel. Textkritisches, sprachliches und sachliches* (Hildesheim: Olms 1968) VI, 241.

37 Schlimm, *Fratricide*, 86 n. 42. The category of "innate" is vague. We understand it to mean that there is no entrenched linguistic convention in which a natural speaker would use רוח to evoke ANGER outside of a large literary metaphor or metonym.

Proverbs 16:32

טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר:

Better patient than a mighty warrior; and one who rules his *rûaḥ* than one who takes a city.

A minority of commentators and other scholars understand רוח here as referring to ANGER.[38] Paul Kruger and Zacharias Kotzé understand this figuratively: Kruger as a metaphor, ANGER IS AN OPPONENT in keeping with the military imagery of משל and לכד עיר, and Kotzé as a metonym, HEAVY BREATHING FOR ANGER, in keeping with the parallel use of אפים. Prov 14:29 above similarly juxtaposed אפים and רוח as reflective of emotional states depicting the lack or presence of capacity to control one's actions, and the conceptual links between PATIENCE and ANGER are significant. However, משל typically refers to a longer-term relationship of authority over (ב) another, which suggests that the experience of ANGER is not that which requires defeat and subjugation.[39] Rather, רוח more likely refers to the internal self.[40] As Richard J. Clifford aptly puts it, "conquest of self is better than conquest of others."[41]

Ecclesiastes 10:4

אם־רוח המושל תעלה עליך מקומך אל־תנח כי מרפא יניח חטאים גדולים:

If the *rûaḥ* of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your post, for calmness puts to rest great offenses.

In contrast to a minority of scholars who consider רוח in Prov 16:32 to directly refer to ANGER, Eccl 10:4 is almost universally read as such.[42] This text offers advice on interacting with local authorities.[43] If "anger" is an acceptable gloss for רוח, this verse neatly matches

38 M.V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18B; New York: Doubleday 2009) 599; Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation," 190; Kotzé, *Conceptualisation of Anger*, 85; C.L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday 1997) 313; R.E. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes* (WBC 23A; Grand Rapids, MI: Word Books 1992) 98 (although there is no mention of this in his later Proverbs commentary). English translations vary: "spirit" (ESV, KJV), "temper" (NET, NRSV), "self-control" (NIV2011, JPS), "emotions" (CSB).

39 Even Daniel Lys (*Rûach. Le souffle dans l'Ancien Testament. Enquête anthropologique à travers l'histoire théologique d'Israël* [ÉHPR 56; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1962] 304), who frequently equates רוח with *colère*, notes, "on peut d'ailleurs penser que cetter maîtrise de *r.* est plus que limitation de colère."

40 So Targ. and Syr., both of which use reflexive נפש in place of רוח.

41 R.J. Clifford, *Proverbs. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 1999) 162.

42 K&D 54:374; R. Lauha, *Psychophysischer Sprachgebrauch im Alten Testament: Eine Strukturalsemantische Analyse von* לב, נפש*, und* רוח (AASF.DHL 35; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia 1983) 228; J.L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes. A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster 1987) 170; Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, 98; Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 313; T. Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1998) 240; C.G. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes* (BCOTWP; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2009) 320. In translation, similarly ESV, NET, NIV2011, NRSV, CSB, and JPS. Apart from my doctoral thesis accepted in 2021, Stuart Weeks is the only recent dissenting voice (see below).

43 The ambiguity of המושל is interesting. It is certainly not on the level of the מלך "king" in Eccl 8:3, and arguably refers to a less specific and more localised official, "Amtsträgers," M. Köhlmoos, *Kohelet. Der Prediger Salomo* (ATD 16/5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2015) 218.

the typical script for ANGER in Ancient Hebrew suggested by Schlimm. ANGER is caused by a perceived wrongdoing, and is typically directed by those possessing a degree of power against those judged responsible for the perceived wrongdoing. It usually entails a separation of some sort between parties, often involving violence, and is almost always negatively evaluated (except for kingly or divine anger, which, like the HEIGHT metaphors above, is considered appropriate).[44]

Eccl 10:4 depicts a social superior as the subject of ANGER, which has been caused by perceived wrongdoing. In addition, there is a similar co-text in 2 Sam 11:20a which features חמה, a term more directly evocative of ANGER: והיה אם־תעלה חמת המלך ואמר לך "then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you…"[45] This makes the ANGER reading for רוח plausible. Yet, this does not mean that it is the only possible explanation.

At this point in our study, we have demonstrated that, apart from contextually clear instances of ANGER IS WIND, there are only two instances where רוח may evoke ANGER: here and Judg 8:3. This raises the question of *linguistic relevance.*[46] There is a tendency in linguistic communication to minimise the cognitive processing effort required for a hearer to infer the intended meaning.[47] If ANGER is a very rare use of רוח (which, even allowing for the small corpus size of Classical Hebrew, seems fair to say), what is the justification for its use in these two texts? What does this lexeme contribute to these texts that a more direct (i.e., requiring less processing cost) way of expressing ANGER, such as חמה, does not?[48]

These questions suggest that alternative readings for רוח should at least be explored for these texts. One such reading attempts to provide a metaphorical motivation for the use of רוח, such as HEAVY BREATHING FOR ANGER.[49] This blends a relatively more typical use of רוח, *breath,* with the contextually-suggested emotion, ANGER. However, apart from the divine uses surveyed above (which are themselves blended with ANGER IS WIND), there is a paucity of examples where the human experience of ANGER is presented via respiration patterns. There is also nothing in the immediate context to evoke such metonyms or metaphors.

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44 Summarising Schlimm, *Fratricide*, 63–64.

45 חמה "heat" evokes ANGER via the PHYSICAL AND EXPRESSIVE RESPONSES OF AN EMOTION FOR THE EMOTION metonym. This is an example of Schlimm's "innate connection," i.e,, the lexeme can be understood as evoking ANGER apart from any HEAT lexemes in the context.

46 This concept derives from Relevance Theory, on which see E.-A. Gutt, *Translation and Relevance. Cognition and Context*, 2 ed. (Manchester: St Jerome 2000). While not strictly part of Cognitive Linguistics, the two share some overlap, see V. Evans – M. Green, *Cognitive Linguistics. An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University 2006) §13.2.

47 E.-A. Gutt, *Relevance Theory. A Guide to Successful Communication in Translation* (New York: SIL 1992) 25.

48 Indeed, while ancient versions often gloss חור with lexemes that may evoke ANGER, such as ὀργή (Prov 16:32 LXX), θυμός (Prov 29:11 LXX), and ܚܡܬܐ (Prov 29:11 Syr.), the versions here follow the MT quite closely: πνευμα + ἀναβῇ (LXX); ܪܘܚܐ + ܣܠܩ (Syr.); and *spiritus* + *ascendere* (Vulg.). This is all the more remarkable given how greatly the versions diverge in translating the second colon of the verse.

49 So Johnson, *Vitality*, 379; Z. Kotzé, "A Cognitive Linguistic Methodology for the Study of Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible," *JNSL* 31 (2005) 113.

Two further readings rely upon wider semantic associations of רוח. The Targum of Eccl 10:4 expands the reference to רוח to רוחא דיצרא בישא, removing the reference to social superiors in favour of a more personal plea that leaves the original text far behind. Stuart Weeks links the use of רוח and על with LEADERSHIP, as in the narrative of Num 11:29 (presumably, too, Judg 3:10; 1 Sam 10:10; Isa 11:2; 42:1). רוח is thus a mark that "those people are endowed with authority," and here "a way of describing the urge to take control, which Qohelet believes should be avoided."[50] Again, this is a fairly specialised use of רוח that would require some contextual information to reliably evoke.

We tentatively suggest a novel reading that better explains the use of רוח while acknowledging the contextual adherence to a typical emotional script. The verbal root עלה is incredibly common (~894x in the Hebrew Bible) and can evoke many of the varied metaphorical uses of HEIGHT. When combined with an על prepositional phrase, it most commonly refers to vertical movement with hostile intent (e.g., Judg 6:3; 15:10; 1 Kgs 15:17)—likely motivated by a cultural model in which defensive structures were typically associated with geographical height. Alternatively, it may refer to gaining superiority over another according to the STATUS IS HEIGHT metaphor (Deut 28:43; Ps 137:6; Prov 31:29).[51] If we allow that רוח does *not* refer to ANGER here, we may consider other more conventional uses such as the internal SELF. This usage was already noted as motivating the use of רוח in the HEIGHT metaphors for ARROGANCE/HUMILITY above. This generates a plausible reading of the text wherein עלה and על profile the relative HEIGHT (i.e., STATUS) difference between the ruler's *self-perception* and the proverbial "you."[52] The מושל exhibits an inflated self-estimation that is exerted against the reader, with Qoheleth counselling the reader to remain at "your post" (neither proudly contesting, nor meekly grovelling).[53] Given the typical script for ARROGANCE, this advice is rooted in the expectation of a corrective "downwards" movement in which those who elevate themselves are catastrophically humbled.

This reading is at least as plausible as the ANGER construal, better explains the choice of רוח, and enjoys greater support from clearer emotional expressions involving the lexeme. Given the significant overlap in the cultural models for ANGER and ARROGANCE in the ANE (e.g., status imbalances), the ethical advice on either reading remains remarkably similar. Even if this particular reading is not considered persuasive, the questions regarding the universal acceptance of the ANGER reading must be seriously considered by future engagements of this text.

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50 S. Weeks, *Ecclesiastes 5–12. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London: Bloomsbury – Clark 2021) 493.

51 Crenshaw (*Ecclesiastes*, 170) sees something of a vertical metaphor at play here in the contrast of מרפא and רוח, יניח and עלה, even though the second colon of this verse is highly ambiguous.

52 This may even motivate the shift from general wisdom statements to the second-person address in this verse.

53 Indeed, נוח may act as a foil to the movement profiled by עלה: remain in the appropriate "level" befitting your status until equilibrium is restored.

Judges 8:3c

אז רפתה רוחם מעליו הדברו הדבר הזה:

Then, their *ruhām* relaxed(?) from against him when he spoke this word.

Judg 8:3 is the final and most frequently cited text in support of רוח as ANGER.[54] The Ephraimites take issue with Gideon's victory over the Midianites, complaining that they are denied their role in the fight (Judg 8:1). Gideon assures them that their capture of the Midianite leaders was superior to his victory (8:2), and the situation is defused (8:3). Construing רוח as ANGER yields a very plausible reading of the text: Gideon reassures the Ephraimites, and their "anger subsides from against him."[55]

There are at least two issues with this assumed reading. The first simply repeats the question asked above. If ANGER is a permissible sense for רוח, it is a rare one. What does this lexeme contribute to this discourse unit that a more typical ANGER lexeme does not?[56]

The second issue is how רפה is to be understood in this context. The verb can refer to the loosening or slackening of something (Job 12:21), but more typically appears with יד to refer to discouragement or weakness (Lachish Ostracon 6 lines 5b–7; 2 Sam 17:2; Ezra 4:4; 2 Chr 15:7; 1QpHab 7:10). This state often arises because of verbal communication (2 Sam 4:1; Jer 6:24; 38:4). רפה may also refer to abandonment (Deut 4:32; 31:6; Ps 138:8). It is difficult to know what sense is intended in this context, and it certainly does not appear to constrain רוח to ANGER.[57] Rather, we need to find a construal of this text that makes sense of both of these lexemes with minimal contextual constraint applied to either.

As above, we need to seek a more compelling reading for this text. Like Eccl 10:4, some have suggested the metonym HEAVY BREATHING FOR ANGER explains both רוח and the discourse context.[58] Similarly, too, some suggest a rare anthropological instantiation of the ANGER IS WIND.[59] Unfortunately, רפה nowhere appears with lexemes of *breath* or *wind*

54 *BDB s.v.* "רוּחַ," 3; *CDCH s.v.* "רוּחַ," 3b(7); *HALOT s.v.* "רוּחַ," 7f.; Johnson, *Vitality*, 29; T.C. Butler, *Judges* (WBC 8; Nashville, TN: Nelson 2009) 218; R.D. Nelson, *Judges. A Critical and Rhetorical Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury – Clark 2017) 156. In contemporary English translation, see ESV, NRSV, KJV, CSB, JPS.

55 Syriac explicitly encodes this reading, ܗܝܕܝܢ ܦܪܫܬ ܚܡܬܗܘܢ ܡܢܗ "then their anger departed from him."

56 Discourses typically build preferential construals for lexemes as they unfold, requiring greater contextual pressure to render rarer or unexpected uses as salient, see R.W. Langacker, *Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008) 457–499. Within Judges, רוח exclusively appears alongside יהוה save for this text and Judg 9:23; 15:19.

57 *Pace* Mark S. Smith, who argues that, "it is the verb 'to subside' … that points to *rûaḥ* here in the semantic field of 'anger' (*ʾap*)" (M.S. Smith – E. Bloch-Smith, *Judges 1. A Commentary on Judges 1:1–10:5* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2021] 535).

58 So K&D 4:351; Kotzé, *Conceptualisation of Anger*, 86; L.A. Dietch, *Authority and Violence in the Gideon and Abimelech Narratives. A Sociological and Literary Exploration of Judges 6–9* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 75; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix 2015) 84. While we remain unconvinced for this reading, Linda A. Dietch's rendering is semantically and poetically apt: Gideon's words cause their "huffing and puffing to cease."

59 Johnson, *Vitality*, 26.

in Ancient Hebrew that might validate such a combination, although the typically divine subject of ANGER IS WIND counts against that reading.

We posit two possible readings that may better explain the text. The first is that רפה may somewhat obliquely evoke the ARROGANCE IS PHYSICAL HEIGHT metaphor explored above.[60] This is salient to the immediate context where the central issue of the text is the indignation of the Ephraimites, and Gideon's speech intends to "placate the Ephraimites by massaging their inflated egos."[61] It also construes רוח in an established manner, as referring to the SELF of the Ephraimites that has been elevated over and against the divinely-chosen judge, Gideon. In response to his soothing words, the corrective "downwards motion" of their רוחם is portrayed by רפה.[62] However, this would be an unexpected use of רפה. Isa 5:24 uses רפה when depicting grass sinking into a fire, but this almost certainly refers to the shrivelling (i.e., "slackening") of the grass stem rather than a directed "sinking" action.

The second, preferable, reading is that רוח refers to the part or aspect of a person capable of and responsible for action, their VOLITION. There are several elements that support this, although they are admittedly fairly indirect. The first is the use of רפה in Jer 49:24, where it appears to refer to the loss of the will to fight in Damascus. Analogously, in Judg 8:3, the Ephraimites lose their will to fight against Gideon, with רוח present to explicitly indicate their VOLITION. The second is the strength of convention associating יד and רפה as indicating a loss of ability to act. We noted above a further convention associating יד and קצר to refer to the loss of capacity to at in a situation, and how this illuminated the collocation of רוח and קצר. Is it possible that in the specific semantic field of CAPACITY, רוח and יד were sufficiently compatible to generate the unique רוח and רפה collocation here? The discourse context at least maintains the typical cause of the loss of CAPACITY via a verbal communication that removes the impetus to action.

The conventional reading of רוח as directly referring to *anger* may well be correct. We have sought to demonstrate that the passages typically used as evidence of this close relationship between רוח and the expression of ANGER are not as simple as they appear. They can, and perhaps should, be explained in terms of other, better attested, uses of רוח and broader metaphoric and metonymic depictions of emotional experiences. When רוח features in the expression of ANGER it is within fairly well-established metaphors of divine action, and never without contextual markers that indicate its metaphorical or metonymic conceptualisation by, for example, meteorological lexemes marking ANGER IS WIND. There

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60 Robert Boling's (*Judges. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* [AB 6; New York: Doubleday 1975] 150) translation of רוח as "indignation" perhaps encodes something of this construal.

61 B.G. Webb, *The Book of Judges* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2012) 251.

62 So Targ. נוח (see also 2 Kgs 2:15 Targ.), which can refer to physical descent or evoke the HEIGHT IS STATUS metaphor, "to go down in status or value", *CAL*, *s.v.* "נוח." Perhaps also we could elicit 1 Kgs 11:26 (see also Exod 14:8; Num 15:30; 33:3), where a possible inversion of the יד + רפה metaphor depicts rebellion against an authority figure using יד + רום. This might suggest that "raising" and "relaxing" were considered semantically compatible partial antonyms, although the unique.

is at least cause for caution in using *anger* as a gloss for רוח in translations and scholarship without significant exegetical warrant.[63]

5. The Unruly רוח

Ancient Hebrew has many ways to depict emotional experience, especially through metaphor and metonymy. The use of רוח in expressing such emotions has been long recognised, but rarely examined closely. Reading texts with the aid of modern advances in linguistics provides new avenues for understand how these expressions function and the experiences to which they point. PATIENCE and IMPATIENCE are depicted via metonymy, where the breathing patterns of the experiencer of the emotion stands for the emotion itself, evoking the presence or absence of capacity to act in a situation. HUMILITY and ARROGANCE are depicted metaphorically as the relative HEIGHT of the self over against others, with a cultural expectation of self-elevation being moderated by external agents or circumstances. Not only did רוח provide a place of entry to examine these two pairs of experiences, but it also allowed us to question the long-held link between רוח and ANGER. The relationship between this lexeme and the expression of ANGER is more complex and nuanced than the casual citations of texts and translational glosses often imply, and at the very least scholars need to abandon mere citations of lexica in support of this reading.

In these and other emotional expressions we did not examine (such as רוח and lexemes of fragmentation such as שבר, נכה, and דכא with רוח to depict DISTRESS), we see רוח reflecting the *person* experiencing the emotions—their breathing, capacity to act, and self-estimation. Given that the same רוח may be both "lengthened" in PATIENCE and "shortened" in IMPATIENCE, "elevated" in ARROGANCE or "lowered" in HUMILITY, the sage's words in Prov 16:32 gain renewed poignancy. Wisdom lies not in the strength to gain power over others, but over oneself.

63 A related factor awaiting further research is the translational equivalents provided in the early versions, especially the LXX. רוח appears to be understood as ANGER in Prov 16:32 (ὀργῆς); 17:27 (קר־רוח, μακρόθυμος); 18:14 (θυμὸν); 29:11 (τὸν θυμόν αὐτοῦ); Eccl 7:8 (ארך רוח, μακρόθυμος) Isa 59:19 (ἡ ὀργὴ); Ezek 39:29 (τὸν θυμόν μου); Zech 6:8 (τὸν θυμόν μου); and Job 15:13 (θυμὸν). ὀργὴ clearly demonstrates that רוח was (rightly or wrongly) understood as equivalent to *anger* by the translator. θυμός likely also reflects this understanding—although the semantic range for θυμός makes it a peculiarly apt counterpart to רוח, as θυμός may also refer to a person's *self* or *volition*. It would be worth examining how the polysemy of רוח and polysemy of θυμός influenced the translation equivalents offered in the LXX. For example, the compound μακρόθυμος (used for the LENGTH metaphors above) appears to be a Septuagintal neologism designed to reflect Hebrew phrases and that entered wider Greek much later (the only non-biblical/Christian reference occurs in the 4th century epigram of Palladas, *Analecta Patristica*, 11.317.1).

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"Ephraim is a Cake Not turned": the Fruits of the False Knowledge of God According to Hos 7:8-16

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Abstract: The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, called *What is man? A Journey through Biblical Anthropology* points out in Chapter 1 ("The Human being created by God"), par. 33 that "[t]he failure to recognise the 'created' nature of the human being is made explicit in history as an arrogant presumption…" (46) and in par. 34 that "[a]n extraordinary endowment of intelligence, wealth and power gives the human being the illusion of being equal to God. To expose this deception of conscience the Lord predicts the inglorious end of the arrogant" (47). Many of the critiques and prophecies of Hosea are proclaimed in a period of Israelite history which reflects false and arrogant presumptions of the people of God. During the reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 784–753 BC) Israel experienced economic growth, territorial expansion and peace with the Arameans and the Judeans. However, especially following the Syro-Ephraimite war (734–732 BC) it became clear that Israel's political and military manoeuvres and his trust in his own strength can only lead to disaster. This is one of the recurring messages of Hosea who points out that the only way to stand is to believe and trust in God alone. Many of his images and concepts describe Israel's false beliefs and presumptions which are based on the erroneous knowledge of God. Hos 7:8-16 can be read as an essence of this message. Its literary devices and notions emphasize that while Israel appears to be potent, he is in fact impotent, the undiscerning nation's "strength" is withering away. Israel seems wise and knowledgeable when he is in fact unwise and does not know the way of life. In the context of the entire book this passage affirms that the basis of the relation of God and Israel is always the right knowledge of him which entails the right knowledge of the self and of its place in the universe. One of God's greatest mercies for creation and Israel is that he is available, he can be sought, found and known through his words and deeds. Hosea as the mediator of God conveys to Israel that they can call upon God, seek him and know him. While his message is for a special historical period and circumstances, it is relevant for all ages when humans ignore their created nature and aspire to be powerful, self-sufficient, intelligent in economic, scientific, political and military matters.

Keywords: Book of Hosea, Knowledge of God, Israel's folly, Literary devices

Introduction: The Most Important Literary Features of the Book of Hosea

Prophetic writings employ a great variety of poetic devices which on the one hand highlight the message of the author, and on the other, reflect the historical, theological and tradition-historical contexts in which these literary devices were produced. Among Hosea's literary devices we find metaphors, similes, parallelism and poetic repetition varied

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by means of wordplays.[1] As John A. Dearman observes, "Hosea has the distinction of being the prophetic book most poetic in the employment of metaphor and wordplay, and most historical with respect to allusions to prior national traditions."[2] He also notes that the metaphors in the book are not simply literary devices. They demonstrate that Hosea thinks metaphorically in order to convey his message – i.e. instruct his audience – by using conceptual comparisons.[3] As Francis Landy notes, "metaphors and other figures of speech complicate meaning, and how they become instruments for the subversion of one's implicit understandings of the world."[4] For Hosea's comparisons nature and history are revelatory of God whose portrayal is diverse, striking and complex as is the portrayal of Israel and his relationship with God.[5] The complexity of the metaphors and similes can be demonstrated in a variety of passages, such as 14:5-9 – according to which Israel is a plant, but God is also described as a plant – or as Hos 8:7 which implies that Israel can be described as a plant and the one who plants; as "a farmer, Israel has reaped what it has sown; as a plant, Israel suffers from the drought that consumes the land."[6] God can be depicted as husband (2:4.7.16), father (11:1-4), physician (7:1), lion (5:14; 11:10; 13:7-8), leopard (13:7), fowler (7:12), she-bear (13:8), dew (14:6), dawn (6:3), rain (6:3), a cypress (14:9), moth (5:12), and decay (5:12).[7] This demonstrates that the choice of images for the deity can be taken from

1 See J.A. Dearman, *The Book of Hosea* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2010) 10–16; G. Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea* (JSOTSup 219; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1996) 45–100; B.E. Kelle, *Hosea 2. Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective* (SBLAcBib 20; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature 2005) esp. 1–17; G. Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert. Metaphors, Models, and Themes in Hosea 4–14* (Connaître la Bible Old Testament 43; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 1996); P.A. Kruger, "Prophetic Imagery. On Metaphors and Similes in the Book of Hosea," *JNSL* 14 (1988) 143–151; J. Middlemas, "Divine Presence in Absence," *Divine Presence and Absence in Exilic and Post-Exilic Judaism. Studies of the Sofja Kovalevskaja Research Group on Early Jewish Monotheism* (eds. N. MacDonald – I.J. de Hulster) (FAT 61/2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013) II, 183–211, esp. 204–206.

2 See Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 10, and his excursus on Similes and Metaphors for Political Actions in Hosea 4–14 on pages 11–16. Cf. also Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 1–17; Eidevall, *Grapes*; Kruger, "Prophetic Imagery," 143–151.

3 Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 10, 11–16. Mason D. Lancaster (*Like a Lion and the Morning Dawn. Reconceiving Yahweh Through the Metaphors of Hosea 4–14* [PhD Diss. Wheaton College; Wheaton, IL 2020] vi) also argues that metaphors cluster in places of rhetorical significance.

4 F. Landy, *Hosea* (Readings; Sheffield: Phoenix Press 2011) viii; Ehud Ben Zvi (*Hosea* [FOTL 21A/1; Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 2005] 179) emphasizes the role of metaphors in connection with the worldviews of not only the author but also the target readership.

5 Cf. Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 10–11. See also Middlemas, "Divine Presence," 204–206, who writes that "[m]etaphors are more than a literary device that substitutes for or replaces another idea... When many metaphors are used, they qualify and subvert each other... Some of the most imaginative and illustrative uses of divine metaphor appear in literature almost exclusively focused on the issue of idolatry" (*ibidem*, 206).

6 R.A. Simkins, *Creator and Creation. Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel*, https://www.academia.edu/1531038/Creator_and_Creation_Nature_in_the_Worldview_of_Ancient_Israel [access: 7.06.2022] 157. In his examination of Hos 8:7, Ben Zvi (*Hosea*, 179) considers a natural process such as sowing and harvesting as notional ground for the metaphor. Middlemas ("Presence and Absence," 204) notes that in Hosea the "deity is attributed with conveying divine messages via figurative speech" (Hos 12:10: "I spoke to the prophets; it was I who multiplied visions" NRSV).

7 H.W. Wolff, *Hosea. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press 1974) xxiv; Lancaster (*Like a Lion*) analyses 105 metaphors for God in 15 clusters within Hos 4–14; Hos 7:8-16 is

the human realm (parent, husband), from the animal world (she-bear, leopard, moth), and natural phenomena (dew, rain, an evergreen tree, dry rot etc.).[8] However, many of the descriptions underline the priority and incomparability of God who is ultimately unfathomable, distinctly other, and language can only provide a partial portrait.[9]

Apart from the penchant for these literary devices, Hosea's work is also characterized by the use of verbs as "to know," "to seek," "to turn," "to reject," "to leave," "to forget," "to love" in the depiction of the relationship of God and Israel. Finally, the book's readers can immediately notice the rapid switch of not only the metaphors but also the person of the speaker.[10]

1. The Significance and Purpose of the Literary Devices in Terms of Hosea's Teaching

The literary traits summed up above generally serve one overarching purpose: to draw attention to the nature and reasons of Israel's apostasy, his present precarious state while reflecting upon the past and the future at the same time. Many of the author's critiques and prophecies are proclaimed in a period of Israelite history which reflects false and arrogant presumptions of the people of God due to economic growth, territorial expansion and peace with the Arameans and the Judeans. But especially following the Syro-Ephraimite war (734–732 BC) it became clear that Israel's political and military manoeuvres and his trust in his own strength can only lead to disaster.[11] This is one of the recurring messages of Hosea who points out on the one hand Israel's sins and on the other, that the only way to stand is to believe and trust in God alone.

The iniquities or ills of Israel mentioned by the author throughout the book are only visible symptoms of a more serious illness or condition: Israel does not correctly know God; he has false perceptions of God. In this regard Hosea's work is similar to that of other 8th century prophets. The lack of or the incorrect knowledge of God is the root of the religious, ethical and social sins. If Israel's perception of God were correct, he would know what God expects of him. Hosea uses the words "to know" and "knowledge" to express this tenet on

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part of 7:8–8:1 (Cluster 7).

8 Middlemas, "Presence and Absence," 205.

9 Middlemas, "Presence and Absence," 205. The metaphor of illness and healing is a central one in the book in the form of explicit reference to the terms "illness" and "healing" (e.g. Hos 5:13; 6:1; 7:1.5; 11:3; 14:4) and allusions to their aspects (e.g. Hos 6:2; 7:9.14; 9:4.11-12.14.16; 13:16; 14:5-7), and God's continuous love for Israel is an important theme in 3:1. These are connected to the ideas of despair and hope in the life of Israel. Cf. S.-H. Hong, *The Metaphor of Illness and Healing in Hosea and Its Significance in the Socio-Economic Context of Eighth-Century Israel and Judah* (SBL 95; New York: Lang 2006); see also P.A. Kruger, "Yahweh's Generous Love. Eschatological Expectations in Hosea 14:2–9," *OTE* 1 (1983) 27–48.

10 See also B. Oestreich, *Metaphors and Similes for Yahweh in Hosea 14:2–9 (1–8). A Study of Hoseanic Pictorial Language* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang 1998) 228.

11 D. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah* (WBC 31; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1988) 9; Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 21–22; H. Jagersma, *Izráel története az ószövetségi korban* (Budapest: Református Zsinati Iroda Sajtóosztálya 1991) 118–126.

a number of occasions.[12] In this context he scolds not only the nation as a whole but also its leaders and priests. According to 4:6 the origin of the many sins of Israel is the lack of the knowledge of God or its rejection: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children" (NRSV). 6:6 emphasizes – as does Mic 6:6 – that love and God's knowledge are more important than to merely fulfil cultic precepts. The opposite of being aware of the blessings of God is forgetting them which is connected with forgetting the Creator himself (2:15; 8:14; 13:6). It is clear that knowledge in Hosea is not abstract, theoretical knowledge about the existence of God, but is closely connected to living according to the will of God.

From the numerous historical allusions (the tradition concerning the patriarchs [12:3-5], the exodus [2:17; 11:1; 12:14], the wilderness wanderings [9:10; 13:5], the blessings of the promised land [2:10]) God's mercy and love can also be discerned for Israel, the divine activity is also revelatory. Israel cannot say that he does not know these, therefore he is accountable to God for his actions. On a number of occasions – both in the historical allusions and other passages – the critique against Israel is formulated using the "I" form in which the deity speaks in order to emphasize his love and compassion towards Israel.[13] The topic of covenant is also related to the topic of the knowledge of God. Israel's apostasy is his faithlessness to the covenant (6:7; 8:1) which is manifested in the rejection of God and his will which entails all other sins, whether they are of cultic or social nature. Israel has violated God's sovereign right to him. His covenant relation to God and its violation are expressed through the metaphor of marriage and marital infidelity.[14] Israel's "harlotry" is the acceptance of certain elements of Canaanite religion – most probably related to the worship of Baal the god of fertility and weather among others – which included the making of graven images, idols of the deity (8:6; 13:2). Another visible symptom of the false perception of God and of Israel's own condition is the lack of concern for the neighbour. Hos 4:1-2 is revealing: "Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel; for the Lord has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land. Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed." (NRSV) The sins committed in the royal court are also an important topic according to the prophet for whom the greatest sin in this matter is ignoring God's will: "They made kings, but not through me; they set up princes, but without my knowledge." (8:4a NRSV, see also 13:9-11). These leaders – kings and those who make them kings – are guilty not only of assassinations but also of political manoeuvers in the international spheres. Hosea's message is similar to that of Isaiah: only God can help, not foreign nations or their armed forces (cf. 5:13; 7:9; 8:9; 12:2).

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12 Out of the twenty occurrences the stem is employed sixteen times in verbal (2:10.22; 5:3.4.9; 6:3 [2x]; 7:9 [2x]; 8:2.4; 9:7; 11:3; 13:4.5; 14:10) and four times in noun form (4:1.6 [2x]; 6:6).

13 See also Middlemas, "Presence and Absence," 203–204.

14 Dearman (*Book of Hosea*, 44–49) considers the metaphor of household to be a root metaphor in Hosea.

2. The Analysis of Hos 7:8-16[15]

Hos 7:8-16 is in the context of chapters 7–8 which especially deal with the folly of Israel in political and international matters.[16] However, political and cultic rejection of God is difficult to separate since mixing with other nations means not only distrusting the power and mercy of God but also trusting one's or other's own "power" and going after other nations' gods. Charges of rebelling against God or rejecting him fit the sphere of both politics and cult.[17] Therefore 7:8-16 is an important passage in the whole of the book and is representative of some of the most important problems in terms of Israel's actions.

8 אֶפְרַיִם בָּעַמִּים הוּא יִתְבּוֹלָל אֶפְרַיִם הָיָה עֻגָה בְּלִי הֲפוּכָה׃
9 אָכְלוּ זָרִים כֹּחוֹ וְהוּא לֹא יָדָע גַּם־שֵׂיבָה זָרְקָה בּוֹ וְהוּא לֹא יָדָע׃
10 וְעָנָה גְאוֹן־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָנָיו וְלֹא־שָׁבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְלֹא בִקְשֻׁהוּ בְּכָל־זֹאת׃

11 וַיְהִי אֶפְרַיִם כְּיוֹנָה פוֹתָה אֵין לֵב מִצְרַיִם קָרָאוּ אַשּׁוּר הָלָכוּ׃
12 כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵלֵכוּ אֶפְרוֹשׂ עֲלֵיהֶם רִשְׁתִּי כְּעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם אוֹרִידֵם אַיְסִרֵם כְּשֵׁמַע לַעֲדָתָם׃
13 אוֹי לָהֶם כִּי־נָדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי שֹׁד לָהֶם כִּי־פָשְׁעוּ בִי וְאָנֹכִי אֶפְדֵּם וְהֵמָּה דִּבְּרוּ עָלַי כְּזָבִים׃

14 וְלֹא־זָעֲקוּ אֵלַי בְּלִבָּם כִּי יְיֵלִילוּ עַל־מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם עַל־דָּגָן וְתִירוֹשׁ יִתְגּוֹרָרוּ יָסוּרוּ בִי׃
15 וַאֲנִי יִסַּרְתִּי חִזַּקְתִּי זְרוֹעֹתָם וְאֵלַי יְחַשְּׁבוּ־רָע׃
16 יָשׁוּבוּ לֹא עָל הָיוּ כְּקֶשֶׁת רְמִיָּה יִפְּלוּ בַחֶרֶב שָׂרֵיהֶם מִזַּעַם לְשׁוֹנָם זוֹ לַעְגָּם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם׃

8 Ephraim mixes himself with the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned.
9 Foreigners devour his strength, but he does not know it;[18]
gray hairs are sprinkled upon him, but he does not know it.[19]
10 Israel's pride testifies[20] against him; yet they do not return to the Lord their God, or seek him, for all this.[21]

11 Ephraim has become like a dove, silly and without sense; they call upon Egypt, they go to Assyria.

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15 The translation of the Masoretic text is from NRSV, unless otherwise indicated. The examination of the passage is based on the final text. For a summary of the views on the composition of the passage and the book, see especially G.A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea. A Redaction Critical Investigation* (SBLDS 102; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1987) and J. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (Berlin: De Gruyter 1993) esp. 58–73.

16 Cf. Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 12, who points out that political imagery appears more frequently in these chapters than elsewhere in the book. Yehezkel Kaufmann (*The Religion of Israel From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* [London: Allen & Unwin 1960] 375–376) also notes the importance of the topic of military and political ventures among the sins of Israel in connection with the failures of the monarchy within Hos 4–14.

17 Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 11.

18 The verbs in v. 9a can be understood in past tense.

19 The expression "he does not know it" can be understood in past tense in both instances. F.I. Andersen – D.N. Freedman, *Hosea. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24; Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1980) 462, translate "Mold is sprinkled upon him, but he has not realized it" (7:9b).

20 The verb עָנָה ("to respond/testify") is used in Hosea in other instances (2:17.23-24; 5:5; 7:10) and can be translated with this meaning here.

21 It is also possible to read: "yet they did not return to the Lord their God, or seek him, for all this."

12 As they go, I will cast my net over them; I will bring them down like birds of the air; I will discipline them[22] according to the report made to their assembly.[23]

13 Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against me.[24]
14 They do not cry to me from the heart,[25] but they wail upon their beds; they gash themselves[26] for grain and wine; they rebel against me.
15 It was I who trained and strengthened their arms, yet they plot evil against me.
16 They turn to that which does not profit;[27] they have become like a defective bow; their officials shall fall by the sword because of the rage of their tongue. So much for their babbling in the land of Egypt.

The passage has points of connection with 7:1-7 through the image of baking (see the image of oven in 7:4.6-7)[28] and through the divine speech in the form of accusatory laments.[29] Nevertheless, v. 8 begins a new section. While 7:1-7 deals primarily with the internal affairs of Israel, 7:8-16 treats his disastrous international and political manoeuvers.[30]

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22 Both the verbs יָסַר ("to chastise," "to discipline," "to teach," "to train") and אָסַר ("to tie," "to bind") fit the context but this would be their only occurrence in the Hiphil stem. The idea of binding would continue the image of net. However, the notion of chastising seems to make better sense regardless of how we translate the final clause of the verse (see below). יָסַר is employed in Hos 7:15 and 10:10 (twice, rendered with παιδεύω in the LXX in both instances). See also Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 462, 470–471; K. Tóth, *Hóseás próféta könyve 1–7. részének magyarázata* (Budapest: Református Theologiai Akadémia 1978) 61; Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 206; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 115–116, 122.

23 The Hebrew word עֵדָה can mean "assembly," "gathering" of people, or "flock" in the case of animals, such as birds. The latter seems appropriate because of the first half of the verse. However, to appreciate the verse as a simile, it is more probable to assume that only v. 12a contains the images of birds and catching, and v. 12b refers to the nation. If we read עֵדוּת ("testimony") instead of עֵדָה, the clause may refer to a treaty. עֵדָה is in parallel with statues and covenant in 2 Kgs 17:15. The LXX has a different rendering in Hos 7,12b: "by the report of their affliction." It may be the result of reading רָעָתָם (from רָעָה: "wickedness," "evil," "trouble," "affliction") for לַעֲדָתָם. Cf. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 115–116.

24 The verb "to lie" can be rendered in the past tense.

25 The verb "to cry" can be translated in the past tense.

26 Neither the word גּוּר ("to sojourn," "to be a stranger"), nor the term גָּרַר ("to drag away") fits the context of the second half of the verse. It is more probable that the text contained גָּדַד ("to cut") reflecting the copyist's error of confusing the consonants ד and ר. See also Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 462, 475; Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 207; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 115–116, 123; P. Czanik, *Hóseás könyvének magyarázata* (Budapest – Gödöllő: Iránytű Kiadó 1996) 93–94, 97.

27 The Hebrew expression is problematic here. The following readings are possible: (They turn) to (אֶל) the yoke (עֹל), cf. Czanik, *Hóseás könyvének magyarázata*, 94; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 115–116, 124; (They turn) but not to (אֶל) me (reading אֵלַי for עָל), Tóth, *Hóseás próféta könyve*, 60–61; (They turn) to (אֶל) Baal (reading לַבַּעַל for the problematic expression), Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 207; (They turn) to (אֶל) no-god, taking עָל as a reference to a deity whose name may have become shorter perhaps due to the copyist's error, but which was similar to עֶלְיוֹן (Most High), see also Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 463, 477; (They turn) to (אֶל) no-profit (from the verb יָעַל: "to profit," "to benefit"), see Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 207, 214; cf. Jer 2:8. The LXX renders "They have turned aside to nothing."

28 See also Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 151.

29 Cf. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 117, who also notes some of the catchwords providing a link between the subsections of chapter 7. Cf. also Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 206.

30 Emmanuel Nwaoru ("The Role of Images in the Literary Structure of Hosea VII 8–VIII 14," *VT* 54/2 [2004] 216–222) notes that the structural and functional unity of Hos 7:8–8:14 is strengthened by literary devices such as metaphors.

7:8-16 can be divided into 3 subsections: vv. 8–10 contain images related to food or consumption, where v. 10 is a culmination of the passage; in vv. 11–12 the author employs images taken from the animal world, and in most of vv. 13–16 the prophet uses direct speech instead of metaphors concerning Israel and the impending punishment.

The Hebrew term בָּלַל ("to mix," "to mingle," "to confuse") in v. 8a is used in the Old Testament for instance in the context of mixing oil and flour with the result of unleavened cakes mixed with oil as in Exod 29:2. Another usage of the verb, however, can take us closer to its meaning in the present context. It also appears in Gen 11:9 according to which at Babel God confused the language of all the Earth. In Hos 7:8 it symbolizes Israel's political actions, when looking for foreign alliances. As a result, he becomes entangled with foreign nations – some of which are greater and more powerful than him –, ending up confused and even more vulnerable. This political manoeuvring reflects Israel's folly and pride at the same time which in the end resulted in the catastrophe of the loss of Samaria in 722 BC. The nations with which Israel mixed himself can be those mentioned by name in the book (Egypt and Assyria), but also other people of the region, the Arameans, the Philistines, or the Canaanites in general. Some of these nations made a covenant with Israel either before the Assyrian invasions of the 9th and 8th centuries or more narrowly during the last decades of the history of Israel, especially following the death of Jeroboam II, when some of Israel's last kings were pro-, while others anti-Assyrians.[31] Mixing with them entailed danger both politically and in terms of cult for a people who were in a special position as the elected people of God, and election entailed special responsibilities and consequences.

The second half of 7:8 employs the image of baking, possibly reflecting wisdom ideas. It compares Ephraim to a cake, more precisely a flat bread not turned. Such a bread would be raw on the one side and burnt on the other, unfit for human consumption. Since the baker's purpose is to produce a good quality product, the inedible bread must be the result of a fault or failure occurring during the baking procedure.[32] The image implies a false perception of Ephraim who appears to be potent, like risen bread, but turns out to be simultaneously burnt and soggy, in other word, impotent.[33] His failed and miscalculated political

31 Among the former was Menahem who paid heavy tribute to the king of Assyria in order to consolidate his hold on power (cf. 2 Kgs 15:19-20) at the expense of the Israelites. This was probably the reason for the assassination of his son Pekahiah by Pekah. The latter, together with king Rezin of Aram, formed an anti-Assyrian coalition which may have included some of the Phoenician and Philistine coastal cities. It is probable that Aram and Israel (and perhaps the Philistines) attacked Judah during the so-called Syro-Ephraimite war (734–732 BC) since they could not force Ahaz the Judahite king into the coalition (cf. 2 Kgs 16:5; Isa 7:1-9). The results of the reprisals of Assyria included loss of Israelite territories, deportation of Israelites and Arameans into Assyria, destruction of major Israelites cities and of Damascus, continuous subjugation of Israel to Assyria during the reign of king Hoshea, the murder of king Rezin. Judah was also made a vassal state to Assyria by king Ahaz (cf. 2 Kgs 16:5-9). See also Jagersma, *Izráel története,* 124–125; Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 22–26; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 9; J.M. Miller – J.H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 1986) 322–337.

32 Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 157.

33 Cf. also S.E. Haddox, "(E)Masculinity in Hosea's Political Rhetoric," *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past. Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes* (eds. B.E. Kelle – M.B. Moore)

and diplomatic actions result in something that is useless; in this case this causes one of the nation's greatest tragedies. This is one of the possible interpretations of the metaphor. If we modify it somewhat and place the emphasis on what Egypt and Assyria means for Israel, the image may also imply that Egypt is unable to provide help, proves to be squishy while Assyria is burning Israel.[34]

Hos 7:9 twice employs the expression "he does not know it." As noted before, the stem "to know" appears a number of times in the book. Hos 4:6.14 describe the idolatrous people of God as those "who lack knowledge" or those "who do not understand/discern," respectively. In the former, apostasy is connected with rejecting knowledge (דַּעַת).[35] The epilogue of the book (14:10) also contains the term "to know." It is a wisdom saying with terminology and ideas typical of Israelite wisdom literature ("wise," "to understand," "intelligent/discerning," "to know," "way/path," "right/straight," "righteous," "walk," "transgressor," "stumble").[36] The verse emphasizes that for the pious the ways of God are straight, possible to follow if not easily discernible since they require strenuous work and meditation, but the sinners can stumble in them. The epilogue also suggests that the prophecies contained in the book have become an object of study and guide to life.[37] The term "these things" may refer to the content of the book and implies that the condition of Israel's survival is fearing God and keeping his commandments.[38] Apart from these passages and the general statements of Israel's knowledge of God or the lack thereof, important is the connection between the concept of the knowledge of God and that of seeking Him (6:3).[39]

In the present context the phrase "does not know" demonstrates that even though Israel is on the way to his demise, he is ignorant of the warning signs. Hos 7:8 and 7:9 together emphasize that the undiscerning nation's "strength" is withering away. Strength in this

(OTS 446; New York: Clark 2006) 174–200, esp. 195–196; Nwaoru, "The Role of Images," 219. Shalom M. Paul ("The Image of the Oven and the Cake in Hosea VII 4–10," *VT* 18/1 [1968] 114–120, 118) considers the image a symbol of Israel's present exhausted condition in the sense that Ephraim is incapable of averting the impending tragedy.

34 Haddox, "(E)Masculinity," 195–196; see the image of the broken reed of a staff in 2 Kgs 18:21 and Jer 37:7.

35 Cf. Sir 6:23.

36 Wisdom literature often contrasts the righteous/godly with the transgressor/godless and their respective ways of life (Ps 37:38-39; Prov 10:24.29.30; 11:3; 12:3.5.7; Sir 32:16-17). See e.g. Prov 1:2; 2:2.6; 3:13.19; 4:5.7 for the word-pair "wisdom" and "understanding."

37 Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 647.

38 Cf. G.T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct. A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (BZAW 151; Berlin: De Gruyter 1980) 129–130, who argues that the editorial stance is explicit also in the suffix of the term "know them." He adds that Hos 14:10 "highlights the function of the Hoseanic corpus as an enduring sacred word to the later Jewish community…[and] indicates a long history in the shaping and in the religious usage of the Hoseanic traditions." (*ibidem*, 135).

39 In wisdom writings the godly is usually associated with wisdom, accepting discipline and undertaking the strenuous work of learning instruction (cf. Sir 6:18-31; 15:3), contained especially in the law of Moses and in the teachings of the sages. Wisdom is connected with the fear of God (Prov 9:10 cf. also Prov 1:7a). On the other hand, "fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov 1:7, NRSV), do not understand that wisdom is the source of life and do not seek her (Prov 8:35). Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez ("A Love Like a Morning Mist. Hosea 5:15–6:6," *Landas* 27/2 [2013] 101–135, 111) points out that the term "seeking," favored by Hosea (e.g. 3:5; 5:6.15; 7:10; 10:12) appears frequently in wisdom writings (e.g. Job 8:5; Prov 1:28; 8:17; 11:27).

context may mean both power, and the produce of the land, representing a people who are losing not only their strength but also their independence.[40] While gray hair should entail wisdom, in this context it only affirms loss of virility.[41] The idea can be paralleled with that in v. 7 in the context of internal turmoil. According to the latter the people devour their own rulers, while in v. 9 strangers consume Israel's strength. Chapter 7 confirms both internal and external dangers[42] through parallels such as this and also through images mentioned above (i.e. baking). The foreigners can be those who remained within Israel from the beginning of the Davidic monarchy, the Canaanites, or those to whom Israel is paying tribute as a vassal state. This theme is continued in 7:11a as can be seen below.

Hos 7:10 is a culmination of the unit comprising vv. 8–10. The phrase "Israel's pride testifies against him" is identical to the one in 5:5. In their immediate context (Hos 7:9 and 5:4) we find a reference to knowledge. 7:9 has been discussed above. 5:4 reads: "Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they do not know the Lord." (NRSV) While the idea of turning to God is found in 7:10, in the case of the other passage it is found not in 5:5 but in 5:4. According to the latter, they do not know the Lord. According to 7:9 they do not even know themselves.[43] 7:10 confirms that while Ephraim is on his way to demise, he is reluctant to seek God and turn to him. Parallel to turning to God is the seeking of God which – as noted before – is one of the most important topics alongside the theme of the knowledge of him (3:5; 5:6.15; 7:10; 10:12).[44] Repentance could still avert God's wrath but Ephraim does not want to repent.[45] This statement echoes that of Hos 7:7 which has God as speaker: "none of them calls upon me" (NRSV). In verse 10 it is the prophet that speaks interrupting the speech of God that pervades chapter 7.[46] Israel cannot claim that God is not aware of his actions. It is clear from God's first person references that he sees and condemns both the internal affairs and the political actions, and these are not according to his will.

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40 M.A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*. I. *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Berit Olam. Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 2000) 80.

41 Haddox, "(E)Masculinity," 195–196. Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman (*Hosea*, 467) reject the idea of "gray hair" here since it is usually the sign of old age that was respected in Israel. They suggest instead the image of mold. This would continue the images related to food in Hos 7:8-9. Paul ("Image of the Oven," 119–120) refers to the epic of Gilgamesh in which the expression "the fifth has a moldy cast" appears concerning the cake baked for the sleeping Gilgamesh, and argues that the Akkadian term employed here is the exact semantic equivalent of the Hebrew שֵׂיבָה זָרְקָה. However, while old age and respect are frequently connected in the Hebrew Bible and in the deuterocanonical literature, Jewish writings do know about becoming old without honour. According to 1 Kgs 11:4-8, Solomon's heart was turned away from God by his foreign wives in his old age. Eccl 4:13 reads: "Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king, who will no longer take advice." (NRSV) According to Wis 3:16-17 the children of an unlawful union might live long but "their old age will be without honor" (v. 17b). For Ben Sira "an old fool who commits adultery" is especially loathsome (Sir 25:2 NRSV).

42 Cf. Hos 5:13 and Landy, *Hosea*, 105.

43 Landy, *Hosea*, 107.

44 Cf. Job 8:5; Prov 1:28; 8:17; 11:27.

45 Cf. Amos 4:4-13.

46 Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 80–81.

The first verse (7:11) of the next unit compares Ephraim to a dove, silly and without sense. An expression similar to "without sense" is found in Prov 17:16 in parallel with the fool. The term "naive" or "simple" also appears in Job 5:2 in parallel with a fool.[47] The comparison in Hos 7:11a may be based on the assumption that doves are easily allured and trapped. This seems confirmed in Hos 7:12. Doves, however, are not always connected with stupidity in the Hebrew Bible. Hosea seems to focus on their negative characteristics. Moreover, in a number of the animal images Israel is portrayed as the powerless prey of God either as bird or herbivore, while God is often described as predator.[48]

The term for dove (יוֹנָה) may also reflect a wordplay since the Hebrew verb יָנָה means "to oppress," "to maltreat," describing the result of Israel's alliances with other nations.[49] The significance of the image is further underlined by the fact that doves move to and fro in search of food, sometimes a morsel, and do not always realize the danger. Israel is also going to and fro between powers in search of help or support when calling upon Egypt and going to Assyria.[50] None of this made any sense, since the Assyrians were exerting their influence in the region already, while Egypt was not in the position to help.[51] We read only about the last of this period's Israelite kings, Hoshea that he sent messengers to king So of Egypt and conspired against the Assyrians (2 Kgs 17:4), but something similar may have happened more than once during the last decades of the history of Israel. The reasons for the assassination of some of the Israelite kings may have been to put away the pro-Assyrian ruler in favor of the pro-Egyptian candidate.[52] According to Isa 7:9, if Israel does not stand firm in faith, Israel shall not stand at all. Hosea's message is similar: Israel should not trust in political intrigue but only in the covenant Lord.

Hos 7:12 continues the theme taken from the animal world reminiscent of those of wisdom literature. The image of bird and snare is used in Prov 7:23 in the story of the adulterous woman.[53] The term "to cast/spread a net" is almost exactly the same in Ezek 12:13; 17:20; 32:3 as in Hos 7:12. The first two passages in Ezekiel portray the Babylonian exile, while according to the third God will throw his net over Egypt at the time of retribution.

47 C.L. Seow, "Hosea 14:10 and the Foolish People Motif," *CBQ* 44/2 (1982) 212–224, 218–219. Cf. also Deut 11:16; Job 31:27. While פָּתָה in Qal means "to be naïve/simple," in Piel it also means "to allure/entice" and is used in Hos 2:16 (= 2:14 in NRSV): "Therefore, I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her." See also Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 81. Cf. Exod 22:25 (=22:26 in NRSV); Jer 20:7.

48 S.E. Haddox, *Metaphor and Masculinity in Hosea* (SBL 141; New York: Lang 2011) 109–114. Grace I. Emmerson (*Hosea. An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective* [JSOTSup 28; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1984]) also notes the importance of figurative language in the portrayal of Israel's relation to God and points out that in the salvation oracle of Hos 11:11 ("They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the Lord" NRSV) the role of birds is the reversal of that in 7:11 (42).

49 Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 81.

50 Cf. Tóth, *Hóseás próféta könyve*, 62. Emmanuel Nwaoru ("The Role of Images," 219) points out that Ephraim's actions without understanding/mind also include forgetting the events of the past (cf. Hos 5:13).

51 This is emphasized in Hos 12:2 (= 12:1 in NRSV): "Ephraim herds the wind, and pursues the east wind all day long; they multiply falsehood and violence; they make a treaty with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt."

52 Czanik, *Hóseás könyvének magyarázata*, 95.

53 For similar images see Jer 5:26; Amos 3:5; Ps 91:3; 124:7; Eccl 9:12.

As noted before, some of the interpreters read "to bind" in the second half of Hos 7:12 in order to harmonize it with the image of trap and snare, while others read "to discipline/chastise/train/teach." While the latter may seem awkward, the verb is not unknown in the Book of Hosea.[54] It is employed in 7:15 and 10:10. The Greek translation of 7:12 and 10:10 has the term παιδεύω which fits into the context of covenant ethos and the teachings of wisdom and piety.[55] The end of Hos 7:12 is difficult to interpret. If we depart from the image of the flock of birds and understand עֵדָה as "assembly," "gathering" of people, we may assume that Israel is reproofed for gathering, meeting with foreign nations for the purpose of seeking allies and making covenants as was the case on more than one occasion in 8th century BC Israel. This idea is even more supported if we conjecture that originally the sentence contained not the word עֵדָה, but the similar עֵדוּת ("testimony") referring to the terms of a treaty with a vassal. In this case God as a suzerain would chastise the errant vassal trusting in Assyria or Egypt instead of him.[56] The Ancient Near Eastern ideological background of such a punishment is well documented.[57] Nets and snares are symbols of – among others – inescapable disaster, absolute sovereignty, control, ultimate world dominion.[58] In Hos 7:12 the image emphasizes the helplessness of Israel, a bird, who will be trapped by his real enemy, Yahweh, the fowler, when he least suspects it.[59] The Greek translation of the final words of the verse takes us into another direction when rendering: "I will discipline them by the report of their affliction," introducing the idea of "affliction," "evil," "trouble," "oppression" instead of "flock" or "assembly." This may have resulted from the assumption that the consonants of the terms רָעָה and עֵדָה were jumbled since they both contain ע while ר and ד can easily be mixed up.[60]

Hos 7:13 contains a cry of woe over Israel in a parallel: "Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against me!" (NRSV). The author employs the strongest terminology for committing iniquity, the Hebrew פָּשַׁע in the sense of rebellion. It often refers to vassal kings who rebel against suzerains (2 Kgs 1:1; 3:5.7; 8:20.22).[61] As a metaphor it is frequently used by the prophets of Israel's or his leaders' rebellion against God (Isa 43:27; Jer 2:8.29; 3:13; 33:8; Ezek 2:3; Lam 3:42).[62] "To rebel" is in parallel with the verb "to stray" in Hos 7:13; the latter also has the meaning "to flee." It is possible to read 7:13b as: "I was the one who redeemed them. They were the ones who told lies about me." In this case we find here the echoes of the language of

54 Cf. Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 206, 211–212; Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 470–471.

55 Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 212. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 115–116 reads "I will punish them sevenfold for their evil."

56 Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 81.

57 Cf. Lancaster, *Like a Lion*, 120.

58 O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World. Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 1997) 89–90.

59 Cf. also Eidevall, *Grapes*, 119; P.A. Kruger, "The Divine Net in Hos 7:12," *ETL* 68 (1992) 132–136, 135.

60 See also Wolff, *Hosea*, 107–108.

61 See also 1 Kgs 12:19.

62 Cf. Lancaster, *Like a Lion*, 124. The noun appears in all of the eight oracles against the nations in Amos 1–2 and also in Amos 3:14; 5:12 concerning Israel's transgressions.

the exodus[63] and a condemnation that even though God has demonstrated his love and power for his people in the Egyptian bondage they do not understand the significance of God's actions or appreciate them. This is all the more serious if we consider that even during the Babylonian exile the main tenets of Israel's faith – such as those of the Creator and of the exodus – were not denied or forgotten by the faithful, they were the main arguments of the prophet Deutero-Isaiah in convincing the exiles about the imminence of redemption and return. Reading the expression in the past tense would strengthen the parallel of verses 13 and 15 since they would both refer to the gracious acts of God (v. 13: redemption; v. 15: training and strengthening) and Israel's rejection of them (v. 13: speaking lies against him; v. 15: plotting evil against him). If the verb "to redeem" is understood as "I would redeem" them the reference is to Israel's present obstinacy.[64] Whatever translation we prefer, these lies are now the obstacles in the present restoration of Israel. What the author means by lies is another matter. It may be that Israel thinks God cannot save.[65] Such a conclusion is based on the fact that Israel has either a false knowledge of God or deliberately speaks unwisely of him. His actions are unrecognized or even scorned by Israel.[66] In the dire situation of the Assyrian invasion and in the shortage of food referred to in 7:14 they not only think that God cannot help but they may even blame him and turn away from him, not knowing or not wanting to know that such conditions are caused by their own sins. The failure to recognize the true nature of their relationship with God and of the correlation between act and consequence is attested elsewhere in the prophetic literature.[67]

Hos 7:14 is problematic. The most probable reading is that of NRSV: "They do[68] not cry to me from the heart, but they wail upon their beds; they gash themselves for grain and wine; they rebel against me." As noted above, neither the word גוּר ("to sojourn," "to be a stranger"), nor the term גָּרַר ("to drag away") fits the context. It is more probable that the text contained the word גָּדַד ("to cut") reflecting the copyist's error of confusing the consonants ד and ר.[69] Even though the Greek renders the entire sentence in past tense it confirms the notion of cutting, gashing. If we accept this translation, the second half of the verse concerns the cult. The significance of the term "beds" is dubious. The image may simply express the sentiment that the Israelites are wailing upon their beds and complaining instead of turning to God with all their heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning as instructed according to Joel 2:12, or it may refer to cultic rituals during which the devotees recline at beds for feast, or it may refer to fertility cults.[70] Nevertheless, the mention of grain and wine suggests that despite the shortage of food Israel is obstinate,

63 Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 462, 473.
64 The term is also found in Hos 13:14.
65 Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 473.
66 Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 82.
67 Among others see the question of tithes in Mal 3:6-12.
68 It is possible to translate it in the past tense.
69 See also Andersen – Freedman, *Hosea*, 462, 475; Dearman, *Book of Hosea*, 207; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 115–116, 123; Czanik, *Hóseás könyvének magyarázata*, 93–94, 97.
70 Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 82–83.

refuses to return to God and looks for blessings elsewhere.[71] If the idea of gashing is indeed present in the text, it describes the desperate acts of Israel similar to those of the Baal prophets on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:28).[72] The Hoseanic verse also contains the Hebrew term סור ("to turn away/aside") which is similar in form to יָסַר ("to discipline," "to teach" etc.). The use of words similar in form or a wordplay is also characteristic of Hosea. In the overall message of the passage the author emphasizes that while God is ready to teach, instruct and discipline his people, there is no one to teach since they turn away from him.

This notion is found in Hos 7:15 in the context of father-son relation appearing also in 11:1-7. Among the so-called historical allusions of Hosea we find those that concern the wilderness wanderings. While it is not specified what the author means by "It was I who trained and strengthened their arms" (NRSV) it refers to an early stage of the relation of God and Israel, the childhood of the nation.[73] Training, strengthening in this context can mean discipline, preparation for life, for protection. God did not create comfortable and perfect conditions for Israel but he prepared them, made them able to stand, to remain faithful and to make sound decisions. He elected Israel and as a father nurtures and sustains his son, so did God with Israel. This is what Israel has forgotten and spurned. As Mason D. Lancaster points out, the images expressing God's generous care, love and provision describe the emotional side of His relationship with Israel. "All the years of equipping Israel for a life of flourishing are met not only with heartless rejection, but with the active plotting of evil against God."[74] The term "to plot evil" is also found in Nah 1:9.11 concerning haughty Ninive who plots evil against God and will be punished for it. It also denotes "to think falsely," "to consider something/somebody falsely." In the present context it is connected with the false perception or lack of proper knowledge of God (Hos 4:1; 6:3). In 7:15 this includes the false perception of his nurturing love and discipline.[75] Whichever translation we accept, in the overall message of Hosea it is clear that those who plot evil against or think falsely of God will be punished. While in Hos 11:9 we read in God's speech that "I will not execute my fierce anger," it is clear that ultimately punishment will be carried out for the contemporaries of Hosea and the promises of restoration are for the future generations.

Various attempts to interpret 7:16a have been detailed above. Some of the probable readings are: "They turn but not to me"; "They turn to Baal"; "They turn to no-god"; "They turn to no-profit."[76] The Greek reads: "They have turned aside to nothing." Whichever of the alternatives we accept, the idea is in parallel with the uselessness of the slack bow. To follow other earthly powers or gods not only angers God but is also futile. The slack bow is good for nothing, since shooting the target is only possible with a taught bowstring.[77] At

71 Cf. Hos 3:1: "they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes" (NRSV).
72 Jer 41:5 may refer to something similar.
73 According to Jer 2:2 the Lord remembers the devotion of Israel's youth.
74 Lancaster, *Like a Lion*, 123.
75 Cf. Gen 50:20 which employs the same term for both human and divine plotting.
76 See the note on the text and translation of 7:16.
77 Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 83.

the same time we may think of the inedible flat bread that is also useless.[78] They all express and portray Israel's present condition.[79]

The second half of 7:16 confirms this when speaking of the fall of the officials. Among them may be those who partook in the assassinations of kings but the prophetic literature frequently singles out Israel's leaders for their iniquity. The expression "the rage of their tongue" may imply complaining or speaking against God himself and refusing prophetic word. However, it may also refer back to the charges of conspiracy in Hos 7:3-7 which may also reflect the interfering of foreign powers in Israel's politics. The mockery of Israel by Egypt may confirm this. Alliance with Egypt and Assyria meant for Israel a trap, demise and derision.[80]

Summary

Through complex literary and linguistic devices Hosea emphasizes that the basis of the relation of God and Israel is always the right knowledge of Him which entails the right knowledge of the self and of its place in the universe. The iniquities or ills of Israel are only visible symptoms of a more serious illness or condition: Israel does not correctly know God; he has false perceptions of God, he forgets his createdness in his relationship with the Creator. This is the root of religious, ethical and social sins. The passage in the context of the book underlines that while Israel appears to be potent, he is in fact impotent, the undiscerning nation's "strength" is withering away. Foreign powers seem influential, alluring, but God's people should know better since they know about a greater power than human sovereigns. The political and cultic entanglement with other nations results in fact not in salvation but in an inglorious demise. Israel's "wisdom" in internal and external matters only demonstrates how unwise he is. His pride, arrogance, scheming and living without God lead not to life but to the opposite, death, of which Israel is ignorant. While Hosea's message is for a special historical period and circumstances, it is relevant for all ages and can be re-read especially when God's people ignore their created nature and aspire to be powerful, self-sufficient, intelligent in economic, scientific, political and military matters.

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78 Lancaster (*Like a Lion*, 126–129) considers the metaphors of the cake, the dove and the bow as metaphors about useless Israel; all three are a failed version of its kind, not able to fulfil its purpose. Through these images the prophet implies that while God had expectations for Israel and chose them for a purpose, Israel failed him.

79 Nwaoru, "The Role of Images," 220. If, however, we assume that the text originally read "They turn to the yoke," we find a reference not to the continuing disobedience but to its consequence. The term "yoke" reminds the reader of the Egyptian bondage, or to the loss of territories and deportations after 732 BC. Cf. Deut 28:47-48: "Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and with gladness of heart for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and lack of everything. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you." (NRSV). See Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 115–116, 124.

80 Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, 83, Landy, *Hosea*, 112.

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Two Accounts – One Ascension: Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:9-11

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Abstract: This article investigates the ascension accounts (Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:9-11) in a narrative way. The main analysis point will be the question: why is one event recounted twice: at the end of the first Lukan volume and the beginning of the second? The second question concerns the meaning of the discrepancies between the two pericopes. We argue that all differences can be explained by Luke's literary and narrative strategy. Luke 24:50-53 recounts the recognition of Jesus. Acts 1:9-11 marks the end of the period (between resurrection and ascension) needed for the disciples to become the legitimate and authoritative successors of Jesus.

Keywords: ascension, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-11, narrative analysis

Luke the Evangelist is the only NT author who wrote an account of Jesus' ascension. In fact, he did so twice. Ever since no one has ever fully answered the question: why there is one event recounted twice? The history of exegetical studies on ascension abounds in many monographs,[1] but the narrative analysis is still missing. Robert F. O'Toole stated in 1979: "The methodology used by most researchers seems too limited. They spend a good deal of time discussing Luke's treatment of the ascension and exaltation, but they do not study

1 Victoriano C. Larrañaga (*L'Ascension de Notre-Seigneur dans la Nouveau Testament* [SPIB 50; Rome: IBP 1938]) was the first scholar who responded to theories proposed by David F. Strauss, Adolf von Harnack in his ample dissertation. He was an apologist of conformity between the two accounts. A significant contribution to the debate was provided by Gerhard Lohfink (*Die Himmelfahrt Jesu. Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* [SANT 26; München: Kösel 1971]), who in his doctoral dissertation examined ascension from *religionsgeschichtliches* and *redaktiongeschichtliches* aspect. Mikael C. Parsons (*The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts. The Ascension Narratives in Context* [JSNTSup 21; Sheffield: JSOT 1987]) examined two texts through both synchronic and diachronic methods. His main conclusion is that discrepancies between two accounts can be most adequately explained not in terms of interpolation or source theories but in the light of their literary function. Arie W. Zwiep (*The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology* [NovTSup 87; Leiden: Brill 1997]) examined in his monography the Jewish background of ascension accounts. Other recent studies include M. Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (SNTSMS 146; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2009); J.A. Mihoc, *The Ascension of Jesus Christ – A Critical and Exegetical Study of the Ascension in Luke-Acts and in the Jewish and Christian Context* (Diss. Durham University; Durham 2010); A.W. Zwiep, "The Text of the Ascension Narratives: Luke 24,50-53: Acts 1,1-2, 9–11", *Christ, the Spirit and the Community of God. Essays on the Acts of the Apostles* (ed. A.W. Zwiep) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2010) 7–37; D.K. Bryan – D.W. Pao (eds.), *Ascent into Heaven in Luke-Acts. New Explorations of Luke's Narrative Hinge* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2016).

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these two events in Luke-Acts as a whole."[2] Matthew Sleeman claims that this opinion has retained his validity until now[3] and states: "Jesus' ascension in Acts not only happens within the narrative, it also structures it."[4] In 2010, François Bovon published a short article on the topic of ascension. At the end of the paper, this great authority on NT studies recounts a small anecdote: "French students in Montpellier (France) told me recently that there is an approach missing in my survey, the narratological one. I could only accept their remark. Questions such as, What is the implied author's point of view? Or what is the construction of Jesus' and the disciples' characters? have thus far not been asked. And they are legitimate questions."[5] It is striking how much effort was put into investigating what is hidden beyond the text of ascension and how little attention was paid to the text itself and how it works within the Lucan narrative. This paper argues that all minor and major discrepancies between the two accounts are caused by Luke's literary and narrative concepts. Our position is that he has different purposes in writing the Gospel and Acts. That difference affects the modulation of ascension pericopes. Why is one story recounted twice? Why has Luke chosen particularly the ascension (and not the resurrection, for example) in interlacing the two volumes of his work? These are the guiding questions. The recent development of narrative criticism in biblical scholarship encourages reviewing ascension accounts again with some new tools at hand.

1. Narrative Comparison of Ascension Accounts

The important factor to consider is the very place where the two stories are put together. All the differences are significant, so we should carefully ponder which discrepancies are caused by the inclusion of the opening of Jerusalem's ministry and which are put into the text because they form a final stage of the development of the plot in chapter 24. We should not overlook the references to the Gospel in Acts 1:9-11. Firstly, we will elucidate the divergences between the two accounts. Then we will try to answer why some elements occur in the first and not in the second pericope and why the author chooses other motifs to tie the stories. These questions will be answered from a narrative perspective.

First, we dismiss the theories that claim that two ascension accounts describe two different events.[6] If this is a correct interpretation, we should also consider other pericopes from the prologue in the same way. Talbert presents five plausible theories which explain the repetition of the event:[7] 1) the author gained more information during the process of writing;

2 R.F. O'Toole, "Luke's Understanding of Jesus' Resurrection-Ascension-Exaltation," *BTB* 9/3 (1979) 113.
3 Sleeman, *Geography,* 30.
4 Sleeman, *Geography,* 236.
5 F. Bovon, "The Lukan Ascension Stories," *Korean New Testament Studies* 17 (2010) 589–590.
6 See a brief summary in I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC 3; Exeter: Paternoster 1978) 907.
7 C.H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (SBLMS 20; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press 1974) 59.

2) the two-tradition hypothesis; 3) interpolation; 4) theological reasons; 5) "Lukan architecture" of the narrative. The fifth explanation is the object of our study.

It is very hard to understand how many scholars (even mindful of the narrative aspects of the text) claim that the ascension scene in Acts presents a more detailed account.[8] Daniel Marguerat argues that we have new elements in Acts: the cloud, the two men and the discourse. Justin A. Mihoc states: "the most obvious differences between Luke and Acts are the omissions (in Luke) and the additions (in Acts)."[9] Luke 24:50-53 also contains different elements: the walk to Bethany, the blessing and the prostration. So how should we differentiate omissions and additions? Both accounts have their particularities. We will offer a narrative analysis of the two accounts respecting their contexts and literary genres.[10] To stress Hans W. Frei's principle: "the narrative is the meaning."[11] We will proceed by using the standard narrative tools of analysis:[12]

a) Plot

Luke 24:50-53 forms a plot, and Acts 1:9-11 does not. Although the ascension in Luke encompasses only four verses, many deeds are described in the account in a very sober way. The narrative is very dense, which explains why it is difficult to see a classical plot pattern in this episode. However, Marguerat, in his manual, exemplifies this pattern in an even shorter narrative unit of Matt 8:14-15.[13] Usually, the plot encompasses longer units as a chapter, but the main plot can also contain smaller plots. The main plot of Luke 24 ends with the scene in 24:50-53, which contains its own own combined micro-plot[14]: it is not only a plot of resolution but also of revelation, which is more character-centred in general.[15] One can also see the structure of imbalance/balance or incompleteness/completeness.[16]

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8 D. Marguerat, *Gli Atti degli apostoli*. I. *(1–12)* (Bologna: EDB 2011) 50.

9 Mihoc, *Ascension,* 72.

10 We are not interested in any oral or rhetorical theories connecting the end of the Gospel with the beginning of Acts. See A. García Serrano, *The Presentation in the Temple. The Narrative Function of Lk 2:22-39 in Luke-Acts* (AnBib 197; Roma: GBPress 2016) 303, where the author presents the concentric structure with the praise in the temple (Luke 24:52-53) in the middle. There are, of course, references to the beginning of Acts, but the connection between Luke 24 and the prologue of Acts is more complex.

11 H.W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative. A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1974) 270.

12 Cf.: J.-N. Aletti, *Il racconto come teologia. Studio narrativo del terzo Vangelo e del libro degli Atti degli Apostoli* (Bologna: EDB 2009) 226–230; D. Marguerat – Y. van Bourquin, *Per leggere i racconti biblici* (Roma: Borla 2011) 158–161.

13 Marguerat – Bourquin, *Per leggere,* 50–51. The authors see in this passage a model example of *"schema quinario"*: exposition (8,14a); complication (8,14b); transformative action (8,15a); resolution (8,15b); final situation (8,15c).

14 The moments of this plot: 1) inciting moment: v. 50a – Ἐξήγαγεν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔξω ἕως πρὸς Βηθανίαν; 2) transformative action: vv. 50b-51 – καὶ ἐπάρας τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εὐλογεῖν αὐτὸν αὐτοὺς διέστη ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; 3) resolution: v. 52a – Καὶ αὐτοὶ προσκυνήσαντες αὐτόν; 4) final situation: vv. 52b-53 – ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἰερουσαλὴμ μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης καὶ ἦσαν διὰ παντὸς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ εὐλογοῦντες τὸν θεόν.

15 J.L. Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us* (SubBi 13; Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico 2000) 18.

16 R.C. Culley, *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative* (SBLMS 3; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press 1976) 70.

In the first account, there is a change in the narration time: in the middle section, the action is slowing down, underscoring the importance of the event (vv. 50b-51).

The three verses in Acts 1:9-11 form a very dense narrative, and only a few exegetes proposed a division of this pericope. We divide it into three parts:

I. v. 9: the ascension – this verse is a complete description of the event;
II. v. 10: the setting of the discourse – the narrator introduces new characters and the context of the speech;
III. v.11: discourse – which presents the interpretation of the ascension.[17]

There is no plot in Acts 1:9-11. The narration time is close to the narrated time. Acts 1:10 is the first moment in the prologue (Acts 1:1-15) when the narration strategy changes and the *showing* is used. After a speech, the summary in vv. 12-14 is another instance of *showing*.

b) Time

This issue raised a long discussion in the scholarship.[18] Above all, it is to say that neither pericope gives a clear indication of the time of ascension. It opens the space for the question we will deal with in the next point when we ask why the narrator avoids giving concrete data for the event? And what is the influence of the preceding or following time references in the pericopes?

c) Place

"Places such as cities, villages, rivers, streams, wells, mountains or forests are mentioned frequently. These are usually mentioned as an integral part of the plot of the narratives."[19] The main question of v. 50 is: why did they leave Jerusalem? The narrator did not mention Bethpage or the Mount of Olives; why did he choose Bethany?[20] Considering the statement of D. Francois Tolmie: what is the contribution of *locus dramatis* to the plot?

Why did they leave Jerusalem in 24:50 to separate themselves? In Luke 24:50-53, Jesus treats Jerusalem in the same way as previously: it is a place of non-recognition, so the final recognition is elsewhere. In the ascension account, disciples recognize the Lordship of Jesus

17 Lohfink (*Himmelfahrt,* 158) divides the scene into: ascension, v. 9 and *Engelszene*, vv. 10-11. G. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*. I. *Einleitung. Kommentar zu Kapitel 1,1 – 8,40* (HThKNT 1; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder 1980) 204, calls vv. 10-11 a unity.

18 See the summary in Zwiep, *Ascension*, 186–192.

19 D.F. Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narrative. A Practical Guide* (Atlanta, GA: International Scholars Publications 1998) 107.

20 François Bovon (*Luke 3. A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2012] 410) explains the issue considering two accounts of ascension in Luke and Acts together. The Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12) gives a good explanation according to French exegete (which is the topic of Parousia associated with this hill). However, this solution gives only a partial answer to our questions. It does not explain why the narrator chose Bethany instead of the Mount of Olives or Bethpage. In Luke 24:50-53, it is very difficult to find any allusion to Parousia. So, the second question still remains: why did the narrator choose Bethany? Bovon's explanation: "Luke is simply concerned to use different expressions" does not reflect the author's awareness of the geography.

by the act of prostration. Moreover, Bethany resembles the joyful entrance to the temple in recognition of Jesus' kingship by the disciples (19:29-46). In this way, the contrast is evident: the disciples recognized the divinity of Jesus in Bethany and *not* in Jerusalem, which overlooked the time of its visitation. Bethany occurs only once before in Luke 19:29. Luke does not make the same use of traditional data in the scene of entry to Jerusalem as other synoptists.[21] Every synoptic Gospel mentions Bethpage and Bethany before the entrance (except for Matthew). Only Luke does not reference Bethany after the entrance before 24:50. For Matthew and Mark, Bethany is where Jesus spends the night (Matt 21:17; Mark 11:11-12) and where he was anointed (Matt 21:6; Mark 14:3). Luke mentions only the Mount of Olives and the temple as places of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (Luke does not recount any exit from or entry to Jerusalem).[22] In this perspective, the reader associates Bethany only with the glorious moment in 19:29. According to the standard division of the third Gospel,[23] Luke 19:29 begins the new section, which ends in 21:38. However, the Jerusalem ministry (19:29–21:38), the Passion narrative (22:1–23:56) and the resurrection narrative (24:1-53) centre around Jerusalem.

There are more similarities between Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and ascension than most scholars are willing to admit. In both cases, Jesus leads the way.[24] First, he and his disciples reach Bethany, and then they go to Jerusalem and to the temple. In the instance of the ascension, there are only disciples who return to the city. The second difference is that the entry to Jerusalem is mentioned explicitly. Nevertheless, the geography of the accounts is the same. Moreover, the attitude of the disciples[25] is almost entirely similar (noteworthy, verse 19:37 occurs only in the Lukan version):

19:37 τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν χαίροντες αἰνεῖν τὸν θεὸν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ	24:52 μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης
19:38 εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος	24:53 (αἰνοῦντες καὶ) εὐλογοῦντες τὸν θεόν

21 G.R. Lanier, "Luke's Distinctive Use of the Temple. Portraying the Divine Visitation," *JTS* 65/2 (2014) 444.

22 "Luca non parla di Gerusalemme: i due poli dello spazio occupato da Gesù sono il monte degli Ulivi (la notte) e il tempio (il giorno)." (J.-N. Aletti, *Il Gesù di Luca* [Bologna: EDB 2012] 138).

23 Infancy narrative (1:4–2:52), ministry preparation (3:1–4:13), Galilean ministry (4:14–9:50), travel narrative (9:51–19:28), Jerusalem ministry (19:29–21:38), passion narrative (22:1–23:56), resurrection narrative (24:1-53).

24 Parsons (*Departure,* 103–106) is very aware of the connection between both scenes. He notes that the setting, the cast of characters and the action are basically the same – the lack of Pharisees removes their conflict with Jesus. P. Atkins, "Luke's Ascension Location. A Note on Luke 24:50," *ExpTim* 109 (1997–1998) 205: "By showing that the departure and blessing of the disciples was at the same place as the entry into Jerusalem, Luke crowns the triumphal entry with the triumphal exit of Christ." Comparing triumphal entry with ascension as a triumphal exit, Atkins and Parsons go too far, in my opinion. It is a kind of "eisegesis," as John Nolland (*Luke 18,35–24,53* [WBC 35B; Dallas, TX: Word Books 1993] 1227) states.

25 In 19:37, there is a multitude of disciples. The ascension participants included the group of Eleven, two disciples from the Emmaus episode, the women who were at the tomb and maybe others.

The cast of characters is very similar, the setting and the action as well. The geography resembles Luke 19:29-48:[26] Jesus and the disciples move to Bethany and Jerusalem (in Luke 19, the entrance is implicitly described) and to the temple (only Jesus enters it). The movement is finished with the information about the presence of Jesus there: Καὶ ἦν διδάσκων τὸ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ (19:47). In the ascension scene in Luke, the disciples follow the same path. The theme is also very similar. In both stories, the disciples express their joy[27] and praise God. Both entrances to Jerusalem are scenes of recognising Jesus' messianic kingship and as a risen Lord. The return to Jerusalem can be explicitly mentioned in Luke 24:52 because Jesus transformed the significance of the city, and now it becomes the place where the mission begins. When the disciples return, they demonstrate their obedience to the words of Jesus in 24:47. The reference to the temple and the disciples' prayer seems to be a realization of Jesus' words in 19:46. A temple is no longer a place of sacrifice; it is a place of prayer. What Jesus has announced before regarding the temple's purpose[28] is realized now by the disciples. Luke does not depict Jesus praying in the temple. It is his teaching place, but he prays on the Mount of Olives. There is a general agreement among the scholars that Luke has a more positive comprehension of the temple than other evangelists.[29] It is a sign of a continuation; however, the ambiguous attitude towards it will be apparent also in Acts.[30]

The perspective sketched above makes it easier to understand why the narrator avoided using the Mount of Olives or Bethpage as a place of ascension. The last one is a settlement traditionally not connected with Jesus.[31] From the narrative point of view, it is a *hapax legomenon* in Luke-Acts having no important association for the implied reader. The Mount of Olives, on the contrary, is "overloaded" with meaning. First, due to the prophecy in Zech 14:1-5, it has an eschatological flavour, the topic the narrator develops from the beginning of the second volume (Acts 1:11-12). Luke 24:50-53 has no references to eschatology. In Luke's narration, the Mount of Olives is also where Jesus slept over during his Jerusalem ministry and a place of prayer and the last station before the arrest of Jesus. It is connected with Jesus (as a place of his sojourn and revelation as the eschatological king),[32] but Luke 24:50-53 focuses more on the disciples. Bethany is linked to both

26 Cf. H. Ganser-Kerperin, *Das Zeugnis des Tempels. Studien zur Bedeutung des Tempelmotivs im lukkanischen Doppelwerk* (Münster: Aschendorff 2000) 147.

27 For details, see P.J. Bernadicou, "The Lucan Theology of Joy," *ScEs* 25 (1973) 75–88.

28 Luke uses four terms to describe the temple. The one used here is ἱερόν which is "more theologically" neutral and refers to the whole complex of the temple; cf. N.H. Taylor, "The Jerusalem Temple in Luke-Acts," *HTS* 60 (2004) 482.

29 Cf. J.M. Dawsey, "The Origin of Luke's Positive Perception of the Temple," *PRSt* 18/1 (1981) 5–22.

30 Cf. J.H. Elliott, "Temple versus Household in Luke-Acts. A Contrast in Social Institutions," *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (ed. J.H. Neyrey) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 1991) 211–241. From the very beginning of the Lukan account, the temple was a temporal institution: A. Casalegno, *Gesù e il tempio. Studio redazionale su Luca-Atti* (Brescia: Morcelliana 1984) 222.

31 Cf. J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1969) 90–91.

32 Cf. Ganser-Kerperin, *Zeugnis,* 152.

Jesus and the disciples, so the choice of Bethany and no reference to the Mount of Olives is a subtle hint that the narrative focuses more on the attitude of Jesus' followers.

The place references in the ascension scenes do not stay in contradiction with each other. The Mount of Olives in Acts 1:12 gives us information about the place from which disciples came. However, it would be striking that the location of the action is disclosed after its conclusion. If it is the case here, it would be a unique example in the Lukan work. It is not written that the ascension took place on the mountain. The Mount of Olives as a place where the ascension happened is at least not stressed by the narrator, who plays the role of mediator between the narrative world and the audience. It is possible that the disciples moved on from the place of ascension (it could be, of course, Bethany) to the Mount of Olives and then to Jerusalem. This scenario is not ruled out by the narrator, who is apparently not interested in giving clear information about where the ascension took place. Furthermore, the Mount of Olives has an eschatological meaning in Jewish belief and is connected with Jerusalem in the narrative (mentioned twice in v. 12). The place of the two "ascensions" can be the same; however, the difference is that in Luke, the narrator mentions the name Bethany explicitly (linking it to 19:28) before the event. Still, the Mount of Olives (which has eschatological connotations) is named after the scene.

d) Action

The itinerary of the characters is almost the same: Jesus goes from the place close to Bethany and to the Mount of Olives to heaven in both stories, and the disciples move to Jerusalem. We disagree with Mikael C. Parsons that the purpose of returning to the city differs in the accounts significantly.[33] Praying and praising are semantically similar. Moreover, after the ascension, the disciples form a community ready to carry on the Jesus given mission in both stories. However, the community description in Acts is far more detailed and forms a separate scene. The differences of significance to the action are the blessing and prostration (Luke) and the appearance and discourse of two men (Acts).

e) Characters

The characters are the same in both stories (Jesus and disciples),[34] with the exception of the two men in white clothes. Surprisingly, characters are described only by the use of personal pronouns in both stories except for Acts 1:10-11, where the narrator calls the newcomers "two men," and in their discourse, the disciples are named "Men of Galilee" and the only name mentioned is Jesus. He is a protagonist in both stories; however, the disciples are more than observers or a foil. In fact, they are at the centre of the narrator's focus. They remain on the stage, and even the biography of Jesus in Luke ends in this way. In both stories, the narrator recounts the inner life of the disciples using only *showing* – "the great joy"

33 Parsons, *Departure,* 194.

34 Although some try to enumerate the list of *dramatis personæ*, we agree with Frei's principle that the narrator mentions only the disciples as a whole.

(Luke 24:52) and "they were looking intently up into the sky as he was going" (Acts 1:10). The presence of two men creates a link commonly acknowledged in the scholarship between the first and last Jesus' post-Eastern appearance:[35]

Luke 24:4-9	**Acts 1:10-12**
καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτάς… καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο ἐπέστησαν αὐταῖς ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ… εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς τί ζητεῖτε… οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη… Καὶ ὑποστρέψασαι ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου…	καὶ ὡς ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν… καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο παρειστήκεισαν αὐτοῖς ἐν ἐσθήσεσι λευκαῖς οἳ καὶ εἶπαν… τί ἑστήκατε… οὗτος ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀναλημφθείς… Τότε ὑπέστρεψαν… ἀπὸ ὄρους.

It is, however, surprising that Gerhard Lohfink (like Arie W. Zwiep) does not notice the occurrence of 'Galilee' in both discourses. Another connection is in the number of men. Usually, one angel appears in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:11, 26; 2:9; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3, 30; 11:3; 12:7, 23).

The ascension description in v. 9 fits the resurrection-exaltation scheme and has its continuance in Acts 2:33; 5:31, as observed by the scholars.[36] However, we do not insist on this dimension of the text. Resurrection is already "enough"; all theories which try to stabilize the necessity of the ascension diminish the meaning of the resurrection.[37] Moreover, these concepts create also unsolvable problems like where was Jesus after his resurrection before entering heaven? Lohfink and Zwiep[38] made bizarre suggestions trying to answer this question: "Offensichtlich befand sich Jesus – dem Verständnis des Lukas zufolge – während der vierzig Tage nach Ostern noch nicht im Himmel, sondern in einer Art Zwischenzustand, in dem er zwar verklärt, aber noch nicht erhöht war"; "The underlying thought seems to be that the appearances are temporary manifestations of the risen Jesus to his followers, after which he withdrew himself again to some hidden place on earth."

f) Focalization

The ascension in Luke possesses the external focalization; in Acts, there is an internal one. In Luke, the disciples know more than the reader, so that begs the question: why do

35 Cfr. Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 196.

36 D. Marguerat, *Risurrezione. Un percorso di vita* (Torino: Claudiana 2003) 9–24. The author distinguishes three types of language describing the resurrection in ancient church: *il linguaggio del risveglio, dell'esaltazione, della vita.*

37 Joseph A. Fitzmyer ("The Ascension of Christ and Pentecost," *TS* 45 [1984] 413, 422) points out that in Luke 24, Jesus is already exalted (v. 26). Moreover, other NT passages about Christ's glory do not mention ascension: Rom 6:4; 1 Thess 1:10; Rev 1:12-18; 3:21b; 6:1b-7; 7:17.

38 Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 274; Zwiep, *Ascension,* 133.

not we have access to the deep inner life of the disciples? Acts 1:10 is, on the other hand, the first moment when the internal focalization begins. Luke 24:50-53 does not contain any words of characters, and Acts 1:11 contains a direct speech. What kind of experience is the narrator trying to transmit in the second ascension scene?

g) Literary Genre

Considering the differences, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the affinities between the two passages are fundamental. The main point they share in common is the literary genre of rapture, despite some modifications. We have to pay tribute to Lohfink's powerful dissertation by considering the genre of Luke 24:50-53 and answering why the author applied it to the book's final scene.[39] Two genres in ancient literature were used to describe a famous person's death: *rapture* and *journey of the soul*. The latter is defined by the following elements: a) the *psyche* separated from the body; b) the focus is on the journey's progression; c) the human witnesses are absent because the story is told from the perspective of a raptured person. Rapture, on the other hand, has different features: a) it is not focused on the journey but *a quo* and *ad quem*, so it marks a dividing line between two periods; b) it is narrated from an "earthly" perspective which does not necessarily mean that there are some witnesses, but they are often present; c) there is no body/soul division; d) it is God who takes the person to heaven; he is quite often explicitly mentioned, or the author uses divine passive form – this creates another difference: in *Himmelsreise* a soul follows his divine nature, but rapture is an exceptional event.

Zwiep's contribution to the rapture genre is not to be overlooked. Firstly, Zwiep's point is that the choice of rapture stresses God's initiative in all that had happened to Jesus.[40] The second inference comes from the fact that the German scholar is more mindful of the Jewish tradition. In this perspective, the rapture in Luke 24, having an analogy to the Elijah cycle, underlines the task of Jesus in the future – Parousia. In this way, the ascension in Luke prepares for an eschatological second coming of the Messiah, which is developed explicitly in Acts 1:11. The perspective of the "task" of Jesus is more plausible to apply to the narrative than the resurrection-exaltation scheme, which was a subject of great attention in scholarship for many years. The mentioning of heaven as the place of Jesus' sojourn is worth considering.[41] It is not only a place of exaltation but also a counterpart to earth. It fits the Elijah typology: Jesus has a "new" task, a new role. He assured the disciples after the resurrection about his presence, but it was a different type of presence than before. Jesus in heaven is separated from the disciples who begin their task on earth.

39 The classification of the genre is Lohfink's great contribution to the study about ascension (*Himmelfahrt*, 32–70). Nevertheless, Zwiep (*Ascension,* 38) demonstrates that Lohfink has underestimated the possible influence of Jewish rapture tradition, especially from the "intertestamental" literature. See the review of OT rapture stories: A. Schmitt, *Entrückung, Aufnahme, Himmelfahrt. Untersuchungen zu einem Verstellungsbereich im Alten Testament* (FB 10; Stuttgart: KBW 1973); Mihoc, *Ascension,* 18–45.

40 Zwiep, *Ascension,* 181.

41 Cf. Sleeman, *Geography,* 88.

Religionsgeschitchliche analysis helps answer the question: why did Luke choose the rapture genre to put in the middle of his narrative? We noted in the introduction that resurrection and rapture are somewhat more competitive than complementary because the resurrected person does not need ascension, and an ascended person does not need resurrection. Nevertheless, the rapture fits the narrative goal of Luke-Acts very well. As we have seen, the narration focuses on the disciples, which matches the requirements of the rapture genre. The whole of chapter 24 describes the change of the disciples from the frustration after the death on the cross to the recognition of Jesus as Messiah. The rapture genre helps shift the Lukan camera's eye to the disciples, who have a demanding role to play in the second volume. This is why the other evangelists end their Gospels in a different way. By using the "concept" of ascension, Luke has closed (maybe historicized) the time of the disciples' preparation for the mission and, at the same time, the process of full recognition of what the death and resurrection meant for them.[42] It was necessary because the event of the resurrection itself has no witnesses. Ascension in Luke fits the Elijah-Elisha typology and prepares the disciples (and the reader) for the outpouring of the Spirit. The rapture of Jesus, like that of Elijah, is a sign of continuity between Jesus and his followers. Jean Louis Ska helps us to understand the profound meaning of the departure of Elijah:

> In altre parole, Eliseo diventa profeta quando Elia non sarà più di questo mondo. In qualche modo, si può dire che Elia deve sparire per permettere a Eliseo di crescere, di maturare e di acquistare la vera statura del profeta [...] Rimarrà una solo cosa da fare per raggiungere Elia: diventare Elia, fare le sue veci, continuare il suo mandato e le sue lotte.[43]

Moreover, in 2 Kgs 2:10, Elijah explicitly presents the condition: You have asked a difficult thing, yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours – otherwise not (NIB). Luke's narrative strategy is a brilliant example of how the choice of literary genre serves to convey the message. The genre of rapture was picked up because of the disciples.[44] This is why the other evangelists do not include ascension[45] scenes in their Gospels to the extent as Luke did: they are not concerned with writing the story of the disciples. The resurrection was an event without any witness, but the ascension gave an opportunity to present Jesus' followers as authoritative continuators of his mission.[46] The departure of Jesus is a *terminus*

42 Cf. Aletti, *Gesù,* 189–210, where the author analysis the Christology of Luke 24. Jesus invites his disciples to understand the Scriptures and itinerary they have made together. However, the narrator does not give any details of this process and teaching, so the reader has to wait for them and the book of Acts. From now on, the disciples' teaching has the same authority as Jesus' one.

43 J.L. Ska, "Morire e risorgere: il carro di fuoco (2Re 2,11)," J.L. Ska, *Una goccia d'inchiostro. Finestre sul panorama biblico* (Bologna: EDB 2008) 221.

44 Lohfink (*Himmelfahrt,* 57–58) states that in 2 Kgs 2:1-18, it is Elisha who stays in the centre of the story. The crucial argument is the receiving of the cloak and, above all, the story belongs to the Elisha cycle.

45 We pass over in this study the second ending of Mark, which is an interpolation from the second century CE.

46 Bruce M. Metzger ("The Meaning of Christ's Ascension," *Search the Scriptures. New Testament Studies in Honor of Raymond T. Stamm* [eds. J.M. Myers – O. Reimherr – H.N. Bream] [Leiden: Brill 1969] 128) states that ascension follows the logic of bodily resurrection. It is rather a mere theological deliberation since we do not have in the text any allusion to bodily dimension of Jesus' departure. Even the fact that Jesus eats a fish

a quo, so from now on, the disciples can begin acting like Jesus. The ascension is a clear sign: from now on, the only possible access to the Son of God is given by the mediation of the disciples; through them, Jesus himself is acting. Jesus has not left any traces of his person: no tomb, no body. He resides in heaven, so the only way to find him on earth is to meet the disciples. As Jean-Noël Aletti states: "negli Atti, dopo l'ascensione, la cristologia è interamente affidata agli apostoli [...] negli atti, Dio non impone mai ai discepoli il contenuto della loro testimonianza."[47] The ascension is put in the middle of the Lukan work because it creates an equality sign between Jesus and his followers.

h) Uniqueness of the Scene

The unique character of Luke 24:50-53 is the transformation. Firstly, Jesus is taken to heaven and begins his "new" task because the revelation of his divinity and the post-resurrection formation of the disciples has come to an end; the disciples are changed from the disorganized and scared group into the community that praises God and waits for a mission because they finally recognize the living Jesus. The relationship between him and his followers comes into a new stage: they are separated. Jerusalem is no longer the place of Jesus' rejection and non-recognition but the place of the mission that will soon begin. The temple finally becomes a place of worship according to Jesus' words. The attitude of the disciples, their joy and praise, have a different reason than in 19:37 and come from the experience that the risen Lord is with them. It also answers why the ascension happened outside Jerusalem and why they left the city. From a narrative point of view, it helps to create a new entrance, a new beginning. Luke uses the topic of return many times. In chapter 24, previous encounters with Jesus were concluded similarly (v. 9; v. 33). Elisha has returned after Elijah's departure as well in 2 Kgs 2:12-14. Everything is changed and set for new action in the second volume.

Where is the uniqueness of Acts 1:9-11 to be found? It is definitely the topic of Parousia. The ascension is briefly recounted to underline the message of Jesus' second coming, which is equally important for both the characters and the reader. From this perspective, verse 12 is correlated with the ascension and Parousia. After the discourse of the two men, the vicinity of the Mount of Olives became a place not only of Jesus' departure but also his return. The reader, along with the characters, is in the same situation: after Jesus' ascension and before his coming; the disciples have returned from the Mount of Olives (which was a place of farewell) to carry on the mission and to expect the revelation of the Mount of Olives as a venue of Parousia in the indefinite future. According to Luke 21:27, the cloud, the aspect of seeing and the use of the verb ἔρχομαι have an eschatological dimension so that both the topic of the scene and the vocabulary create the sense of Jesus' second coming. The direct reference to the Elijah typology in v. 11 (ἀναλαμβάνω) strengthens the eschatological

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(24:42) is not proof of Jesus' new, "transformed" body but simply evidence that he is really alive. Girl, resurrected by Jesus, does the same in 8:55.

47 Aletti, *Gesù,* 220.

expectations. In the end: "The ascension is a Parousia in reverse (he leaves now on a cloud that must bring him back). It constitutes a warning: the church must avoid all false hope and positively use the delay accorded for mission."[48]

2. Complementarity of Ascension Accounts

We will proceed in the following way: first, the fundamental meaning and unity of the ascension accounts are to stabilize; that is more important than the differences. To describe the general purpose of the narrative, it is better to use universal analysis tools for literary genre or to analyse them from their positions in the entire narrative. More concrete and detailed analysis tools, as enumerated above, will help answer the meaning of the differences between the two accounts.[49] In this perspective, the context of the scenes plays a crucial role because the differences between the two could be easily noticed in close reading. Still, to comprehend their meaning correctly, it is necessary to consider the context of the chapters firstly and then, more importantly, the references to other parts of the narrative (like in the case of the first ascension account – the correlation to Luke 19:29-48 and the connection to Luke 24:1-12 in the second account).

2.1. The Unity of Ascension Accounts

Parsons enumerates eight functions of redundancy in Luke-Acts:[50] 1) it combats the tendency to forget information over an extended narrative; 2) it is a means of emphasis; 3) it has a persuasive effect; 4) it allows for character development; 5) it confirms expectations reached through the reading process; 6) it allows changes in the pattern to be noted; 7) it provides a sense of unity in the narrative; 8) it encourages interaction among the characters and events in the reading process. Points 6) and 7) are applicable to the repetition of ascension.

As the very first scheme helpful in harmonizing the two ascension accounts, we will consider the following opposition: continuity and discontinuity. We take this inspiration from Bovon's reflection; however, we do not share his argument that the ascension in Luke expresses continuity with the preceding narrative and a discontinuity in Acts. He does not give compelling arguments for this sharp contrast.[51] According to our previous narrative analysis, we pointed out that the choice of rapture genre and particularly the reference to

48 F. Bovon, *Luke the Theologian. Fifty-five Years of Research (1955–2005)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2005) 200.

49 This analysis method has some points in common with Parsons' strategy, which also recognizes the value of variation in the concept of circularity. However, Parsons' study is very theoretical, and it seems that the theory about the text prevails upon the text itself. The sign of it is that the deliberation about theoretical issues occupies a large part of his paper.

50 Parsons, *Departure,* 198. Cf. R.C. Tannehill, "The Composition of Acts 3–5. Narrative Development and Echo Effect," *SBL 1984 Seminar Papers* (ed. K.H. Richards) (Chico, CA: Scholars Press 1984) 217–240.

51 Bovon, "Ascension Stories," 583.

Elijah-Elisha typology make the ascension equalize the accomplished ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the disciples to come. This is what Parsons articulated: "by repeating the ascension in Acts, the narrator has identified the story of Jesus with the story of the Church," with the exception that this effect is not achieved only through the repetition of the events but also by choice of literary genre and the typology.[52] This equals sign between the mission of Jesus in Luke and disciples in Acts, creates a continuity on the one hand but the other marks a discontinuity because the nature of the mission in Acts will be different:

Elements of:	**continuity**	**discontinuity**
Luke 24:50-53	1) The motif of the journey in v. 50a, which resembles the travel to Jerusalem and gives the sense that this journey is also another stage of Jesus' plan, 2) the blessing – the sign of the continued presence of Jesus with disciples given before the beginning of their mission, 3) the prostration as a sign of the recognition that Jesus is alive.	1) The ascension itself, especially because of its description: Jesus parted from disciples and was carried to heaven.
Acts 1:9-11	1) The use of πορεύομαι in vv. 10-11, which assembles the motif of Jesus' journey with disciples also taking the time to come, another stage of Jesus' teaching pedagogy, 2) "Men of Galilee," which refers to the beginning of the Gospel.	1) The ascension itself because of the cloud motif which separates the characters and the mentioning of heaven as a counterpart of the earth, 2) the assertion in the discourse that Jesus will not be back until the Parousia.

It is not to overlook that the Elijah typology creates the strict unity of a continuation and a separation. However, the scheme mentioned above does not explain all the differences and discrepancies between the two accounts. Some exegetes tend to see the ascension in Luke as a "departure" and the one in Acts as a "glorification."[53] However, when we consider the uniqueness of the accounts, it is very difficult to find arguments supporting this view. Both stories describe the departure. Mihoc states that the second account assures the reader about "Christ's heavenly status." However, was it necessary after the resurrection to confirm it? The context of the prologue does not favour this option. Another explanation is given by Josef Zmijewski, who perceives the ascension in Luke as a farewell (*Abschied*) and a beginning in Acts because it is more oriented to the future.[54] This position is problematic because Acts 1:9-11 also references the past, and the real beginning of the mission will be

52 Parsons, *Departure,* 192.

53 Mihoc, *Ascension,* 78.

54 J. Zmijewski, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (RNT 5; Regensburg: Pustet 1994) 69.

at Pentecost. The combination expressed in German is closer to our position: *Abschied-Abschluss* (farewell-ending).

We present a different argument to explain the discrepancies between the accounts. The rapture genre was chosen because of the disciples, whose story develops in the second volume. The other evangelists are not interested in the ascension event because they do not describe the fate of Jesus' followers. Ascension is an equals sign between the biography of Jesus and the story of the disciples because of two reasons: they recognized Jesus as a living person among them after his death (the ascension in Luke), and he prepared them to carry on the mission which he himself destined for them because they became authoritative witnesses (to the ascension in Acts). So, the key differences can be summarized as follows: recognition – Luke and witnessing – Acts.

2.2. Peculiarity of Luke 24:50-53

Based on the comparison made above, we will try to perceive the differences between the two versions of the events and the particularities of the first ascension account in the light of the recognition of the disciples that Jesus is alive among them.

a) Chronology

The first striking and long-debated difference[55] in the chronology is explained in light of the scheme of recognition. Many authors have tried to explain this problem. Some pointed out that the number 40 has a symbolic value and gives a sense of preparation. However, the scholars do not ask what effect the time references in chapter 24 could have on the ascension account. There are six references to time in Luke 24 (vv. 17, 13, 21, 29, 33). It is very difficult to argue that there is a moment of ellipsis in chapter 24. The narrative time encompasses one day from daybreak to evening.[56] From the previous narrative, the reader knows that it is a very special day, the first of the week, the day of a completely new beginning already announced in 9:22 and 18:33. As Robert C. Tannehill states: "Luke 24 must be understood as a continuous series of interrelated events, not as separate pericopes that can be adequately understood in isolation."[57] Chapter 24 describes the process of recognizing Jesus. The one day of narration corresponds to "one" recognition. It stresses the unity of the process; meanwhile, the number forty offers a better frame for the preparation time. The recognition process is unified and contains the moment of doubts, the personal encounter of Jesus and the public one that ended with the final collective recognition in v. 52.

55 See a summary in H.J. De Jonge, "The Chronology of the Ascension Stories in Luke and Acts," *NTS* 59/2 (2013) 153–158. The author itself tries to present the theory that Acts 1:3 refers to 40 days of apparition after ascension. In this way, Acts 1:9 is not a rapture story but just the closure of appearances. In my opinion, the author makes too much of the meaning of v. 3. Moreover, it is enough to say against his position that 40 days can have symbolic value.

56 [In Luke 24:50-52] "the reader has the impression that we are still on the day of Easter"; Bovon, "Ascension Stories," 577. Henk J. De Jonge ("Chronology," 152–153) presents the position of minority of scholars who claim that it is not possible that just one day could contain such a multitude of events.

57 R.C. Tannehill, *Luke* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 1996) 349.

b) Prostration

The main point of prostration is the recognition of Jesus' divinity. The gesture of the soundless raising of Jesus' hands finds its correlative element in the speechless recognition of his divinity. Aletti stresses the meaning of this type of recognition in Luke 23.[58] Individuals express in direct speech what they recognized, but communal recognitions (23:27; 23:48) are narrated in *showing*. The communal recognition of the disciples in Luke 23 is lacking. In Luke 24, Jesus proves that he is alive; however, the narrator seems to avoid the description of his communal recognition consciously. In 24:41, there is no full recognition, but the reader could suppose that after eating the fish, all doubts should be resolved. However, the final communal recognition is explicitly recounted only in 24:52a.

c) Plot and the Uniqueness of the Account

The ascension scene in Luke presents the plot of resolution and revelation and forms the larger plot's ending. Matteo Crimella expressed the tension in the narrative:

> The narrator recounts in such a way that there is a progression in the encounter with the risen Jesus. Everything takes place in the polarity between absence and presence. The one whom the women seek is absent; he is present but not identified by the two disciples of Emmaus, and he is only recognized when he has become invisible to their eyes; finally, the Eleven and the others meet him, see him, are invited to offer him something to eat.[59]

The play of Jesus' absence and presence and his appearance and disappearance create the tension around whether the disciples are really able to recognize the new post-resurrection status of Jesus.[60] After the first scene (24:1-12), which is the exposition to the plot of Luke 24, the reader asks: will the disciples meet and recognize the risen Jesus? Will they surpass their unbelief (v. 11)? The complete answer to those questions is given only in Luke 24:50-53. After the ascension, the situation is the same as before Chapter 24: Jesus is gone. However, the main difference caused by the ascension is not seen in the new "heavenly status" of Jesus (because the resurrection itself is already enough) but in the disciples' consciousness. In fact, they remain on the stage in Luke 24:53. The uniqueness of the account, which is the character of change, stresses the meaning of this transformation. They have recognized Jesus, but to access the content of their new awareness, we have to wait for their preaching in Acts.

d) Place

Some scholars see the contradiction between the placement of the two ascension accounts. As we pointed out, there is no inconsistency at this point. Bethany seems to be a reference to Luke 19:29. Passage 19:28-48 has a lot in common with 24:50-53: in both instances,

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58 J.-N. Aletti, *Gesù: una vita da raccontare. Il genere letterario dei vangeli di Matteo, Marco e Luca* (Roma: GBPress 2017) 104–105.

59 M. Crimella, "The Transformation of Characters in Lk 24. A Narrative Investigation," *RB* 119 (2012) 3.

60 This play is very well visible in the Emmaus pericope, see Marguerat – Bourquin, *Per leggere,* 62–63.

Jesus leads the way; the disciples follow the same itinerary – from Bethany to Jerusalem and to the temple. The setting, characters and movement are the same, but the main point of comparison is in the disciples' attitude. They are joyous and recognize Jesus' identity. The general significance of the scene – the recognition of Jesus as the king of Israel –matches the final recognition of Jesus after his death in the ascension scene.

e) Blessing

This element ends the biography of Jesus in the Lukan Gospel. Many scholars consider the blessing of Jesus as a priestly service because of a parallel to Sir 50:20-21.[61] However, the liturgical context of the action is only a supposition: the place is far from the sacred place, and there is no liturgy. Moreover, the narrative favours the connection with non-priestly blessings, especially with the father's last blessing. The blessing itself has a long biblical tradition (Gen 1 when God blessed the creatures; Gen 9:1 God blessed Noah and Abraham in Gen 12:1-3). In a few instances, the blessing is connected with a mission or even reveals the destiny of the blessed person (Gen 49). It is the case in Luke 24 when Jesus blesses the disciples after giving his last instructions. The event happened at the end of Jesus' earthly life, not at the end of a liturgy. Johannes Munck has enumerated the features of the parting scene: 1) prior farewell speech; 2) warning of obeying or disobeying the teaching; 3) (less frequent) an account of life; 4) prophecy regarding the future; 5) a meal before departure.[62] The context of chapter 24 fits those features. Moreover, the motif of blessing can belong to the Jewish type of rapture genre. Enoch was asked to bless the people before his departure in *2 En.* 64:4, and he blessed his children and the elders in 57:2 before he was taken away.[63] We consider the blessing a sign of Jesus' presence and confirmation of his previous words. From this perspective, it is evident that the blessing could not be present in the second ascension account.

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61 Andrews G. Mekkattukunnel (*The Priestly Blessing of the Risen Christ. An Exegetico-Theological Analysis of Luke 24,50-53* [Europäische Hochschulschriften 23/714; Bern: Lang 2001] 62) claims that another argument is a reference to 2:34 where Simeon blessed the parents of Jesus. The author assumes that Simeon was a priest– contra: F. Bovon, *Luke 1. A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2005) 100. Other arguments are not decisive: like the statement that blessing was a priestly prerogative in OT; (there are non-priestly blessings as well). Even more difficult association to accept is the analogy to Moses, who raised his hands during the fight against Amalek in Exod 17:11. This proposal does not take into consideration the narrative context of the Gospel at all. Cfr. L.T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP 3; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1991) 403; D. Hamm, "The Tamid Service in Luke-Acts. The Cultic Background behind Luke's Theology of Worship (Luke 1:5-25; 18:9-14; 24:50-53; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30)," *CBQ* 65 (2003) 218–220.

62 J. Munck, "Discours d'adieu dans le Nouveau Testament et dans la littérature biblique," *Aux sources de la tradition chrétienne. Mélanges offerts à M. Maurice Goguel* (ed. P. Benoit) (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé 1950) 155–170; cf. J.F. Maile, "The Ascension in Luke-Acts," *TynBul* 37 (1986) 43–44.

63 G. Friedrich, "Lk 9,51 und die Entrückungschristologie des Lukas," *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Sinoptiker* (eds. P. Hoffmann – N. Brox – W. Pesch) (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder 1973) 58–59. The author sees also the correlation to 2 Kgs 2:9. Gerhard Friedrich neglects the possible references to Sir 50 and explains the motifs in the light of rapture terminology.

Tannehill summarizes chapter 24 in the following way: "the resurrection narrative tells how disciples who previously could not understand Jesus' prophecies of death and resurrection (cf. 9:44-45; 18:31-34) not only encounter the risen Messiah but also finally come to understand when instructed by Jesus, the ironic way that God's purpose is being achieved through the rejection and death of the Messiah."[64] The disciples will be witnesses of the resurrection, but the interval between this event and the ascension was necessary to fully recognize the meaning of Jesus' death.

2.3. Peculiarity of Acts 1:9-11

The second ascension account is not just a simple repetition of the first one. The context of the prologue is crucial to understand the account properly. The main characterization of the disciples is that they are prepared to carry on the mission, which purpose is witnessing.

a) Chronology

The 40-day span is the most striking difference between the two ascension scenes. Sejin J. Park summarizes the traditional data about the duration of the period of time between the resurrection and ascension:

> Tertullian (Apol. 21) follows Acts 1,3 in attesting forty days. However, the Ethiopic Epistula Apostolorum 18 (29) identifies the Resurrection day itself as the day of Ascension (cf. Epistle of Barnabas 15,8; Aristides, Apology 2; Gospel of Peter 35–42). Irenaeus says that some Gnostic groups believed that Jesus talked with his followers for 18 months after his resurrection (Adv. haer. I 1.5; 28.7). Similarly, the Ethiopic version of the Ascension of Isaiah 9:16 has Jesus ascending 545 days (approximately 18 months) after his Resurrection, while the Apocryphon of James 2,19-24 has it as 550 days after the Resurrection. Finally, Pistis Sophia 1.1 has Jesus staying for eleven years after his resurrection before he ascends to heaven.[65]

This makes the question even more intriguing: why did Luke choose the forty-day span? There are many convincing answers provided in the history of the survey about the ascension. Firstly, the number forty is connected not with the ascension pericope but it is a period of time of appearances and of teaching about the kingdom of God (1:3).[66] Number 40 is deeply rooted in the biblical tradition as the time (Lohfink calls it "sacred" time) necessary for preparation.[67] Jesus was tempted in the desert for 40 days in Luke 3:22. Zwiep notes: "in rabbinic sources, learning and teaching 40 times suggests reliable instruction."[68] Baruch, before his departure, taught the people and then, after 40 days, was taken

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64 Tannehill, *Luke,* 349.

65 S.J. Park, *Pentecost and Sinai. The Festival of Weeks as a Celebration of the Sinai Event* (LHBOTS 342; London: Clark 2008) 206.

66 Cf. Parsons, *Departure,* 194; Zwiep, *Ascension*, 97.

67 Lohfink (*Himmelfahrt,* 176–186) makes careful analysis of the occurrences of symbolic numbers in the Bible; see also: Mihoc, *Ascension,* 80.

68 Zwiep (*Ascension*, 99) notes also that there is no parallel to 40 day-span in the Hellenistic rapture stories.

away.[69] James D.G. Dunn gives another explanation: "the explanation that the tradition of the first Pentecost was already sufficiently established– that is, of the first great experience of the Spirit in collective Christian memory, as having happened on the next pilgrim feast (Pentecost). Forty days would be the next round number before fifty."[70] Joseph A. Fitzmyer notes that the number fifty associated with Pentecost is more important than the 40-day span.[71] Another reason or maybe consequence for defining the exact period of time is that the experience of Paul in Damascus differs from the experiences of the apostles.[72] All of these answers are valid and fruitful. From our perspective, it is to stress the connection with the core of Acts 1:9-11. This bond is expressed by Zwiep: "The function of the forty days of instruction is clearly related to the role of the apostles as eyewitnesses."[73] In the second ascension account, the disciples are presented as witnesses. The number forty reinforces their reliability. After Luke 24, the reader could ask: "ok, they have recognized Jesus, but are they really prepared for the mission, for witnessing (24:48)?" Luke 24 recounts just one day which could give rise to doubts about the disciples' competence. Forty days assures us that they have enough time to be fully instructed and to see Jesus alive after his death. It dispels all doubts that what happened was only an illusion. Those doubts could have emerged while reading chapter 24.

b) The Analogy to Luke 24:1-12

From this perspective that the disciples were "in need" of the time of preparation, the analogy to the beginning of post-resurrection time is convincing. We do not share Parsons' suggestion that this link expresses the unity of the ascension and the resurrection.[74] It forms a framework for the period of apostolic instruction. The process which began with the discovery of the empty tomb, ends with the ascension. In this way, the sudden appearance of the two newcomers is a comprehensible modification of Luke 24,50-53. The accent of the narrative is put not on the process of recognition but on the preparation and teaching for the witnessing. This aspect plays an important role in Acts.[75]

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69 Friedrich, "Lk 9,51," 64.

70 J.D.G. Dunn, "The Ascension of Jesus. A Test Case for Hermeneutics," *Auferstehung – Resurrection* (eds. F. Avemarie – H. Lichtenberger) (WUNT 135; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2001) 303.

71 Fitzmyer, "Ascension," 437.

72 However, the issue seems to be more complex: G. O'Collins, "Luke on the Closing of the Easter Appearances," *Luke and Acts* (eds. G. O'Collins – G. Marconi) (New York: Paulist Press 1991) 162–165.

73 Zwiep, *Ascension*, 173. De Jonge, "Chronology," 160, states: "In Luke's view, this instruction makes the apostles reliable teachers of the Church, authorized guardians of the truth, and an effective tool against deviant ideas." James D.G. Dunn ("Ascension," 305) argues that Luke restricts "apostle-making appearances" to forty days in order to limit the number of reliable apostles.

74 Parsons, *Departure,* 193.

75 For details see, for instance, A. Landi, *La testimonianza necessaria. Paolo testimone della salvezza universale a Roma in At 28,16-31* (AnBib 210; Roma: GBPress 2015) chap. I.

c) Uniqueness of the Account – Ending and Beginning

It refers to the beginning of Jesus' ministry (and of the disciples' learning) in the discourse of the two men (Galilee). The whole pericope assembles at the beginning of post-resurrection time (Luke 14:1-12). On the other hand, mentioning Parousia marks the end of another period. It is now the time that Jesus will work through the disciples and the Holy Spirit. The "seeing" aspect renders the disciples reliable witnesses and forms a summary of their preparation time. According to Luke 21:27, this aspect is correlated with eschatological expectations. Witnessing is an important feature of being an apostle (Acts 1:22). In this passage, the apostles are witnesses of the resurrection. Still, it is necessary to be present during Jesus' ascension to give this testimony. Hence, the time between the resurrection and the ascension is indispensable for the apostles and the growing church.

d) Place

The Mount of Olives matches the eschatological context of the pericope. The narrator lets the newcomers announce the Parousia and confirms this aspect of the narrative after it by mentioning a place of "eschatological" significance. The return from the Mount of Olives creates this sense that it is a new stage of salvation; the disciples have to come back from the ascension place and do not expect Jesus to return suddenly. They have to carry on his mission and expect the Holy Spirit. From previous dialogue with Jesus vv. 4-8, the disciples know that Pentecost does not mean the end of a time but the beginning of a new phase. The geography is quite astonishing: in Luke 24:1-12, which creates a clear link to Acts 1:9-11, we are close to the tomb, so the place under the earth; in the ascension scene, Jesus goes to heaven and then the disciples went down from the mountain, the place closer to heaven, to carry on the mission on earth.[76]

e) *Showing* and Internal Focalization

Verse 10 is written in *showing*. In this way, the disciples and the reader are waiting for the next great event to come: Pentecost. This internal focalization strengthens the effect described in the previous point: the disciples are fully prepared to be witnesses. Starting in v. 10 through the summary in vv. 12-14 and the election of Mattia in vv. 15-26, the narrator conveys a great sense of expectation.

Conclusions

This study presents a synchronic approach to the text and therefore does not delve into the details of interpolation theories which attempt to explain the discrepancies between

76 Crimella, "Transformation," 5: "So if the development of overlapped scenes leads Jesus, the hero of the macro-unit who goes from the tomb (under the earth), the place of death, to heaven (above the earth), the place of glory, passing by way of the earth (the place of the living), the path of the human characters must follow the same stages." However, the author refers to this reflection only in chapter 24 of Luke.

the two ascension accounts. Rather, we think that Luke is a gifted writer and a good storyteller who is able to modulate received patterns in order to convey his own message by writing down the story of Jesus and his followers. In doing so, we did not want to minimize the differences between the two accounts. On the contrary, we fully appreciated them in order to comprehend the author's narrative strategy of providing alternative accounts of one event which is repeated twice in a very particular place– in the middle of his great project.

The explanation of the ascension presented in this study provides a clear answer to the question: why is Luke the only evangelist who recounts the story of Jesus' departure? The reason can be found in the second volume of his work: because of the disciples. Other evangelists do not narrate this event because they are not interested in writing the story about the disciples. The resurrection itself is enough and constitutes a "sufficient" content of the kerygma. However, the disciples "need" the time between the resurrection and the ascension because they have to recognize Jesus' new status and be prepared to carry on the mission. Acts 1:22 provides a good argument for this thesis: the choice of the new apostles will depend on whether they witnessed the resurrection and whether they accompanied Christ since the baptism until the day of ascension. Luke's choice to put the story into the rapture genre matches this observation. One of the features of this genre is the presence of witnesses who guarantee that the person is really gone because there is no sign, no tomb, no body to offer proof that they are no longer on earth. There is no witness to the resurrection event itself. Moreover, Elijah-Elisha typology (which is another exquisite model applied by Luke) enriches the rapture genre by highlighting that the ministry of disciples will be at the same level of importance as the ministry of Jesus. There is a continuity. As we have considered before, the ascension of Christ presents the radical discontinuity between Jesus and the disciples, but it is also a sign of continuity. The references to the journey previously made to Jerusalem are signs that after the ascension, a new stage of Jesus' guidance of the disciples will begin. The ascension of Jesus (and the gift of his Spirit) is "necessary" for the disciples. They have everything they need to carry on and they do not need the presence of Jesus in the same way as before. Jesus "has to" disappear to make the disciples his real successors.

The discrepancies between the two accounts are explained thanks to Luke's narrative strategy. The first account ends the biography of Luke in chapter 24. The plot of this part of the Gospel recounts not only the appearances of Jesus, but the process of recognition that 1) Jesus is alive and 2) he must die on the cross. The long-debated question about chronology can be explained in the following way: one day of narrated time in Luke 24 strengthens the impression that it is one process of recognition presented as a whole. The blessing, an element that has no equivalent in Acts 1:9-11, is a sign of Jesus' presence. Disciples are legitimate followers of Jesus. The allusion to Luke 19:29-48, where Jesus was recognized by the disciples, reinforces this effect. The second account is characterized by the presentation of the disciples as prepared and authoritative successors. Forty days offer the time needed for the preparation for this mission. This account is more likely to be considered as the "closure" of the appearances since references to their beginning are found in Luke 24:1-12.

The discourse of the two newcomers marks an end to Jesus' post-resurrection appearances and provides a new limit: Parousia. Disciples are presented as the witnesses– this theme will be developed later in Acts.

Fitzmyer notes that "the ascension of Christ is the guarantee of Christian destiny,"[77] basing his argument on the Scripture (1 Thess 4:16-17; Heb 6:19-20). Bovon recounts an anecdote about one of his students who came to the conclusion that the main thesis of her doctorate should be a reflection on the fact that the ascension happened "for the benefit of Jesus' disciples, for the benefit of the Church, for the benefit of humanity. Jesus ascends to heaven so that the believers themselves can also ascend to God."[78] These intuitions match the results of our study.

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77 Fitzmyer, "Ascension," 425.

78 Bovon, "Ascension Stories," 591.

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Was Not the Woman Created in the Likeness of God? Pauline Midrashic Reading of Gen 1–3 in 1 Cor 11:7–12

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Abstract: To demonstrate his claim in 1 Cor 11:2–16 about how a Christian man and woman should wear their hair during liturgical worship, Paul uses several types of arguments, including Scripture (vv. 7–12). In v. 7, he states that "A man should not cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God, but a woman is the glory of man" (NAB). Most readers today, question the soundness of such an argument and may accuse Paul of misogyny. Does he not, contrary to what Gen 1:26–27 asserts, contend that the woman was not created in the image of God? The present study argues that Paul's position can be better understood only if one, on the one hand, highlights the points of his argumentation and, on the other hand, considers the techniques of the Jewish theory of interpretation of the Scriptures in practice at the time of the Apostle. Paul is doing a Midrashic reading of Gen 1–3 narratives about the creation of human beings to assert the importance of both man and woman to behavior during Christian liturgical worship in such manner that they respect their specific dignities. At the end, Paul seems to be more "philogynist" than people use to appreciate.

Keywords: 1 Cor 11:7–12, specific dignity of women, Holy Scriptures, Gen 2–3, Midrashic reading, rhetorical analysis

1 Cor 11:2–16 is considered by many readers as speaking about how women should be seen in communal worship.[1] And it is one of the Pauline texts where the Apostle is accused of being a male chauvinist, negating the parity between men and women restored by Jesus in

1 According to Wolfgang Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther [1 Kor 6,12–11,16]* [EKKNT 7/2; Solothurn – Düsseldorf: Benziger – Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 1995] 485), this text is "über die rechte Haartracht für Frauen im Gottesdienst." The different titles given to this literary unit in some biblical editions or translations say the same: "Über das Verhalten der Frau im Gottesdienst" (*Die Bibel. Einheitsübersetzung* [Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 1980]); "Il velo delle donne nelle assemblee" (*La Bibbia. Nuovissima versione dai testi originali* [Roma: Paoline 1983]); "Le voile des femmes" (*La Bible des communautés chréteinnes* [Kinshasa: Médiaspaul 2001]); "Mudi bakaji mua kuikala diba dia disambila" (*Mukanda wa Mvidi Mukulu* [Kinshasa: Verbum Bible 2004]); "Mwaan-mukaj avwaal ciit ku mut ha kulomb Mawej" (*Mukand'a Mawej* [Kinshasa: Alliance biblique 2006]). See also S. Brown, "The Dialectic of Relationship: Paul and the Veiling of Women in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *Salesianum* 67/3 (2005) 461. On his part, H.R. Holmyard III, "Does 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Refer to Women Praying and Prophesying in Church?," *BSac* 154 (1997) 461, thinks that: "On the basis of 1 Timothy 2:11–12 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 many evangelicals are convinced that women should not speak in local church gatherings. Yet 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 gives instructions for the behavior

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the Jewish milieu.[2] Paul would keep women as inferior to men by requiring them to cover their heads in a liturgical assembly, to honor men, even though he recognizes the possibility of women praying or being prophetesses. The supremacy of the man over the woman is made clear by the fact that he, in v. 3, says that the man is the "head" of the woman: "I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and a husband the head of his wife, and God the head of Christ."[3] NAB). Saying so, the woman is the head of nobody.[4]

Apart from questions arising about the meaning of some terms and expressions used in the whole unit, like the words κεφαλή, δόξα, εἰκών, κατακαλύπτω τὴν κεφαλήν, etc., the greatest concern is the scriptural argument used by Paul in vv. 7–12, which seems to discriminate between human beings on gender. By saying, in v. 7, that "a man should not cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God, but a woman is the glory of man," is he not implying that a woman is not the image and glory of God?[5] The author of the present study is convinced of the importance of the rhetorical model for an efficient analysis of the whole vv. 2–16.[6] Using this model and knowing the difference between the principal statement of a rhetorical discussion and the other statements, which are its confirmations, he focuses his analysis on how the echoed Creation Narratives of Gen 2–3 in vv. 7–12 are intended by Paul as proofs of his main statement, which is in vv. 4c–5. The article is thus developed in four points: 1) What does Paul say in 1 Cor 11:7–12 according to Scholars?; 2) the Pauline Midrashic Reading of the Creation Narratives in vv. 7–10; 3) the Pauline Midrashic Reading of the Creation Narratives in vv. 11–12; and 4) as Conclusion, Paul's position and message.

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of women when they pray or prophesy. The traditional view is that 1 Corinthians 11 as a whole pertains to the corporate worship of the church. However, several components of 1 Corinthians either allow for or press the conclusion that 11:2–16 does *not* address congregational settings. Thus if 11:2–16 pertains to nonchurch settings, it does not conflict with 14:33b-35. The former instructs women to wear headcoverings when they pray or prophesy in nonchurch gatherings, and the latter instructs them to remain silent in local-church gatherings." Italics in the text. See also on page 472.

2 See C. Militello, "In dialogo con Jerome Murphy-O'Connor," J. Murphy-O'Connor – C. Militello – M.-L. Rigato, *Paolo e le donne* (Orizzonti biblici; Assisi: Cittadella 2006) 94–95.

3 If not stated otherwise, all the Bible quotations in English are from *The New American Bible* (NAB), Revised Edition 2011.

4 See E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Le rôle des femmes dans le mouvement chrétien primitif," *Concilium* 111 (1975) 24.

5 The translation of *The New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) speaks even of the woman being 'the reflection of man's glory': "But for a man it is not right to have his head covered, since he is the image of God and reflects God's glory; but woman is the reflection of man's glory."

6 See also J.-B. Matand Bulembat, "'Est-il convenable qu'une femme prie Dieu la tête en désordre ?' (1 Co 11,13). De la misogynie paulienne dans l'argumentation rhétorique de 1 Co 11,2–16," *Revue Africaine des Sciences de la Mission* 19 (2003) 7–41; J.-B. Matand Bulembat, "'L'homme est l'image et la gloire de Dieu; et la femme, la gloire de l'homme' (1 Co 11,7). De l'interprétation de la tradition scripturaire d'Israël au sein de l'Eglise primitive," *Epistémologie et théologie. Enjeux du dialogue foi – science – éthique pour l'avenir de l'humanité. Mélanges Monseigneur Tharcisse Tshibangu pour ses 70 ans d'âge et 35 ans d'épiscopat* (eds. L. Santedi Kinkupu – M. Malu Nyimi) (Kinshasa: FCK 2006) 43–68.

1. What does Paul Say in 1 Cor 11:7–12 According to Scholars?

1 Cor 11:2–16 is one of the much discussed pericope about its object and occasion.[7] Inside of it, more than one NT scholars have considered vv. 7–12 to be Deutero-Pauline. Paul – they say –, who supported the equality of man and woman in Christ (cf. Gal 3:28), could not be inconsistent with himself in asserting what is found here. It must be a late interpolation. This is the case of W.O. Walker and Lamar Cope.[8] Nowadays there is no convincing arguments to sustain the inauthenticity of these verses. That is why some, like Charles Perrot and Gerhard Dautzenberg, have believed that Paul has a very negative view of women, especially in vv. 7–10. And having himself discovered the risk of giving a bad image of women by insisting on their inferiority to men, Paul had to rectify his position in vv. 11–12 by using the particle *πλήν*.[9] In this way, there would be two different theologies or anthropologies in these vv. 7–12.[10] For Giancarlo Biguzzi, Paul did not even manage to make such a correction: "Tutto dice che Paolo è alla disperata ricerca di motivazioni, così che quelle che di fatto poi trova ed espone, rivelano di essere strumentali, più che pertinenti e convincenti."[11]

For other exegetes, one of whose tenors is Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Paul is not only addressing women in this text; men are also the target of his speech. His problem is with the dress that both men and women adopt at Christian prayer meetings. In the Greek society of the time, these exegetes let observe, short hair for a woman or long hair for a man indicated that the person in question was flaunting his homosexual tendencies. Now some Corinthian Christians were already claiming to be full of the Spirit and to have reached perfection (cf. 1 Cor 4:8; also 1:5; 2:6; 3:1), to the extent that they considered that everything was permitted (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23), even in sexual matters. In the name of the liberation and freedom acquired in Christ, they relativized all moral restrictions. Some of them did not hesitate to come to the prayer meetings dressed in a manner considered "indecent"

7 See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 491–497.

8 See W.O. Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's Views Regarding Women," *JBL* 94 (1975) 94–110 and L. Cope, "1 Cor 11:2–16: One Step Further," *JBL* 98 (1978) 430, both quoted by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor ("Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *CBQ* 42 [1980] 482).

9 See C. Perrot, "Une étrange lecture de l'écriture: 1 Co 11,7–9," *La vie de la Parole. De l'Ancien au Nouveau Testament. Etudes d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Pierre Grelot* (Paris: Desclée 1987) 263. See also J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (eds. R.E. Brown – J.A. Fitzmyer – R.E. Murphy) (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall 1990) 809. See also J.-M. Aubert, *L'exil féminin. Antisémitisme et christianisme* (Paris: Cerf 1988) 95; S. Tunc, *Brève histoire des femmes chrétiennes* (Paris: Cerf 1989) 52; N. Baumert, *Antifeminismus bei Paulus? Einzelstudien* (FB 68; Würzburg: Echter 1992) 88.

10 "...unser Abschnitt zwei unterschiedlichen Theologien oder Anthropologien Raum gibt... Die theologische Unausgeglichenheit der Argumentation lässt sich nicht harmonisieren... Das Nebeneinander unterschiedlicher Argumentationslinien zeigt, dass es Paulus nicht gelungen ist, eine einheitliche theologische Konzeption zum Thema der Gleichwertigkeit von Mann und Frau zu werfen und durchzuhalten" (G. Dautzenberg, "Zur Stellung der Frauen in den paulinischen Gemeinden"; quoted by Giancarlo Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio. Paolo e la donna in 1 Cor 11,2–16 e 14,33b-36* [SupRivB 37; Bologna: Dehoniane 2001] 29, n. 42).

11 See Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio*, 27.

by the surrounding environment. Paul, in writing to them, draws their attention to this point and urges them to respect, each according to his or her sex, what society holds to be the proper way for each sex to appear in public. The Pauline problem is not, in this case, a problem of the veil.[12]

Other scholars also point to the way women and men conducted themselves at times of public acts among the Greeks, Romans and Jews. Greek and Jew Women had to keep distance from "foreign" men and one way to express it was to put on a veil on the head. It is then argued that Paul was repressing the boldness with which some Christian women, even though they came from among the Jews or Greeks, lacked restraint even towards men who were not their husbands or family members, because of their ability to participate and even speak at liturgical celebrations. In this case, it is indeed a question of the veil. Therefore, the Pauline discussion is not about all women, but about those who were married.[13]

I would sustain that the best explanation of this Pauline discussion in 1 Cor 11:2–16 is mainly through the best interpretation of the adjective ἀκατακάλυπτος, used in relation to a woman (cf. vv. 5.13). Careful study of this lexeme shows that it refers to the idea of a person whose dress is disorderly, careless, and disrespectful of social propriety. This adjective refers to someone who, as in the Deuteronomistic society of Israel, was considered unclean because of the disorder introduced by leprosy into their physical and interpersonal relationships (cf. Lev 13–14, and parallels; mostly Lev 13:40–46). It thus refers to the person who, in such a state of appearance, has lost something that would give him respectability.[14] By applying this concept of ἀκατακάλυπτος to the hair of someone who prays or prophesies, Paul would be arguing that such a person, man or woman, should do so with a well-groomed head.

Now in matters of care, it is, as the Old Testament texts relating to the adjective ἀκατακάλυπτος show, the society in which the Christian finds himself, that defines its customs particularly those of dress. Thus, according to social arrangements, men and women may not style their hair in the same way when in a public assembly. The cosmetics that are appropriate for women can require that they have long and well-groomed hair. For this,

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12 See Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," 482–500; A. Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church. The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16," *JSNT* 20 (1984) 69–86; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16. Once Again," *CBQ* 50 (1988) 265–274; K.-K. Yeo, "Differentiation and Mutuality of Male-Female Relations in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *BR* 43 (1998) 7–21; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Paolo e le donne," J. Murphy-O'Connor – C. Militello – M.-L. Rigato, *Paolo e le donne* (Orizzonti biblici; Assisi: Cittadella 2006) 25–29; K.R. MacGregor, "Is 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 a Prohibition of Homosexuality," *BSac* 166 (2009) 201–216; P.T. Massey, "Gender versus Marital Concerns: Does 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Address the Issues of Male/Female or Husband/Wife?," *TynBul* 64 (2013) 239–256.

13 See D.W.J. Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *TynBul* 41 (1990) 245–260; D.B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press 1995) 235–239, 248–249; D.E. Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 through Archeological and Moral-Rhetorical Analysis* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen 1997); M. Finney, "Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2–16 in its Social Context," *JSNT* 33 (2010) 31–58.

14 See Matand Bulembat, "Est-il convenable?," 30–37. See also Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 507.

even a cap (veil) would be necessary if it hides some disorder of her hair. On the other hand, the cosmetics that are suitable for men can require that they have short hair, so that they do not have messy hair. For this, even a completely shaved head would be necessary if it hides some disorder of his hair. The argument emerges from cultural anthropology.[15]

To reach this position, I consider that 1 Cor 11:2–16 is developed as a rhetorical argumentation, where the sequence of ideas passes through stages that can be identified according to the rhetorical model.[16] Through the identification of the main statement (the *thesis* or *problema*) that Paul supports in this text through arguments (*pisteis* or *probatio*).[17] According to J. Murphy-O'Connor, the programmatic statement is the v. 3, followed by a description and condemnation of Corinthian practices (vv. 4–6). Then comes the first argument against the Corinthians based on the difference between man and woman in Gen 2:18–23 (vv. 7–10), with a parenthesis excluding a false interpretation of Gen 2:18–23 (vv. 11–12). In vv. 13–15, there is the second argument against the Corinthians based on natural law, and in v. 16, the third argument against the Corinthians based on the practice of the churches.[18] In my analysis, it looks that the v. 3 cannot be the *propositio* because it is not immediately sustained by arguments that are its probatio. For me, vv. 4–5c are the ones to play the role of the *propositio*, which is sustained in vv. 6–12 (cf. γὰρ).[19] Paul states that

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15 Applying also an intertextual analysis, Maria-Luisa Rigato sustains that the OT text that can best help here is Num 6:7–21 on the rites of the Nazirites. For her, "non si trattava per Paolo di *conservare il simbolismo dei ruoli sessuali* di donna e uomo derivante dai capelli corti o lunghi. E' questa la tesi di molti commentatori moderni. Se la mia ipotesi è esatta, Paolo non vuole come oranti e profettanti dei nazirei o *che ne abbiano anche solo la parvenza*" (M.-L. Rigato, "Paolo imita Gesù nella promozione della donna," J. Murphy-O'Connor – C. Militello – M.-L. Rigato, *Paolo e le donne* [Orizzonti biblici; Assisi: Cittadella 2006] 141). Italics in the text.

16 See also J.E. Marshall, "Uncovering Traditions in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *NovT* 61 (2019) 70–89. For the characteristics of an optimal use of the rhetorical criticism and its importance in the study of Pauline texts, see J.-N. Aletti, "La *dispositio* rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes. Propositions de méthode," *NTS* 38 (1992) 385–401. See also A. Pitta, *Disposizione e messaggio della Lettera ai Galati. Analisi retorico-letteraria* (AnBib 131; Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute 1992); W. Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition. In Honorem Robert M. Grant* (eds. W.R. Schoedel – R.L. Wilken) (ThH 54; Paris: Beauchesne 1979) 177–188.

17 See Aristote, *Rhétorique*, 3 ed. (eds., trans. M. Dufour – A. Wartelle; annot. A. Wartelle) (Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1989) III, 3.13.1414a.

18 See Murphy-O'Connor, "Paolo e le donne," 27–29. See also Sherri Brown ("The Dialectic of Relationship," 465) who considers v. 3 as the theological statement (*theologoumenon*) bracketed by Christ, statement which "introduces the thesis to Paul's argument not as the subjugation of woman and her conduct to man, but as the dialectic of relationships in life in Christ. All relationships and conduct are bound and held accountable therein."

19 See Matand Bulembat, "Est-il convenable?," 45–46. In this article the author sustains rightly that v. 2 can be considered as the *exordium* where the *captatio benevolentiae* is remarkable. Verse 3 can be considered as a small *narratio* where the orator exposes the facts as they are, not needing to be demonstrated; they appear to be a kind of "accepted ideas," as Aristote (*Topiques*. I. *Livres I–IV* [ed., trans. J. Brunschwig] [Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1967] 100 b 21–23) and Quintilien (*Institution oratoire* [ed., trans. J. Cousin] [Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1978] V,10,11–12) do speak about the nature and function of a *narratio*. For me, the v. 16 plays surely the rhetorical role of an *exitus/peroratio* where Paul asks the audience to adhere to his view. Before this *peroratio*, Paul has resumed the main *propositio* in v. 13 and sustained it with a subsidiary *probatio* in vv. 14–15.

it is convenient that a man or a woman may be allowed to address his/her prayers to God or to prophesize, but with hair well-groomed according to the parameters of civility in the society.[20]

However, in vv. 7–12 the Apostle presents to the Christians the order of creation and procreation, as told in the narratives of Gen 1–3, as the strongest argument for his thesis towards the argument from culture. Now, since they are not introduced by a citation formula, the biblical texts to which Paul refers can only be identified by a listener/reader accustomed to the Scriptures.[21] The interpreter is then obliged not only to identify them, but above all to see how the Apostle has used them to support his main thesis of vv. 4–5c. The following hermeneutical questions are therefore pertinent: How does Paul manage this argument? What does this argument point out in line with his principal idea and to which extent can it be considered as relevant for believers in Christ? At the end, do not the echoed biblical texts and the Pauline interpretation undermine the parity between woman and man restored by Christ? In sum, what does Paul say in 1 Cor 11:7–12 through his midrashic reading?

2. Pauline Midrashic Reading of Gen 1–2 in vv. 7–10

In Paul's days, as we know, the reading and commentary of biblical texts were done according to precise principles of interpretation.[22] These rules were based on a fundamental con-

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In a paper presented in June 2021 in Minneapolis Marcin Kowalski ("Changing Gender Roles and the Unchanging Message of 1 Cor 11:2–16," *Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture, Quinn Conference, The Saint Paul Seminary, Minneapolis, MN* [forthcoming]) argues that v. 3 is the thesis of 1 Cor 11:2–16. For him, the fundamental and unchanging message of this literary unit is the necessity and purpose of the distinction between man and woman, and of their mutual interaction. Since the manifestation of this distinction may vary from time to time, v. 3 affirms the unchanging truth that the relationship between man and woman is to imitate the relationship between the Father and the Son, where equality and diversity of participants are important. About the *dispositio* of 1 Cor 11:2–16, see also Jill E. Marshall ("Uncovering Tradition," 75) who proposes another structure.

20 See also R.E. Ciampa – B.S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans – Cambridge, UK: Apollos 2010) 522–537.

21 This is a case of intertextuality in which "[l]es textes bibliques parlent entre eux, mais c'est à voix basse pour la plupart du temps ; il faut prêter l'oreille pour les entendre. Les deux Testaments aussi, à condition de ne pas être sourd. Un texte n'est pas vraiment compréhensible si l'on n'entend pas le système d'échos qu'il entretient avec d'autres ; si l'on ne perçoit pas que le sens est ce qui circule non seulement à l'intérieur d'un texte, entre les lignes, mais aussi entre les textes et entre les livres du corpus biblique, comme le sang dans le corps" (R. Meynet, *Traité de rhétorique biblique* [Rhétorique sémitique 4; Paris: Lethielleux 2007] 376).

22 See C.K. Stockhausen, "Paul the Exegete," *TBT* 28 (1990) 196–202; C.K. Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant. The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor. 3,1–4,6* (AnBib 116; Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute 1989); M. Collin – P. Leenhardt, *La Torah orale des Pharisiens. Textes de la tradition d'Israel* (CaESup 37; Paris: Cerf 1990); D. Banon, *La lecture infinie. Les voies de l'interprétation midrachique* (Paris: Seuil 1987). On the rules of biblical hermeneutics used in Jewish rabbinism, see among others H.L. Strack – G. Stemberger, *Introduction au Talmud et au Midrash* (French trans. M.-R. Hayoun) (Patrimoines; Judaïsme;

viction that "the Bible is considered as a unity by the authors of the readings,"[23] even if these rules could sometimes appear contradictory. In such a context, even the simple reversal of the order of the words in a verse in order to derive a teaching was not a problem.[24] In this way, rabbinic exegesis could even modify a text, but these modifications were not conceived as "manipulating a text to say what it does not say for the sake of the argument."[25]

In view of this, the use of Scripture was clearly a relative rereading of the texts, since the context of the rereading and the purpose of the rereading were decisive. The interpreters were therefore convinced that the biblical text was of plural interpretation.[26] It was, after all, contextualizations that made the old text alive forever.[27] What is most constant, however, as Frédéric Manns points it out, is the fact that during the rereading, the meaning of a text came out from its immediate literary context.[28]

2.1. Literary Composition of vv. 7–10

Let us remember that Rhetoricians teach that the development of the different parts of the *dispositio* proceeds through small units that often have multiple forms of relationships between them, thanks to figures of style or thought, notably simple chiasms, concentric chiasms, synonymic or antithetical parallelisms, sometimes at a long distance. Each argumentative unit can therefore be formally composed in its own way. The pericope under consideration is indeed composed of two small units: vv. 7–10 and vv. 11–12, which are developed, one in the form of a concentric chiasm, and the other in the form of a synonymic parallelism.

Paris: Cerf 1986); J.-L. Ska, *Introduction à la lecture du Pentateuque. Clés pour l'interprétation des cinq premiers livres de la Bible* (Italian trans. F. Vermorel) (Le livre et le rouleau 5; Bruxelles: Lessius 2000) 236–252.

23 F. Manns, *Le Midrash. Approche et commentaire de l'Ecriture* (SBFA 56; Jérusalem: Franciscan Printing Press 2001) 14.

24 This principle applies even to the juxtaposition of texts: "Pour l'interprète de l'Ecriture la juxtaposition des textes est importante. Elle n'est pas due au hasard. Le contexte immédiat a une répercussion sur l'intelligence du texte. C'est dans cette proximité que le texte prend son sens" (Manns, *Le Midrash*, 12).

25 M. Taradach, *Le Midrash. Introduction à la littérature rabbinique (Drs dans la Bible, les Targumim, les Midrasim)* (MdB 22; Genève: Labor et Fides 1991) 47. For Herman L. Strack and Günter Stemberger (*Introduction au Talmud*, 37), "L'usage rabbinique de la Bible peut maintes fois paraître arbitraire ; il n'en demeure pas moins tenu par des règles (middot)."

26 The rabbis have always said that "*Shiv'im panim la-Torah*" in the sense that – as Jean-Louis Ska translates – each verse of the Torah (Pentateuch) has seventy meanings. See J.-L. Ska, "Le Pentateuque – Une Cantate à plusieurs voix," *Carrefour des Exégètes. Mélanges en hommage à Monsieur le Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya à l'occasion de ses 80 ans (1939–2019)* (ed. P. Béré) (Kitabu na Neno – Livre & Parole 1; Abidjan – Rome: PITCJ – GBP 2020) 105. This is, according to Alan Padgett ("Wealthy Women at Ephesus," *Int* 41/1 [1987] 25), the reason of the existence of a variety of Jewish forms of Scrirpture reading.

27 As L. Ann Jervis ("'But I want you to know…': Paul's Midrashic Intertextual Response to the Corinthian Worshipers [1 Cor 11:2–16]," *JBL* 112/2 [1993] 233) points out: "The hermeneutical practice of the rabbis was a continuation of the interpretative strategies of the biblical writers, that is, the expression of 'new teachings by means of strategic revisions of earlier traditions' made in light of 'a practical crisis of some sort.' While scripture was considered to stand in dialectical tension with the historical moment, this did not exclude the interpreter in this mode from considering that scripture's original meaning had been understood."

28 "Pour l'interprète de l'Ecriture la juxtaposition des textes est importante. Elle n'est pas due au hasard. Le contexte immédiat a une répercussion sur l'intelligence du texte. C'est dans cette proximité que le texte prend son sens" (Manns, *Le Midrash*, 12).

1 Cor 11:7–10 can indeed be divided into three minimal units: v. 7a-b, vv. 7c-9 and v. 10. The relations between the sentences in these units can allow a formal structure of concentric chiasm ABA’ where the external assertions become clear thanks to what is stated in the center.

A { Ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν
εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων·

B { ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστιν.
οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός·
καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα.

A’ { διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς
διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.

Verse 7 and verse 10 seem visibly arranged in parallelism, mainly because of the use of the verb ὀφείλειν in both sentences. But this verb is negated in v. 7 (οὐκ ὀφείλει) while it is not in v. 10, and their subjects are different (ἀνήρ in v. 7, and γυνή in v. 10), as well as their complements are also not similar (κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλήν in v. 7 and ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς in v. 10). At the end of each verse, there is a phrase justifying why the subject ought not / ought to do what is said in their complements (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων in v. 7b, and διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους in v. 10). The parallelism is in fact not synonymic because of the opposition of their subjects, as the use of μὲν … δὲ in v. 7a and v. 7c makes it clear. This parallelism helps to see that the sentence ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς cannot say the same thing with κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλήν, and to see whether the phrase διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους (v. 10) has any contact with the sentence εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων (v. 7b).

In the middle of the unit, verse 7c (ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστιν) stands as the opposition of verse 7b: while man is image and glory of God, the woman is the glory of man. Paul realizes that this affirmation (7c) must be justified. The two verses 8–9 do play this function of explanation of v. 7c. From this feature, one can understand that the sentence εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων was rhetorically not difficult to be understood by the original addressees. This was not the case with what is asserted in v. 7c. That is why Paul does the rereading of the biblical texts that speak about the creation of man and woman.

There are two major problems of understanding in v. 7. The first relates to the statements ἀνὴρ μὲν … εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστιν. Is Paul here asserting that only the man (ἀνήρ) is the image of God, while the woman is not?[29] Did he

29 See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 509–510.

minimize the woman?[30] The second problem is, what the term δόξα means in this context? These are problems of Pauline interpretation of the Scriptures.

2.2. The Man Is the Image of God (v. 7bα)

Regarding the first problem, there is reason to believe that by virtue of the hermeneutical principle of *gezerah shawah*, Paul must have brought Gen 1:27 closer to Gen 2:7–23.[31] Indeed, Gen 1:27 asserts that the human being was created "in the image of God" (κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν). Only Paul makes two 'modifications': 1° he moves from the idea of conformity, expressed by the preposition κατά (בְּ), to identity itself. "The image of God" is no longer a modality for the human being, but his attribute: man is the image of God. For this reason, G. Biguzzi thinks that Gen 1:27 is not the basis for this Pauline conception of man as the image of God.[32] 2° Paul reserves this fact of creation for the ἀνήρ alone, whereas the Greek text (LXX) of Gen 1:27 doesn't use the term ἀνήρ, but ἄνθρωπος, making it immediately clear that it must be understood for both male and female (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς). Each of them is created at the image of God. Both of them should be the image of God, as it is said in Wis 2:23, "ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ᾽ ἀφθαρσίᾳ καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν."

Thanks to the *gezerah shawah* however a restrictive interpretation to the male was possible. The lexical ambiguity of the Greek term ἄνθρωπος could allow the use of it with the meaning of 'human being' in general or 'male being.' The translator of Gen 2:18–23 in the LXX has indeed equivalently used the terms Αδαμ, ἄνθρωπος and ἀνήρ to denote the male man.[33] Paul himself has used the term ἄνθρωπος instead of ἀνήρ in 1 Cor 7:1 as the immediate literary context indicates. Now, when one reads Gen 2:7–23, it becomes possible to understand in virtue of the hermeneutical principle of precedence, that Paul, in line with what he has already asserted in v. 3, holds that the man is "the head" of the woman i.e. he is the origin of the woman; the woman came from him, as he says more clearly in

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30 According to M.-L. Rigato ("Paolo imita Gesù," 145–147), the phrase εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων is said of Christ himself, and not of the man.

31 The *gezerah shawah* consisted in bringing together passages of the Scripture which had "common points in vocabulary, syntax or general content" in order to derive a rational interpretation. See E. Ketterer – M. Renaud (eds.), *Le midrash. Textes choisis, traduits et présentés* (CaESup 82; Paris: Cerf 1992) 36. It was "une règle régissant les associations verbales. L'expression signifie littéralement 'principe équivalent'. C'est l'une des règles juives (attribuées à Hillel) d'interprétation de l'Ecriture. On raisonne sur des analogies : deux passages différents des Ecritures (initialement, le principe valait seulement pour deux passages de la Torah, mais il a été étendu aux Prophètes et aux Ecrits) ayant un ou plusieurs termes en commun peuvent être interprétés l'un par l'autre. Autrement dit, sur la base d'une similarité verbale entre deux textes, ce qui est dit de l'un peut être dit de l'autre" (J.-N. Aletti *et al.*, *Vocabulaire raisonné de l'exégèse biblique. Les mots, les approches, les auteurs* [Paris: Cerf 2005] 105).

32 See Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio*, 23–26. Apparently, this way of reading was not strange or new at the time of the Apostle. According to L.A. Jervis ("But I want you to know," 235–238), it is also found in Philo of Alexandria. See once more Wis 2:23, which doesn't use the preposition κατά before εἰκόνα: "ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ᾽ ἀφθαρσίᾳ καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν."

33 See Pontificia Commissione Biblica, "*Che cosa è l'uomo?" (Sal 8,5). Un itinerario di antropologia biblica* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2019) n. 152.

v. 12a.[34] According to the Yahwist version of the creation of human beings, in fact, Adam "was fashioned" from dust taken from the ground long before all the animals (Gen 2:7), whereas the woman was created from man long afterwards, when Adam, *scilicet* the man, had not found a being similar to him among the animals (Gen 2:22). According to this narrative, the woman has her source in the man (cf. 1 Tim 2:13).

This being the case, Paul does not argue in v. 7 for the inferiority of the woman in relation to the man. In fact, while pointing out that the origin of woman is man, Gen 2:18–23 emphasizes above all the resemblance between man and woman. This pericope indicates only that God had resolved to create the woman ("this one shall be called γυνή": Gen 2:23) as a human being, of the same nature as the man (Αδαμ, ἄνθρωπος, ἀνήρ), so that the latter might find a being who was like himself (τῷ δὲ Αδαμ οὐχ εὑρέθη βοηθὸς ὅμοιος αὐτῷ [αὐτῷ referring to τῷ Αδαμ]). Between Adam and woman there is a similarity that makes woman different from all other non-human creatures.[35]

In conclusion, people should, in view of all these scriptural elements, exclude from their thinking that Paul was holding that woman is not the image of God. The novelty he introduces is the assertion, on the one hand (μὲν), that "man is the glory of God" and, on the other hand (δὲ), that "woman is the glory of man." Thus, one comes to the second problem. How are we to understand here the term δόξα which Paul used?[36]

2.3. The Man Is the Glory of God (v. 7bβ)

We note that the term occurs with various meanings at least 160 times in the NT, 75 of them in the Pauline corpus. It is used 3 times in 1 Cor 11:2–16 out of the 12 times in 1 Cor. It is often contrasted with the term ἀτιμία (cf. 1 Cor 11:15 and 15:43) and refers to the contrary of sordid, disgusting appearance of someone's outfit, i.e. to the splendid, proper, honorable appearance. In this case, δόξα is used with a dative. In 1 Cor 11:7, it is used in the same way as in 2 Cor 8:23; Eph 3:13 and 1 Thess 2:20. Here, it employed with the genitive of the person related. In these texts it is said that someone is the glory of someone to say that he is his honor, his pride, wherever he is: one cannot be ashamed of him, complain about him, but rather boast about him. Man is thus the glory of God in the sense that his being at the moment of the creation of the universe constituted an honor for God. The reason is that according to Gen 1 Adam was, of all living beings, created in

34 According to the hermeneutical principle of priority/precedence/anteriority, there is a chronological order between two texts or two words in Scripture: the fulfilment of the first conditions the fulfilment of the second. However, this principle could be contradicted by the one according to which "there is neither before nor after in the Torah," *Sifré sur les Nombres*, § 64, H. 61; *Pesachrim* 61 b, quoted by Günter Stemberger (*Midrasch. Von Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel. Einführung – Texte – Erläuterung* [München: Beck 1989] 25). See also Ska, *Introduction à la lecture du Pentateuque*, 236–252.

35 See Brown, "The Dialectic of Relationship," 469–470.

36 See A. Feuillet, "L'homme 'la gloire de Dieu' et la femme 'gloire de l'homme' (I Cor., XI, 7^{b})," *RB* 81 (1974) 161–182.

the image of God, in His likeness (κατ᾽ εἰκόνα καὶ καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν: Gen 1:26).[37] Therefore, Adam is the glory, the pride of God among all the living beings. Having already made the identification between ἄνθρωπος and ἀνήρ, Paul adapts his speech to the cause he is defending.

2.4. The Woman Is the Glory of Man (vv. 7c-9)

In this logic, we understand that Paul also says that "woman is the glory of man" (7c). This is in the sense that her being at creation constituted an honor for man. The reason is that according to Gen 2 she was, among all the living things, created at the likeness of Adam (ὅμοιος αὐτῷ: Gen 2:20), in addition to having been created, according to Gen 1, as a copy of God. She gives honor to the man from whom she was taken. Δόξα here in no way signifies that the woman would reflect the man's glory, as does translate the NJB, nor that man would have supremacy over her.[38] It seems to mean only that the woman is a reason for the pride of man before the spectators.

The two arguments Paul juxtaposes in vv. 8–9 make clear this reading: "For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; nor was man created for woman, but woman for man" (NAB). Once again Gen 2:18–23 is echoed. Indeed, in v. 8, the Pauline affirmation γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός is a verbatim repetition of the explanation that the narrator provides in Gen 2:23 (ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς). And this diegetic explanation summarizes the words Adam spoke out as he saw the woman for the first time: τοῦτο νῦν ὀστοῦν ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων μου καὶ σὰρξ τῆς σαρκός μου αὕτη κληθήσεται γυνή. For Paul, Gen 2:23 shows that "woman comes from man" and, according to the exegetical rule of priority, it highlights the chronological precedence of man over woman. For Paul Gen 2:23 means that "man did not come from woman" (οὐκ ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς).[39]

In v. 9, Paul echoes Gen 2:18 as he says that "man was not created for woman, but woman for man." He is speaking about the purpose of the creation as the use of διά + accusative makes it clear.[40] Indeed, according to the text of Gen 2:18, the purpose for the creation of the woman was that man would not be alone (οὐ καλὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον). The woman was conceived and made by God to remedy the loneliness in which man found himself after the creation of all living beings (εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον) and which was not good (οὐ καλὸν). Man needed a helper who was like him, made according to him (ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν κατ᾽ αὐτόν), i.e. different from beasts, birds, reptiles. It is noteworthy that in its

37 As the Pontificia Commissione Biblica (*Che cosa è l'uomo?*, n. 43–44) points out, the phrase καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν (כִּדְמוּת), specifies that of κατ᾽ εἰκόνα (בְּצֶלֶם: Gen 1:26.27) to say that Adam was created in the very likeness of God. He is practically a copy of God.

38 As L.A. Jervis ("But I want you to know," 242) puts it so well: "the introduction of the word 'glory' provides for a midrashic retextualizing of the two creation stories, for it allows Paul to avoid saying that woman is the image of man while pointing to the good and divinely ordained contrast between male and female in the second creation story."

39 Let us note that according to the same principle of anteriority, man could be recognized prior to woman in Gen 1:27 since the word "male" occupies the first position.

40 See Rigato, "Paolo imita Gesù," 148.

many occurrences,[41] the term "help" (βοηθός) emphasizes a support that someone lends to another, to sustain him in what he is not capable of. It reveals the situation of weakness or necessity in which the one in need of assistance finds himself, at the same time as it highlights the power of the helper, a power he has in the area in which he helps. And Paul stresses that such a help for man at the creation is the woman, i.e. *not even another man*. André Feuillet puts it in a better way: "In this second account of creation, woman is truly the glory of man in the precise sense that she honors him, that she is his joy and his pride because of the irreplaceable complementarity she brings him."[42]

At this point, it becomes clear why Paul doesn't say that the woman is the image of the man. Indeed, always bringing together Gen 1:27 (where male and female are created in the image of God) with Gen 2:18 (where woman is created from man), two expressions seem similar, but are not equivalent: *κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ* (Gen 1:27) and *κατ᾽ αὐτόν* (Gen 2:18). According to Gen 2:18, the woman is not created "in the image" (*κατ᾽ εἰκόνα*) of man. *Κατ᾽ αὐτόν* means ὅμοιος to stress the equality between them given that the term *εἰκών* implicates a distance that exists between a copy and its original.[43] But both man and woman have been created in the image of God, as it is repeated in Gen 5:1.[44]

That said, verses 8–9 clarify Paul's thought in v. 7c (cf. *γάρ*). Woman is the glory of man because she constitutes the pride of man in a twofold way: because of her origin (she is of human origin, similar in all things to man: *γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός*) and because of its raison d'être (she is the only one capable of filling man's loneliness and accomplishing what himself and other creatures cannot: *γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα*). There is therefore nothing contemptuous of woman in this Pauline interpretation. He is not discussing to prove the inferiority of woman to man. Rereading Gen 1:26–27 in the light of Gen 2:7–23, it comes out that woman has the same dignity as man, given that she comes from him. At the same time, she is an honor for man, given that she was created to be the unique irreplaceable helper for him. This singularity constitutes her dignity in front of man, which Paul doesn't deny in this argumentation, but expresses in other words.[45]

41 See Ps 19:3; 34:2; 117:7; Matt 15:25; Mark 9:22.24; Acts 16:9; 27:7.

42 Feuillet, "L'homme 'gloire de Dieu,'" 177.

43 See H. Kleinknecht, "L'uso greco di εἰκών," *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento* (eds. G. Kittel – G. Friedrich) (Brescia: Paideia 1967) III, 160–164.

44 Only their children are, according to Gen 5:3, created in the image of Adam (*κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ*), the latter understood as male and female.

45 See Murphy-O'Connor, "Paolo e le donne," 30: "L'offesa che il suo riassunto piutosto inetto reca alle donne è grandemente ridotta se si presta molta attenzione a quello che Paolo sta facendo. La sua preoccupazione è di mettere in rilievo l'importanza della differenza tra maschio e femmina. Pertanto egli argomenta che, se Dio avesse inteso che non ci fossero differenze tra i sessi, avrebbe creato l'uomo e la donna allo stesso modo. Ma in realtè li ha creati in modi diversi. Di conseguenza, la distinzione tra maschio e femmina è importante perchè è voluta da Dio e deve essere mantenuta."

2.5. What Does It Mean ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς? (v. 10)

If the parallelism recognized above between v. 7 and v. 10 was synonymic, one would find in v. 10 a sentence like this: διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλήν (therefore the woman must cover her head).[46] But Paul says: "διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς." How to understand the phrase ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς?[47] The difficulty of interpretation was so great that some early manuscripts corrected the term ἐξουσία by replacing it with κάλυμμα (veil). This aberrant lesson, however, does not stand up to either external or internal criticism. It is an "explanatory gloss,"[48] that is not defensible, because v. 10 is understandable as the result of the Midrashic reading of Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:7–23.

This rereading, as just demonstrated, has stressed the singular power and dignity the woman has in front of man, dignity which is an honor for man. We think this is what Paul says further using the expression ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν. Recurring five times in 1 Cor (7:37; 9,4.5, and here), this locution has, in all cases, nothing to do with subordination. Instead, it denotes autonomy, independence, and freedom from others (7:37); it also denotes the right, the power to do something in accordance with one's own dignity, i.e. the power to feel oneself and to be responsible for one's choices (9:4).[49] Following our explanation of the Midrashic reading, this means that Paul recommends to the woman, in coherence with v. 7, to which v. 10 is parallel, to conduct according to her specific dignity, to respect what manifests her dignity as woman, to be proud of her femininity, of her female humanity. In relation with the main thesis (vv. 4–5c), Paul asserts in v. 15, that this uniqueness of the woman is expressed by "nature" in her long hair (γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστιν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται αὐτῇ). For this reason, the woman must keep this dignity on her head (ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς) and not cut it off or keep it in disorder, because "it is a shameful thing for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved off" (v. 6). Verse 10a-b shows therefore that it is not the veil that is Paul's main concern,[50] but rather the dignity of the woman in what is specific to her when she is in a liturgical act of prayer or prophecy.[51] She must take this dignity in consideration "because of the angels" (v. 10c).

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46 Or like this: "woman should *cover her head*" (ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχειν [cf. v. 4]) or also "woman should not *uncover her head*" (οὐκ ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἀκατακαλύπτῳ τῇ κεφαλῇ εἶναι [cf. v. 5]). See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 513, der sagt: "Eine besondere *crux* [für V. 10] ist die Interpretation von ἐξουσία und von διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους."

47 See M. Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ. The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1987) 96–102.

48 B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies 1971; 2 ed. 2002) 562.

49 See H. Nyekumbo Dangbe, *Du droit à la charité. Analyse exégétique de 1 Co 8* (AnBib 221; Rome: GBP 2018) 157–162. Noteworthy here is also what Sir 17:2 says about the power of human beings over everything. [The Lord] "granted them [cf, *human beings* in v. 1] authority over everything on earth (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς [cf. *ἄνθρωπον* in v. 1] ἐξουσίαν τῶν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς [cf. γῆς in v. 1])."

50 See Murphy-O'Connor, "Paolo e le donne," 29; Rigato, "Paolo imita Gesù," 149.

51 See another way of argumentation by S. Brown ("The Dialectic of Relationship," 471).

The angels (ἄγγελοι) it is about are not, in my opinion, as J. Murphy-O'Connor suggests, the messengers who might have come from other churches, specifically from Chloe (1 Cor 1:11) who were scandalized by what they observed in the community of Corinth.[52] I don't think either that they are, as Maria-Luisa Rigato asserts, the angels who announced the news of the resurrection of Jesus to the women.[53] The following elements induce to think that the angels could be the persons mentioned in v. 3 as being between God and the woman. (i) In the Bible, angels are mainly presented as indispensable intermediaries between God and humanity. Among their various roles, the common one is the fact that they are God's messengers, mediators of a revelation. In this way, the term can even refer to a human being who represent God bringing a divine message to other human beings (cf. in the LXX: Num 20:14; Judg 7:24; 11:12–19; 1 Macc 1:44; in the NT: Luke 7:24–27; 9:52.54; Gal 4:14). (ii) Ps 8:5–6 reminds that, at the creation, the human being (ἄνθρωπος) was created a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and majesty (ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ᾽ ἀγγέλους δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν). The parallelism mentioned above between the final phrases of v. 7b (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ) and v. 10 (διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους) sounds at the ears of a reader/listener as echoes of this Psalm in 1 Cor 11:7–10. (iii) In the present argumentation, Paul informs, in v. 3, about the existence of a series of intermediaries between God and the woman, i.e. the man and Christ.

It is because of them, that the woman should respect her specific dignity and behavior consequently in respect with her hair.[54] It is necessary (ὀφείλει) that she have on her head, not the mark of her subjection, but that of her dignity. In all cultures, it is considered very appropriate that in a public celebration each participant respects his or her dignity respectively to his echelon and may be recognized by the insignia of that echelon, especially if all echelons are present. The insignia of each level are not a mark of subjection, but of honor. And in the Greek and Jewish culture of Pauline addressees, the mark of feminine dignity was, as regards the hair on the head, not to keep it disheveled or cut off, but to keep it well groomed. In short, Paul exhorts the woman, not to submit, but to honor her own rank, and avoid any confusion of grade. This is so significant for him that in vv. 11–12 he comes back to the Scriptures for a complement of arguments.

52 See Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 809; Murphy-O'Connor, "Paolo e le donne," 31.

53 See Rigato, "Paolo imita Gesù," 154–157. See also the other suggestions as reported by Wolfgang Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 515–517). Following the hypothesis of Joseph A. Fitzmyer based on Qumran literature, S. Brown ("The Dialectic of Relationship," 472) thinks that it is about "angels [which] were understood to be present in the assemblies of worship."

54 I even believe that Paul could easily use the expression διὰ τὸν Χριστόν instead of διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, given that in v. 3 it is – as already said in 1 Cor 8:6 – Christ who plays the role of a direct intermediary between God and man (see also Gal 4:14). But given that it is not only Christ who, in v. 3, is the intermediary between God and the woman, the plural ἀγγέλους is understandable here.

3. Pauline Midrashic Reading of Gen 2–3 in vv. 11–12

As well known, many exegetes attribute to the particle πλήν used at the beginning of v. 11 the function of introducing a correction to what is said in vv. 7–10.[55] Paul would have amended his position because of his Christian faith (cf. ἐν κυρίῳ), and so confessed that between woman and man there is full equality and reciprocity. Now, if the above demonstration is correct, and that Paul doesn't deny in vv. 7–10 the equality between man and woman, why should he correct his position? For me, the problem lies in the meaning of the particle πλήν.

3.1. The Semantic Extent of the Particle πλήν

In dictionaries of the Greek language, πλήν is globally used in two ways: either as a preposition (+ genitive) or as an adverb. It is translated in most cases as "except," "only," "however," "nevertheless," "yet," "it remains that." In this case, it is the idea of opposition to what has just been said that is highlighted. There is a restriction, a correction. It is in this way that in 1 Cor 11:11 is translated, where it is used as an adverb.[56] Now in Luke 22:21, where it is also used as an adverb, the meaning of restriction cannot be the expected one.

In this Lucan text, indeed, the particle πλήν does not imply any idea of a restriction that Jesus makes to what he has just said in v. 20. Rather, it introduces another statement that goes in the same direction as what is asserted in this verse. It reveals another reality (the hand of the traitor) which confirms the unmistakable death of Jesus and the certitude of the shedding of his blood. In this case, the new element would be better introduced thanks to the adverb "elsewhere," "on the other hand" than by "however." It is not a correction, but an addition, a supplementary element. So it looks like in 1 Cor 11:11.[57] Paul adds new arguments to those in vv. 8–9.[58] And what is supplementary is the fact that, playing on the meaning of the prepositions ἐκ, χωρίς, ἐν and διά (+ genitive), he now takes in

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55 "Die meisten nehmen an, Paulus beuge jetzt einer falschen Konsequenz vor, die man aus V. 3.8f ziehen könnte" (Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 517).

56 "*However*, in the Lord, though woman is nothing without man, man is nothing without woman; and though woman came from man, so does every man come from a woman, and everything comes from God." (NJB). "*Nevertheless*, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God." (NIV). "*Pourtant*, la femme est inséparable de l'homme et l'homme de la femme, devant le Seigneur. Car si la femme a été tirée de l'homme, l'homme naît de la femme et tout vient de Dieu." (TOB). "*Doch* im Herrn gibt es weder die Frau ohne den Mann noch den Mann ohne die Frau. Denn wie die Frau vom Mann stammt, so kommt der Mann durch die Frau zur Welt; alles aber stammt von Gott." (EIN).

57 See Matand Bulembat, "L'homme est l'image," 59–60.

58 For see also Brown, "The Dialectic of Relationship," 473, "Verses 11–12 depict the same truths from creation first postulated in w. 7–9, but the nature of the relationship between man and woman is now fully articulated in light of the two other participants of the *theologoumenon* of relationships with which Paul opened this discussion (v. 3)." We agree with this interpretation, except when it understands the syntagm ἐν κυρίῳ as meaning *in Christ*.

consideration the order of procreation besides that of creation, as does reveal the literary composition of 1 Cor 11:11–12.

3.2. Literary Composition of vv. 11–12

This micro-unit can be subdivided into two smaller units (v. 11 and v. 12), which can be arranged in the form of a synonymic parallelism (a, b, c, a', b', c'), in which a' clarifies a, b' explains b and c' enlightens c.

v. 11	(a)	no woman without (χωρίς) man	order of creation
	(b)	no man without (χωρίς) woman	order of procreation
	(c)	in (ἐν) the Lord	God's disposition
v. 12	(a')	woman (comes) from (ἐκ) man	order of creation
	(b')	man (comes) through (διά) woman	order of procreation
	(c')	everything (comes) from (ἐκ) God	God's disposition

3.3. Man and Woman in the Order of Procreation

One can see that the idea of the creation of the woman, contained in v. 8a-b, and underlining the precedence of man at the moment of creation, is resumed in v. 11a and v. 12a. "No woman without man" (v. 11a) means "woman comes from man" (v. 12a). The equality of man and woman in nature (woman doesn't come from an animal) doesn't annul the fact that man came before woman; man is at the beginning of woman, he is her origin, her head. The Midrashic analysis of vv. 7–10 revealed this male prerogative.

On the other side, in v. 11b, Paul takes in consideration the fact of man's procreation originating from woman and emphasizes the female prerogative. This idea is resumed in v. 12b. "No man without woman" (v. 11b) means "man comes through woman" (v. 12b). This is most probably an interpretation of Gen 3:20. In this text Adam, who in Gen 2:23 had said that the being drawn from him would be called "woman" (αὕτη κληθήσεται γυνή), gives her now another name: "Ζωή" i.e. the "Living One" (ἐκάλεσεν Αδαμ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ Ζωή). The reason given for this naming in Gen 3:20 is the fact that "she is the mother of all living" (ὅτι αὕτη μήτηρ πάντων τῶν ζώντων).

Thus, verses 11 and 12 of 1 Cor 11 bring Gen 2:7–23 close to Gen 3:20, and synthetize: chronologically, at the beginning of creation, man came before woman, and she from him, even if diachronically, through ages, man also is brought to life through woman. Paul thus completes the order of creation with that of procreation, without reducing the former to nothing. For in his view the whole disposition comes from God (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ:

v. 12), who is Lord (ἐν κυρίῳ: v. 11). The understanding of these two sentences is therefore important.

3.4. The Synonymic Parallelism of ἐν κυρίῳ and τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

The syntagm ἐν κυρίῳ is what prompts scholars to see in vv. 11–12 a correction by Paul based on the newness introduced by Christ in male-female relations.[59] The question anyway is whether the term κυρίος refers to Christ Jesus. Lucien Cerfaux and A. Feuillet have clearly shown that this term refers here to God, the Creator.[60] Indeed, whenever Paul resorts to the argument of creation, he is aware that the initiative belongs only to God the Creator. This should be the case here in an argumentation where he calls upon the creation narratives to justify his position.

Moreover, the formal parallelism already noted between the expression ἐν κυρίῳ and the statement τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ may indeed authorize giving an instrumental value to the preposition ἐν + dative to indicate the order established by the person who took the initiative of an act. This stands in Greek lexicons.[61] In the text we are reading ἐν κυρίῳ can thus refer to the order established by the Lord God at the creation of man and woman. The expression can be translated as "according to the Lord's provision." In this case, the Pauline argument is theological, and not christological.

The statement τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ is along the same lines and sheds more light on the place of the male being in the creative process. Because if Paul wanted to emphasize the equality between woman and man, he should have said here οἱ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. Instead, he speaks of τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, which normally refers to the creation of the whole universe. In this way, this statement also highlights the fact that the work of God is an order that should be respected. Even procreation, where the prerogative of woman is emphasized, remains a work of God's creation. At this point, one understands that Paul has sustained his principal idea that everyone, man and woman, should fulfill his/her responsibilities according to God's provision, while praying or prophesying in a Christian assembly.[62]

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59 According to Charles Perrot ("Une étrange lecture de l'écriture," 263) "Paul fait de l'exégèse 'à rebours'; il se sert de Moïse comme d'un réactif à l'aide d'une Loi qui découvre surtout le péché, sans plus être désormais la norme dernière. La Torah montre la faille, et c'est dans le Christ que la femme chrétienne trouvera sa valeur nouvelle et son autorité entière." See also N. Baumert, *Frau und Mann bei Paulus. Überwindung eines Mißverständnisses* (Würzburg: Echter 1992) 173–174, whose interpretation even seems to me to be a case of *eis-egesis*!

60 See L. Cerfaux, "'Kyrios' dans les citations pauliniennes de l'Ancien Testament," *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux. Etudes d'Exégèse et d'Histoire Religieuse de Monseigneur Cerfaux réunies à l'occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire* (eds. R. Aubert *et al.*) (BETL 6–7; Gembloux: Duculot 1954) 176, 187; Feuillet, "L'homme 'gloire de Dieu,'" 163, n. 23.

61 See BAGD, 260–261; A. Bailly, *Dictionnaire Grec-Français* (Paris: Hachette 1950) 665, to the word ἐν used as a preposition + dative: A.III.9.

62 See Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 517–518, where he rightly rejects certain assumptions that are, about vv. 10–12, difficult to be understood in the internal logic of the pericope. However, in the light of our analysis, his following assertion is also questionable: "V. 11a betont vielmehr zunächst, dass die der Frau zukommende ἐξουσία keine völlige Unabhägigkeit vom Mann bedeutet, ist also eher eine Einschränkung der ἐξουσία der Frau. Gleich wohl setzt V. 11f zugleich eine Gegengewicht, wie schon der Rückbezug von V 12a auf V 8a

4. Paul's Position and Message of the Pericope

Considering the above analysis, it is clear that 1 Cor 11:7–12 is not a text in which Paul has tried to justify with Scripture his alleged anti-feminist position.[63] Moreover, Paul does not blow hot and cold, supporting on the one hand the superiority of man over woman (vv. 7–10), and on the other hand correcting this position in a Christian way by speaking of their parity before the Lord (vv. 11–12). What he is arguing is that a Christian man or woman can pray or prophesy in a liturgical service, as long as each of them respects his/her dignity in the way she wears his/her hair. His message can be formulated this way: "Let not the hair of either man or woman outrage what the surrounding society holds as decent for his/her gender, because in matters of gender even God at the creation of the world did not dissolve differences. He created them both in His image and of the same human nature. But at the same time distinct, male and female, avoiding any process of confusion."

In 1 Cor 11:7–12 Paul does not support an ontological inferiority or inhuman subjugation of women to men. The vv. 3.5d-12.14–15 are not his main idea; they contain accepted logical ideas, i.e. not to be discussed – of course, in this argument and for this cause – and which provided him with the elements of what constitutes the specific dignity of every man and every woman, dignity which Paul would like to see respected at the time of liturgical acts. How can then Paul be considered as misogynistic with such a position? The analysis undertaken here shows that he is rather a *philogynist*!

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ergibt. Auch der Mann ist nicht unabhängig von der Frau (V 11b), d.h. trotz der bleibenden schöpfungsbedingten Unterschiede geht es um die Zusammengehörigkeit und das Aufeindaner-Verwiesensein von Mann und Frau, weil «im Herrn» zwar nicht Uniformität herrscht, wohl aber Interdependenz und Gemeinsamkeit, z.B. in der Partizipation an den Charismen (V 5)."

63 As Murphy-O'Connor, "Paolo e le donne," 27, states: "In realtà, il maschilista non è Paolo, ma i suoi interpreti, che hanno introdotto nel testo le loro vedute misogine."

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Homosexuality in the Pontifical Biblical Commission Document *What Is Man?*

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Abstract: Considerable public attention has been given to the treatment of homosexuality in the recent document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man? A Journey through Biblical Anthropology*. Some reports have claimed that the document represents a shift in Catholic teaching toward the acceptance of homosexual acts. This article assesses that claim by carefully examining the relevant sections of the document in the perspective of its wider reflections on biblical anthropology and on the biblical vision of the institution of marriage. While the document situates the biblical texts concerning homosexuality within their literary and cultural contexts and emphasises the pastoral sensitivity with which this topic must be approached, it does not promote a revision or reversal of the Church's teaching on sexual morality.

Keywords: homosexuality, sexual morality, Sodom, Gibeah, anthropology, Pontifical Biblical Commission, marriage

When the Vatican first published the Pontifical Biblical Commission document *What Is Man? A Journey through Biblical Anthropology* in Italian in December 2019, some media commentators, both on the left and on the right, seem to have skipped over the first two hundred pages and opened immediately to the section on homosexuality. There were headlines such as "New Vatican Book Reinterprets Sin of Sodom," "PBC Whitewashes Homosexual Fornication," and "PBC moves to justify divorce, more 'pastoral care' for gays." What is the basis for these claims? Are they correct? Does the document misrepresent biblical teaching on sexual morality, or seek to change Catholic doctrine? The present essay seeks to clarify what the PBC document actually says about homosexuality within the context of its reflections on biblical anthropology.

The document takes up the topic of homosexuality in its third chapter, "The human family," which concerns human interrelationships in all their forms. Within that chapter is a section on "The love between man and woman," with a subsection on "The marriage union in human history." Within the latter subsection there is a smaller unit dealing with

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"improper behaviours," including incest, adultery, prostitution, and homosexual acts. By this arrangement the PBC document indicates that the biblical references to homosexuality can be interpreted properly only in the context of the biblical vision of the institution of marriage as "the design willed by the Creator for the human being (Gen 1–2)."[1] While this vision is sketched in Genesis 1–2 and developed later by the wisdom traditions of Israel, the Bible in its realism also makes reference to various problematic situations and practices, including homosexual acts, which "disfigure the perfect form of the spousal union set forth by God."[2] Accordingly, this article will first summarize the PBC document's reflections on the biblical understanding of marriage, and then examine its analysis of the biblical texts that refer to homosexual practice.

1. The Biblical Vision of Marriage

The PBC notes that the Bible's first reference to human beings introduces the aspect of sexual differentiation: "male and female he created them" (Gen 1:26–27). The duality of male and female means that "each person will be in the image of God in a specific bodily form, with all that this implies, and in a relationship with the other, who is different from oneself."[3] God's creation of the human couple is, moreover, "immediately linked to the act of divine blessing which expresses itself as a call to fruitfulness (Gen 1:28). *Children are born of the couple* and they in turn are called upon to be fruitful and multiply; from the initial encounter innumerable offspring of humankind descend (Gen 5:1–32; 10:1–32)."[4] Sexual differentiation is thus intrinsically tied to the act of procreation, by which human beings become co-creators with God and thereby carry out a central aspect of their vocation as the bearers of his image on earth (cf. Gen 5:3). Through their spousal union the man and woman will "replicate that image by bringing forth children… who likewise will bear the divine imprint."[5]

God's blessing of the human couple (Gen 1:28) is similar to his blessing of the fish and birds (v. 22), but with a subtle difference: God directly addresses the man and woman (ויאמר להם אלהים) thereby inviting them into communion with himself.[6] The commission that he confers on them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (v. 28), gives them responsibility over their reproductive powers. Thus although the sexual

1 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man? A Journey through Biblical Anthropology* (trans. F. O'Fearghail – A. Graffy) (London: Darton, Longman & Todd 2021) no. 171. Here and throughout, references to the document are given by paragraph number.

2 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 171.

3 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 48.

4 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 151. In all quotations from the PBC document, italics are as in the original.

5 J.C. Atkinson, *Biblical and Theological Foundations of the Family. The Domestic Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press 2014) 63.

6 See N.M. Sarna, *Genesis* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society 1989) 13.

complementarity of human beings is analogous to that which exists in the animal world, it transcends it. As the PBC states,

> Sirach notes that God created all things "in pairs, by opposites" so that "one thing complements the excellence of another" (Sir 42:24–25)…. If human beings are in fact similar to animals because like them they are "male and female", they are nevertheless also similar to God because they are capable of giving life in love and for love: human generation cannot therefore be described simply as the fruit of a carnal relationship, because it is able to express a "divine" quality when it takes place according to the way in which God gives life to every person, that is, in gratuitous generosity.[7]

In the second creation account (Gen 2:4–25), similar themes are expressed in a different and less poetic literary mode. Here too the narrative highlights the common human nature of the man and woman, but at the same time their distinctness. God first fashions man (האדם: v. 7), which as the PBC notes is probably intended to represent human nature in the abstract, apart from sexual distinction.[8] God's remark that "It is not good that the man should be alone" (v. 18) indicates that the work of creation is as yet incomplete and inadequate.[9] God then resolves the crisis of אדם in solitude not by fashioning a replica of him, but by fashioning from his side (מצלעתיו) a complementary being who is different yet intimately related to him, with whom he yearns to be *re*united.[10] Only now are they two sexually differentiated beings, איש (man) and אשה (woman) (v. 23).[11] Genesis insists on the specific sexual identity of each, expressed for the man in "closing the flesh up again" (v. 21) and for the woman in being "built" (בנה: v. 22), which alludes to her potential to generate children (בנים).[12] Likewise the etymological link between איש and אשה shows their "kinship" but "highlights at the same time the difference that leads to the spousal union (v. 24) that is necessary for the procreation of life."[13] By accenting the male-female distinction, the narrator conveys that it is through the complementarity of their bodies—their sexual differences that make fruitful union possible—that the man and woman perceive their call to spousal

7 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 48.

8 "It is not the solitude of the male but that of the human being that is remedied by the creation of man and woman" (*ibidem*, 153). Pope John Paul II takes the same approach in his reflections on the theology of the body (General Audience of Oct. 10, 1979, in *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body* [trans. M. Waldstein] [Boston, MA: Pauline 2006] 147).

9 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 73.

10 See F. Martin, *Sacred Scripture. The Disclosure of the Word* (Naples, FL: Sapientia 2006) 201; R.A.J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice. Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 2001) 60–61. Although צלע is traditionally translated "rib," in nearly all other OT uses it simply means "side," and Adam's exclamation in 2:23 implies that the woman was taken not only from his "bone" but also from his "flesh" (soft tissue).

11 As Robert A.J. Gagnon notes, "The image presented in Gen 2,21–22 appears to be that of an originally binary human, or one sexually undifferentiated, who is split down the side to form two sexually differentiated counterparts. Marriage is pictured as a *reconstitution* of the two constituent parts, male and female, that were the products of the splitting" ("The Old Testament and Homosexuality: A Critical Review of the Case Made by Phyllis Bird," *ZAW* 117 [2005] 367–394).

12 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 156.

13 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 155.

communion. Each recognises the other as an equal, unlike the animals (2:19–20), and yet irreducibly *other*.[14] "The difference between them encourages the discovery of the spiritual good of mutual recognition, the principle of a communion of love and an invitation to become 'one flesh" (v. 24)."[15]

In a scene with nuptial overtones, the Lord orchestrates the encounter between the two, thereby resolving the problem of the initial solitude of the human being (v. 18). The man speaks for the first time, welcoming the Creator's gift in joy and delight. His exclamation, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," reflects the language of covenant.[16]

> The call to institute the marriage covenant is a theme of v. 24 where the speaker brings out the purpose of the difference between man and woman: "this is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife". The reference to parents is entirely incongruous in this narrative context, and compels the reader to see announced here the ideal path traced for man in general: the woman, led by God, goes towards the man (v. 22), and the man, recognising the gift, goes towards the woman (v. 24), each one leaving the reality they came from to bring about through their mutual "adhesion" that unity ("one flesh") that will be the beginning of new life, and will become in history a sign of witness to the one fatherhood, the one origin of all things.[17]

As Joseph C. Atkinson notes, "God did not create two principles, the male and female, which were then brought together. Rather there is already an interior ordination of one to the other; one comes from the other and together they form a unity… (*bāsār ʾeḥād*—one flesh)."[18] The beauty of this spousal union is later celebrated in the Psalms and Wisdom literature, especially the Song of Songs, and in the book of Ruth.[19]

At the conclusion of the account in Genesis 2, the narrator's remark that their nakedness did not produce shame evokes "the innocence of the beginnings, not yet spoiled by sin." It also suggests "that the sexual relationship of the spouses is pure insofar as in the flesh it expresses love according to the design of God."[20] This final verse sets up a contrast with the next scene, in which the couple cover themselves and hide in shame in consequence of their disobedience to the divine command (3:7–11). Disobedience to God introduces disorder into human relationships, especially in the sexual sphere.[21]

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14 See Atkinson, *Biblical and Theological Foundations*, 57–58.

15 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 153.

16 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 158 (cf. Gen 29:14; Judg 9:2; 2 Sam 5:1–3; 19:13–14). See W. Brueggemann, "Of the Same Flesh and Bone (GN 2,23a)," *CBQ* 32 (1970) 532–542.

17 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 157.

18 Atkinson, *Biblical and Theological Foundations*, 171.

19 See Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 158–170, which also comments briefly on Ps 45; Prov 5:15–18; 31:11–12, 28–29; Sir 7:22; 25:1; 26:13–18; Qoh 4:9–12; 9:7–9; Wis 8:2, 9, 16.

20 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 157.

21 Not incidentally, the first consequence of the couple's sin is a loss of sexual innocence: "they knew they were naked" (3:7), and there will henceforth be a disturbance in the marital relationship, with tendencies toward disunity, exploitation and dominance (3:12, 16).

The PBC's reflections on the vision of marriage sketched in Genesis 1–2 thus reaffirms the biblical witness that human beings are created with an intrinsic orientation to spousal communion with the opposite sex that is inscribed in the human body, male or female. Marriage and sexuality, as part of God's created order, cannot be arbitrarily defined but have "a constitutive nature which needs to be respected if man and society are to flourish."[22] This background provides the essential foundation for interpreting the biblical passages that directly concern homosexual acts and other behaviours that are contrary to the divine plan for human sexuality.

2. The Biblical Texts on Homosexuality: Preliminary Observations

Before proceeding to analyse the biblical texts that mention homosexual acts, the PCB document acknowledges the sensitivity of this topic in today's cultural context, in which many people hold "that a new and more adequate understanding of the human person radically questions the exclusive evaluation of the heterosexual union, and invites similar acceptance of homosexuality and of homosexual unions."[23] Just as the advance of science has shown certain aspects of biblical cosmology, biology and sociology to be outdated and historically conditioned, so, some argue, modern developments in the understanding of sexuality have rendered the biblical view of sexuality antiquated and irrelevant. Moreover, "it is sometimes argued that the Bible says little or nothing on this type of erotic relationship, which should not therefore be condemned, also because it is often wrongly confused with other deviant sexual behaviours."[24] The PBC document does not—contrary to some media reports—endorse these arguments, but simply presents them as a reason for carefully examining the relevant biblical texts.

What Is Man? makes another preliminary observation that is of capital importance for interpreting the references to homosexuality: "the Bible does not speak of the erotic

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22 Atkinson, *Biblical and Theological Foundations*, 50.

23 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 185. For representatives of these views see, e.g., J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality. Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1980); R. Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality. Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1983); M. Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World. A Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1998); D. Balch (ed.), *Homosexuality, Science, and the "Plain Sense" of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2000); D.A. Helminiak, *What the Bible* Really *Says about Homosexuality* (Estancia, NM: Alamo Square 2000); K. Stone, "Homosexuality and the Bible or Queer Reading? A Response to Marti Nissinen," *T&S* 14 (2001) 107–181; D.O. Via, "The Bible, the Church, and Homosexuality," D.O. Via – R.A.J. Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible. Two Views* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2003) 1–39; J.V. Brownson, *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2013); and W. Loader, "Homosexuality and the Bible," W. Loader *et al.*, *Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2016) 17–48.

24 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 185.

inclination towards a person of the same sex, but only of homosexual acts."[25] The Bible does not, of course, view the human person in terms of the modern categories of homosexual vs. heterosexual (nor any other sexual orientation); still less does it speak of gender identity as something distinct from sexual difference.[26]

3. Homosexuality in the Old Testament

Having briefly laid this contextual foundation, the PBC document deals with the four Old Testament and three New Testament texts that directly mention homosexual acts.[27] First are two Old Testament narratives, the stories of the sin of Sodom (Gen 19) and the gang rape in Gibeah (Judg 19). The Sodom account is the proverbial biblical text concerning homosexual sin and its catastrophic punishment. In this story, two angels under the appearance of two men are lodging overnight with Lot, when the inhabitants of Sodom besiege the house, demanding to "know" (ידע) these men (Gen 19:5), a euphemism for sexual relations (cf. Gen 4:1, 17, 25). Lot, in a desperate attempt to deter them, offers them instead his two daughters "who have not known [ידע] any man" (v. 8), an offer the townsmen refuse. The angels rescue Lot and his daughters, after which the city is destroyed. The PBC notes that Genesis presents the Sodom episode as a counterpoint to the story of Abraham: whereas God's blessing of Abraham is expressed in "deliverance from every threat and danger, and above all in the gift of innumerable descendants (Gen 15:5; 17:4–5; 22:17)," the curse of Sodom is expressed in "the total disappearance of life, leading to desolation and perpetual sterility."[28]

But what precisely is the sin for which Sodom is punished? The PBC, along with many contemporary scholars, interprets the sin of Sodom as that of refusing hospitality to strangers and subjecting them to shameful humiliation.[29] It notes that the later references to the Sodom event in the Hebrew Bible do not denounce the city for homosexual

25 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 185. This observation should, however, be balanced by noting the fact that Old and New Testament texts also censure interior lustful passions, whether toward persons of the same or the opposite sex (e.g., Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21; Matt 5:28; Rom 1:26–27; Eph 4:22; 1 Thess 4:5; 2 Pet 2:10).

26 The term "homosexual" is a modern term, coined in Germany in 1869. It was sometimes used more broadly to refer to any single-sex entity (such as an all-girls school), but gradually came to be used specifically in reference to sexual attraction and behaviour. Only in the late twentieth century did "homosexual" come to be viewed as an anthropological category (along with heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and so on) designating a kind of person, namely one with a sexual "orientation" to the same sex. See J.N. Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2005).

27 The document does not treat the biblical texts referring to homosexual cult prostitution (Deut 23:17–18; 1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kgs 23:7; Job 36:13–14), nor the story of Ham's sin against Noah (Gen 9:20–27), which is arguably an act of incestuous homosexual rape (see Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 63–71; Nissinen, *Homoeroticism*, 52–53).

28 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 186.

29 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 187.

acts, but rather for a variety of sins including adultery, deceit, encouraging evildoers, pride, complacency, and failure to assist the poor (Isa 1:10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Ezek 16:49–50).[30] It should be noted, however, that the Sodom narrative cannot be read in isolation from its context within the Pentateuch, which condemns homosexual practice as one of the abhorrent behaviours of the Canaanites (Lev 18:22, 24; 20:13, 23). Moreover, two references to Sodom in the later New Testament letters (2 Pet 2:6–10 and Jude 7) interpret the sin of Sodom as erotic relations with persons of the same sex, a fact of importance to canonical biblical interpretation and to later Christian tradition.[31]

The PBC document concludes, however, that the interpretation given in 2 Peter and Jude lacks "clear support in the biblical account."[32] As evidence for this conclusion, the document states that Genesis does not intend to present "an image of an entire city dominated by overwhelming cravings of a homosexual nature," which would presumably be unrealistic.[33] But it may be asked whether this observation overstates the case. The narrator's statement that "the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man" demanded Lot's guests (Gen 19:4) is standard biblical hyperbole, not intended to be taken literally but used for emphasizing the general wickedness of the city (cf. similar examples in Josh 10:40; Judg 20:26). Moreover, as noted above, the Old Testament does not speak of homosexual inclinations per se, but only of homosexual acts.[34] The narrator of Genesis is concerned not so much with inner cravings as with intended external deeds.

The motif of hospitality is clearly a major element of the Sodom account: the people of Sodom wished to humiliate foreigners rather than welcoming them with respect.[35] When Lot, himself a foreigner, welcomed the angelic guests "under the shelter of his roof," he was threatened by the men of the city with the same degrading treatment (Gen 19:9). According to the PBC, their threat "reveals the moral evil of the city of Sodom, which not only refuses hospitality, but will not put up with the presence within the city of one who provides an open house to the stranger."[36] This description, while accurate as far as it goes, omits to mention the full reason given by the men of Sodom for their rancour toward Lot: his condemnation of their intended homosexual rape as "doing evil [רעע]" (Gen 19:7). They retort

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30 See also Sir 16:8; Wis 19:13–14. However, Ezek 16:50 speaks of Sodom having committed "a hateful thing" (תועבה), which is likely an oblique reference to homosexual relations, using the same expression for such acts found in Lev 18:22; 20:13. See Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 79–85.

31 This was the standard interpretation of the sin of Sodom in Jewish literature of the intertestamental and NT period. See Philo, *Abr.* 135; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.11.3; *Jub.* 16:5–6; 20:5–6; *T. Levi* 14:6; *T. Benj.* 9.1; *T. Naph.* 3.4; *2 En.* 34:1–2. Jude 7 literally reads, "Sodom and Gomorrah… indulged in sexual immorality and went after other flesh" (Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα… ἐκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας). The sense may be that "in their lust for sexual intercourse with other men, the men of Sodom inadvertently put themselves in the sacrilegious position of pursuing sexual intercourse with angels" (Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 88).

32 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 186.

33 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 187.

34 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 185.

35 See K.A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (NAC; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman 2005) 231–233; Sarna, *Genesis*, 135; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Dallas, TX: Word Books 1994) 63–65.

36 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 187.

in outrage, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge [וישפט שפוט]! Now we will deal worse [רעע] with you than with them" (Gen 19:9). Their fury is directed at his moral censure of their actions.

Reading the Sodom narrative in its literary context yields further conclusions. The story is part of a tightly-woven unit, which begins with the Lord's visit to Abraham and Sarah at the oaks of Mamre, promising the birth of their son (18:1–15), and concludes with Lot's incestuous relations with his daughters (19:30–38). The Sodom episode is thus framed by contrasting references to sexual relations. The first, that of Abraham and Sarah, depicts a married couple who trust in God and conform to his plan, leading to great blessing in the birth of their son Isaac, progenitor of the people of Israel. The other, that of Lot and his daughters, depicts distrust in God (cf. 19:31) and disorder in sexual relationships, leading to future troubles in the birth of Ammon and Moab, ancestors of Israel's historic enemies. This narrative frame suggests that sexuality also plays a key role in the Sodom story itself (18:16–19:29). Another suggestive parallel is that both the Mamre and Sodom scenes involve a divine visitation. In the first, the Lord (in the form of three men/angels) is welcomed by Abraham with extraordinary humility and hospitality; in the second, the Lord (represented by two angels) is treated by the men of Sodom with extraordinary contempt and hostility.[37] This parallel suggests that the fundamental question in both stories is how human beings will respond to a visitation of God.[38] In the eyes of the biblical narrator, the sin of Sodom consists neither in hostility to foreigners alone nor in sexual immorality alone. Rather, it consists of a depraved mélange of homosexual sex, violence toward strangers, and contempt for the messengers of the Lord.

The account in Judges 19 closely parallels the Sodom story. The inhabitants of Gibeah besiege the house of an old man, demanding to "know" a Levite of Ephraim who is lodging overnight with him, i.e., to have coercive homosexual relations with the foreigner (Judg 19:22). The master of the house, attempting like Lot to appease the mob, offers his own virgin daughter and the guest's concubine in place of "this outrageous thing [נבלה]" (Judg 19:24; cf. 2 Sam 13:12). When they refuse the offer, the Levite hands over his concubine, whom they sexually abuse with such violence that she dies.[39] In this case, as in the Sodom episode, the PBC argues that the sin of the city is that of showing hostility and

37 There are similar parallels between the Sodom episode and the account of the flood (Gen 6–8). In each case there is catastrophic destruction as a result of grave evil, the evil includes both sexual immorality and violence, God mercifully spares one man and his family, and the calamity is followed by the protagonist's intoxication with wine and the abhorrent actions of his children. See Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 40–45.

38 The latter is the focus of Jesus' own references to Sodom in the synoptic gospels (Matt 10:14–15; 11:20–24; Luke 10:10–12).

39 It is worth noting that, contra the opinion of some interpreters, the narrator—depicting a society in which "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6)—does not condone the behaviour of the old man and the Levite. "They emerge as cowardly, and their complicity in the rape and murder of the woman is a clear and reprehensible violation of covenant" (S. Niditch, *Judges. A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2008] 193). "The text blames the men: the men of Gibeah, the Levite and the host. The woman is a victim of evil men. Good, godly men treat women differently—even in a patriarchal world" (K.L. Younger Jr., *Judges and Ruth* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2002] 362).

violence to the stranger. Their sexual abuse of a woman "shows that they were not sexually attracted by the male but only desirous of imposing themselves on the foreigner."[40] This assumes, however, that only those with exclusively homosexual inclinations would have engaged in homosexual acts—an assumption not supported by the evidence in the Hebrew Bible, nor in ancient Near Eastern literature generally.[41] Moreover, as noted above, the OT is not concerned with sexual inclinations but with sexual acts. Whether the intended rape was motivated by lust or by hostility—or more realistically, a combination of the two—it is the act that is censured. "A strict either/or approach to the question of motivation (intent to do harm vs. sexual passion) is unwarranted for this story.... As in the case of the Yahwist's rendition of the story Sodom, the narrator here is concerned with describing evil actions, not with psychologizing the motives of the perpetrators of this vile act."[42] Hostility to a foreigner is certainly an aspect of their despicable behaviour. But here too, a factor that the PBC does not fully account for is that the old man of Gibeah (like Lot) clearly regarded the homosexual nature of the intended acts as exacerbating the crime; for the narrator of the story, this "outrageous thing" (נבלה) "was an act that underscored the perversion of the Israelite men of Gibeah."[43]

After briefly analysing these two narratives, the PBC concludes that the narrative texts of the Bible do not provide "any pointers concerning homosexual practices, either as behaviour to be criticised or as attitudes that are tolerated or welcomed."[44] This again seems to overstate the case, since in both accounts the homosexual nature of the intended acts forms part of the overall portrait of the depraved city. Nevertheless, it is true that the Sodom and Gibeah narratives—like all biblical narratives—do not in themselves provide norms of conduct. The biblical narratives depict human motives and behaviour in all their complexity—good, evil, and mixed—offering moral assessments only in oblique and sometimes ambiguous ways. For prescriptive moral norms we must look elsewhere. In regard to homosexual acts, these are found in the Old Testament in two legislative texts, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

As the PBC document observes, each of these texts appears in a list of unacceptable sexual practices, including various forms of incest, sexual relations with a menstruating

40 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 188.

41 See Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 385, 418–420; D.M. Halperin, "Homosexuality," *OCD* 723.

42 Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 97.

43 Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 95. It is undoubtedly also true that the woman's life was considered of less value than that of her husband.

44 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 188. Other OT narratives, such as the account of the friendship between David and Jonathan, or between Ruth and Naomi, are sometimes cited as evidence of a positive view of homosexual relations. But as the PBC notes (*ibidem*, 188), "Friendship between persons of the same sex, such as that of David and Jonathan, which is highlighted in 2 Sam 1:26, cannot be considered as an element favouring the recognition of homosexuality in Israelite society." See M. Zehnder, "Observations on the Relationship between David and Jonathan and the Debate on Homosexuality," *WTJ* 69 (2007) 127–174; I. Himbaza – A. Schenker – J.-B. Edart, *The Bible on the Question of Homosexuality* (trans. B.M. Guevin) (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius 2011).

woman, adultery, child sacrifice, and bestiality.[45] The PBC, without attempting a detailed analysis of these passages, states that "we can assume that the law of Leviticus intends to safeguard and promote an exercise of sexuality open to procreation, in accordance with the Creator's command to human beings (Gen 1:28), ensuring of course that such an act takes place within a legitimate marriage."[46] One might also add that Leviticus intends to safeguard God's intention for marriage as depicted in the second creation account (Gen 2), where the focus is not on procreation, but on spousal communion.

4. Homosexuality in the New Testament

From the Church's perspective, it is of course the New Testament that is decisive for formulating Christian moral norms. As the PBC states, the gospels make no mention of homosexual acts.[47] That silence, however, must be interpreted within the context of first-century Judaism, which unequivocally held to the Mosaic law's prohibitions of homosexual acts along with other sexual offenses.[48] The gospels use the term πορνεῖαι (or the singular πορνεία) to denote "sexually immoral acts" in general, including those listed in Leviticus 18.[49] A saying of Jesus mentions πορνεῖαι as among those "evils" that come from within and "defile a person" (Mark 7:21–23; Matt 15:19–20). Jesus therefore implicitly includes homosexual acts among behaviours that must be renounced by the children of the kingdom. Nor is there any indication that Jesus relaxed the sexual ethics of the Torah. Although he implied that certain ritual laws are now rescinded (Mark 7:14–19; cf. Acts 15; Rom 14:14, 20), his moral teaching was not less but *more* rigorous than that of the Torah and its first-century Jewish

45 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 190. The proscription of sex with a menstruating woman (Lev 18:19; 20:18), dealing as it does with a bodily emission of fluid, would seem belong to the ritual law rather than moral law. But in fact it embodies a moral principle, namely, that even within marriage, male sexual desire is not given free rein but is subject to restraint, in accord with God's command for openness to procreation (Gen 1:28). See W.C. Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1991) 199. Likewise, the condemnation of child sacrifice (Lev 18:21; 20:2–5) may appear out of place in a list of sexual behaviours, but in the eyes of the biblical legislator, to destroy the human life resulting from sexual union is in fact a grave abuse of the sexual faculty.

46 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 190.

47 Allusions to homosexuality are sometimes read into gospel texts; for instance, a sexualised interpretation is given to the centurion's relationship with his slave, or to Jesus' relationship with the beloved disciple (Matt 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10; John 13:23–25). But this is eisegesis rather than exegesis. See Himbaza – Schenker – Edart, *Question of Homosexuality*, 107–110. Likewise Jesus' saying about some eunuchs "who have been so from birth" (Matt 19:12) refers to sexual potency, not sexual orientation. See Loader, "Homosexuality and the Bible," 33.

48 There is abundant evidence that Jews of the period (roughly 200 BC to 200 AD) viewed homosexual practice as an offense and a prime example of pagan sexual depravity. Cf. Wis 14:26; *Let. Aris.* 152; *Sib. Or.* 3:184–187, 596–600, 764; 5:166, 430; *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocydides* 190–192, 212–214; Philo, *Abr.* 135–137; *Spec.* 1.325, 2.50, 3.37–42; *Contempl.* 59–62; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.200–201; *Ag. Ap.* 2.199, 273–275; *T. Levi* 17:11; *T. Naph.* 3:4; *2 En.* 10:4; 34:1–2; *m. Sanh.* 7:4.

49 Matt 5:32; 15:19; 19:9; Mark 7:21; John 8:41; cf. Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25. See BDAG, s.v. "πορνεία," 854; Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 191.

interpretation, particularly in the area of sexual ethics (Matt 5:17–19, 27–28, 31–32). In his response to the Pharisees regarding divorce and remarriage (Matt 19:1–9; Mark 10:1–12), Jesus cites both creation accounts (Gen 1:27; 2:24), reaffirming heterosexual marriage as the only kind of sexual union authorized by God. Moreover, by appealing to what God intended "from the beginning of creation" as the standard for marriage henceforth (Mark 10:6), Jesus implies that there is a new capacity to live according to that standard in the eschatological era inaugurated by his redemptive mission.[50]

Three New Testament texts mention homosexual acts explicitly, all in the Pauline correspondence: two in lists of behaviours that exclude a person from inheriting the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9–10; 1 Tim 1:10), and one more detailed text in Romans. The PBC document addresses each of these in turn.[51]

The list in 1 Cor 6:9–10 is prefaced with the rhetorical question "Do you not know?", indicating that Paul considers these truths self-evident to his Christian audience. He presents a list of ten transgressions in two parts, "almost a kind of Decalogue, adapted for the Corinthian situation."[52] The first part (v. 9) refers mainly to sexual sins but also includes idolatry, which for Paul, as for the Old Testament, is inextricably linked to sexual immorality.[53] The fourth and fifth items on the list are μαλακοὶ (literally, "soft, effeminate") and ἀρσενοκοῖται (literally, "men who lie with males"). In ancient Greek μαλακοὶ was sometimes used as a pejorative term for men or boys who played the passive role in homosexual acts.[54] Here, sandwiched between two other kinds of sexual behaviour that exclude one from the kingdom (adultery and homosexual practice), it clearly refers not to a mere personality characteristic (effeminacy) but to sexual conduct.[55] Nor is there warrant for narrowing the meaning to "male prostitutes" (NRSV) or "boy prostitutes" (NAB), since there is no evidence that the term was restricted either to adolescents or to those who sold their sexual services.[56] The term ἀρσενοκοῖται does not appear in Greek prior to Paul and was probably coined by Paul himself, combining the two words used for homosexual acts in

50 See John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* [*The Splendor of Truth*] (Rome 1993) no. 103.

51 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 191–195.

52 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 191.

53 Cf. Exod 32:1–6; Num 25:1–2; Isa 57:7–8, Hos 4:12–14; Gal 5:19–21, Eph 5:5, Col 3:5.

54 Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 7.2.4, relates that Aristodemus the tyrant of Cumae was nicknamed Malakos, either "because when a boy he was effeminate [*malakos*] and allowed himself to be treated as a woman" or "because he was of a mild nature and slow to anger." Cf. Philo's use of *malakia* ("effeminacy") alongside *anandria* ("unmanliness") to refer to the behaviour of passive homosexual partners who cultivate feminine features in *Spec.* 3.37–42, and his use of *malakotēs* ("softness, decadence") to describe the feminizing process of the men of Sodom in *Abr.* 135–137.

55 G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1987) 244.

56 Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 306–312, 325–330. Although pederasty was the most common form of male homosexual practice in the Greco-Roman world, it was not uncommon for youths in such relationships to continue to play the sexually passive role in adulthood. See T.K. Hubbard (ed.), *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome. A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2003) 5–7.

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 LXX: ἄρσην (“male”) and κοίτη (“lying” or “bed”).[57] Placed together, μαλακοὶ and ἀρσενοκοῖται make clear that both partners in homosexual relations are held accountable.[58] Paul’s aim in this passage is of course to ensure that his readers will *not* be excluded from the kingdom. Thus he calls those who practice such things to repentance and sexual purity in accord with the gift of sanctification they have been given in Christ through the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 1:2; Rom 6:19; 1 Thess 4:3).

In 1 Timothy 1:9–10 there is a long list of the kinds of offenders for whom “the law is laid down,” roughly following the order of the Decalogue. The “law” almost certainly refers to the Mosaic law or Jewish law more broadly, rather than to civil law or the general moral law.[59] Here too the list is prefaced with “knowing this” (similar to “do you not know?” in 1 Cor 6:9), indicating that these truths are considered obvious. This catalogue includes ἀρσενοκοῖται (“men who lie with males”), again referring to those who practice any form of homosexual intercourse, not only exploitative relations with boy prostitutes or one’s own feminized male slaves.[60] As the PBC states unambiguously, “From these lists we can conclude that for Christians homosexual practice is considered a serious sin.”[61]

The most detailed and carefully constructed passage in which homosexual acts are mentioned is the opening section of Paul’s letter to the Romans. Here Paul sketches the universal captivity of human beings to sin, demonstrating the universal need for salvation in Christ. Paul denounces the human tendency to suppress the truth about God (v. 18), which leads to moral degradation in four stages. The PBC speaks of three stages, but Paul’s threefold repetition of the key phrase “[Therefore] God handed them over” (vv. 24, 26, 28) seems to indicate that following the initial stage of rejection of the truth, there are a further three distinct stages.

First, the culpable failure to acknowledge and honour God leads to idolatry (vv. 21–23). “Here is denounced the fact that human beings, although having the reality of creation before their eyes and having the intelligence to understand, were not able to distinguish the creature from the Creator. Instead of rendering glory to God, they venerated ‘the likeness of the image’ of men and of beasts (Rom 1:20–25).”[62]

Second, people commit sexually impure acts that “dishonour [ἀτιμάζεσθαι] their bodies” (vv. 24–25). Paul is likely referring here to sexual immorality in general. These *dishonourable* actions are a direct consequence of the failure to *honour* God by glorifying him (v. 21).

57 Lev 18:22 LXX reads μετὰ ἄρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην γυναικείαν (“you shall not sleep with a male as on the bed of a woman”); Lev 20:13 reads ὃς ἂν κοιμηθῇ μετὰ ἄρσενος κοίτην γυναικός… (“whoever sleeps with a male as on the bed of a woman…”). See D.F. Wright, “Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of *Arsenokoitai* (1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10),” *VC* 38 (1984) 125–153.

58 See Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 330; D.E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2003) 217–218.

59 See W.D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville TN: Nelson 2000) 32–33.

60 Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 332–336.

61 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 192.

62 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 194.

Third, people engage in homosexual relations (vv. 26–27), which is again directly linked to their rejection of God: those who "exchanged" (ἤλλαξαν) God's glory for idolatry (v. 23) and "exchanged" (μετήλλαξαν) the truth about God for a lie (v. 25) also "exchanged" (μετήλλαξαν) natural sexual relations for unnatural (v. 26).[63] As the PBC notes, Paul's term "unnatural" (παρὰ φύσιν) "is to be interpreted as something that contrasts with the concrete reality of sexual bodies, which have in themselves a difference and a purpose that are not recognised and respected in relationships between persons of the same sex."[64] The claim is often made that the phenomenon of homosexual orientation was unknown to Paul, and therefore here he speaks only against those who are heterosexual by nature but engage in homosexual acts.[65] But the phenomenon of an exclusive or predominant attraction to the same sex was in fact well known in the ancient Greco-Roman world and likely familiar to Paul.[66] More importantly, there is no evidence that Paul would have understood what is "natural" as constituted by a person's subjective desires or inclinations. Otherwise one would have to recognize a "natural" orientation to other forms of sexual sin—not to mention envy, deceit, boasting, and other sins mentioned in this passage (vv. 29–31). Rather, "natural" means living in harmony with the order of things willed by the Creator.[67] Paul describes the sexual acts that violate that order as marked by "dishonour" (ἀτιμία) and "disgrace" (ἀσχημοσύνη). The PBC makes the important observation that for Paul, such behaviour is itself "a form of punishment: 'God abandoned them to degrading passions [...] receiving in themselves due reward for their perversion' (Rom 1:26–27)."[68] Sexual conduct that no longer respects the "natural" sexual complementarity of men and women is thus not prior to but rather a *symptom* of the sin of rejecting the truth about God.

Finally, Paul describes a general breakdown of society in the form of various violent and disordered behaviours (vv. 28–31). This too he interprets as a divine judgment that is meant to "open people's eyes to the lie that produced such injustice," so that they may recognise their need for the solution God has provided: "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24).[69]

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63 By using the relatively rare terms θῆλυς (female) and ἄρσην (male) rather than γυνή (woman) and ἀνήρ (man) in vv. 26–27, Paul alludes to Gen 1:27 LXX, emphasizing the sexual distinctiveness of male and female in God's created order. See T.R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book 1998) 95.

64 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 194.

65 Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 109–112; Via, "The Bible, the Church, and Homosexuality," 15; Loader, "Homosexuality and the Bible," 45.

66 See Plato, *Symp.* 189C–193D; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 7.5.3–5 and other sources cited in Gagnon, *Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 380–386.

67 See Loader, "Homosexuality and the Bible," 39–40; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday 1993) 286; Schreiner, *Romans*, 95. Philo, *Spec.* 3.7; cf. *Abr.* 26, and Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.38, specifically denounce homosexual practice as "unnatural" (παρὰ φύσιν).

68 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 194. See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 272.

69 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 194.

Conclusion

In concluding its brief treatment of the biblical texts concerning homosexuality, the PBC states that "Certain formulations of biblical authors, as well as the disciplinary directives of Leviticus, require an intelligent interpretation that both safeguards the values that the sacred text seeks to promote and avoids the literal repetition of culturally conditioned features of the time." Moreover, "pastoral care will be required, particularly in relation to individuals, in order to carry out that service of the good that the Church is called to take up in its mission to humanity."[70] Although these statements caused consternation in some circles, a recognition of the cultural conditioning of biblical texts is well established in Catholic teaching. As the Catechism states, "In order to discover the sacred authors' intention, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture."[71] Today there is a greater recognition than there was in ancient times that certain sexual behaviours are often not simply chosen but can stem from inner wounds and compulsions that are difficult to resist.[72] An adequate pastoral approach to sexual morality must take into account factors that were not considered by the biblical authors; for instance, the fact that some people have, through no fault of their own, deep-seated homosexual inclinations going back to early childhood, which can diminish—though without entirely destroying (cf. 1 Cor 10:13)—their freedom to resist these impulses. Likewise, sexual abuse (homosexual or heterosexual) often causes profound psychological trauma that destroys self-esteem and leads people into sexually promiscuous lifestyles. None of these factors nullifies the biblical teachings on sexual morality, but they do need to inform the Church's pastoral approach to the issue, which should be marked by the New Testament's confidence in the power of Christ's grace: "such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11). Thus the treatment of homosexuality in the PBC document, while incomplete in some respects, in no way seeks to change or invalidate the Church's teaching, but simply provides a concise orientation to the relevant biblical texts and important facts to consider in interpreting them.

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70 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man?*, no. 195.

71 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2 ed. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2011) no. 110; cf. Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum* (Rome 1965) no. 12; Pius XII, *Divino afflante Spiritu* (Rome 1943) no. 37–42; Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Rome 1993) I.A; I.D; III.D.

72 For very helpful explanations of and pastoral responses to such challenges, see the essays in J.E. Smith – P. Check (eds.), *Living the Truth in Love. Pastoral Approaches to Same-Sex Attraction* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius 2015).

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Mutual Vulnerability? Asymmetric Relationships in Biblical Anthropology

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Abstract: The 2019 PBC document views relationships between parents and children, masters and servants, "shepherds" and "the flock," civil authority and citizens as *asymmetric*. The structure of the document suggests that these relationship systems are based on shared human experience and a common theological foundation: they appear to repeat the pattern of the parent-child relationship and originate in the obligation to obey God. Using the document as a starting point, I would like to outline what the concept of asymmetric relationships can mean today. In search of common perspectives, I will compare New Testament texts with the interpretation of asymmetry in today's social ethics discourse. The inequality and asymmetry of different persons and groups seem to be an undeniable fact, causing tension that can be resolved fruitfully by parties who take responsibility for each other in the presence of a "third."

Keywords: vulnerability, asymmetric relationships, reciprocity, obedience

Pope Francis spoke at a theological symposium in Naples on 21 June 2019, addressing the issue of the desirable renewal of theology in the spirit of the apostolic constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*.[1] He emphasised, among other things, that today's theology must strive in particular for an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach. Thus, on the one hand, the self-serving seclusion of theology or the theologian can be avoided. On the other hand, such an approach will enable theology, like many other disciplines, to reassess its traditions in a spirit of compassion and attention to our fellow men and to make these traditions useful to others.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission published a document on the image of man in the Bible on 16 December 2019.[2] The paper also addresses a wide range of human sciences and invites them to work together to communicate and make use of the values of the biblical message that are as relevant today as ever. From the multitude of possible

1 The text of the speech is available at: "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis," https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco_20190621_teologia-napoli.html [access: 29.12.2021].

2 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *«Che cosa è l'uomo?» (Sal 8,5). Un itinerario di antropologia biblica*, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20190930_cosa-e-luomo_it.html [access: 29.12.2021].

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topics and approaches, I would like to draw attention to the points that summarise, under the heading "asymmetric relationships," the parallel relationships between parent and child, master and servant, shepherd and flock, "citizen" and social leader, as described in the Pauline epistles (*IAB* 230–234; *cf.* 235).[3] As democratic Western societies witness the widespread questioning and rearrangement of power structures, more specifically, in light of the painful experiences of child maltreatment and the abuse of religious power, this subject is particularly topical.

This paper is divided into three parts. First, I will outline the complex picture that the Biblical Commission document presents of these systems of relationships by briefly describing the textual background, conceptual approach and theological context of the issue. Second, I will explain the socio-philosophical meaning and context of the concept of "asymmetric relationships." Third, I will make suggestions as to the direction in which the contemporary validity and validation of the biblical message can be sought in light of the socio-ethical and educational-theoretical contexts outlined. The first step will be a close reading of the Biblical Commission document section in question; the second tries to summarise recent developments, relying on scholarly papers, whereas the third is necessarily fragmentary.

1. "The Pastoral Instructions of the Apostolic Tradition" (*IAB* 230–234) and Their Context in the Biblical Commission Document

Chapter 3 of the Biblical Commission document is entitled "The Human Family," and section 3.2 describes "the love between parents and children." It is worth recalling that the first section of this chapter is about "the love between man and woman," while subchapter 3.3 concerns the "love of brothers and sisters." The section on love between parents and children is thus in an intermediate position, and this arrangement gives us an insight into the structure of the whole document. Chapter 1 understands and originates man from his relationship with God. Then Chapter 2 links man's relationship with the garden, that is, nature, to God's order. Finally, Chapters 3 and 4 present human relationships as the origin of the process of life and history in a biological, cultural and political sense. One of the fundamental features of the document is the philosophical-theological position that the nature and origin of reality are correlative. This basic approach reflects the way prehistory is understood today. Furthermore, it is also recurring as a guiding principle in the document whose structure can be described as "genetic": the elements of reality unfold from one another.

Chapter 3, section 2 on "love between parents and their children" goes a long way in following the biblical text. First, it mentions the biblical genealogies and circumcision, the unique roles of fathers and mothers and the general picture of love between parents

3 The text of the document is referred to by the numbering of paragraphs in the document.

and children (*IAB* 209–215). Then it discusses the duties of parents and children towards each other according to the law (*IAB* 216–221), the teaching of the sages (*IAB* 216–221), the prophets (*IAB* 226–227), the teaching of Jesus (*IAB* 228–229) and finally the apostolic tradition (*IAB* 230–234). The text lists the peculiar situations and forms of special human relationships. At the same time, it also emphasises the relationship with God again and again. The recurring idea is that the "lawful" obedience experienced in specific human relationships is, in fact, an act of obedience to God and becomes the beginning of the freedom experienced before Him.[4] Ultimately, it is obedience to God that makes children's obedience meaningful, just as it once made meaningful the kind of "disobedience" that the followers of Jesus showed to their parents or the Jewish leaders.[5] Thus, morality based on faith in God constitutes a norm and, at the same time, questions other norms based on the individual's belonging to God and his obligation to the Lord. In analysing and emphasising the requirement of obedience to parents, the text presupposes, albeit implicitly, an empirical and theological basis: children experience their parents as a substitute for God, psychologically modelling their first, perhaps not even thematic, an image of God on them.

The document suggests that the human experience of the parent-child relationship also influences the structures of future relationships between otherwise adult people. These relationships are detailed in certain New Testament warnings, although some rules concerning leaders can also be found in the Old Testament (*cf.* the biblical references in *IAB* 221). The term "instructions of the apostolic age" reminds us of the "household codes" of the Pauline epistles (*Haustafel*, *Hausordnung* – Eph 5:21–6:9; Col 3:18–4:1),[6]

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4 It is worth quoting the thoughts in paragraph 217 regarding the norm on the Sabbath: "It is important to note that, because he himself obeys the same precept, the father can be a model of obedience to the true authority, that of the Lord, who does not impose servile obligations to his own advantage, but calls for a discipline that expresses the authentic way of life. In the atmosphere of rest and celebration typical of the Sabbath, the father, offering the children the joy of freedom, actually subjects them, at the same time, to the first of the commandments […]."

5 Paragraph 229, speaking first of blood ties and then of social and religious leaders, summarises the example of Jesus and the apostles: "what emerges from the gospel perspective is the call to loving obedience towards God, which relativises any other binding connection or obligation. This should be extended, by analogy, also to the forms of obedience required by civil and religious authorities" (*Cf.* Luke 14:26; Acts 4:19 and 5:29).

6 On the "household codes," see A. Standhartinger, "Die 'Haustafel' im Kolosserbrief," *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefes* (ed. A. Standhartinger) (NovTSup 94; Leiden: Brill 1999) 247–276; B. Witherington – G.F. Wessels, "Do Everything in the Name of the Lord: Ethics and ethos in Colossians," *Identity, Ethics and Ethos in the New Testament* (ed. J.G. van der Watt) (BZNW 141; Berlin – New York: De Gruyter 2006) 303–333 (esp. 315–329 in the chapter); G.J. Reydams-Schils, "Clement of Alexandria on Woman and Marriage in the Light of the New Testament Household Codes," *Greco-Roman Culture and the New Testament. Studies Commemorating the Centennial of the Pontifical Biblical Institute* (eds. D.E. Aune – F.E. Brenk) (NovTSup 143; Leiden: Brill 2012) 113–133. The texts reflect a process in which the first generation of Christians took over, reinterpreted and gave new motivation to an existing form familiar in the Jewish and Hellenistic context. The fundamental intention of exhortation and change is to help us live in a Christian way under the actual circumstances. They seek to change not the external framework but, above all, the quality of the relationships that unfold within the circumstances. Ben Witherington and G. François Wessels ("Ethics and Ethos in Colossians," 315–316) point out the similarities between Col 3:18–4:1, Eph 5:22–6:9a and

in which the relationship between parents and children, masters and servants, and even the relationship between parents as husband and wife, are placed side by side.

In Ephesians, the precursor of such a family (and economy) model is the order of the ecclesial community. Just as in a family, in an ecclesial community, there are different functions according to various gifts of grace (Eph 4:7–16). The notion that following Christ requires a spirit of filiality towards God appears to be anticipated a few verses later: "As God's dear children, then, take him as your pattern, and live in love just as Christ loved us, giving himself up for us as an offering and a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1–2). It is fitting that children follow their parents and love them.[7] What makes this possible is the sacrifice of Christ which He made "for us," that is, for the whole community. It is striking that the admonition that spouses love each other is also based on the devoted love of Christ (Eph 5:21–30). This may be the primary context behind the structure of the document.[8]

With regard to specific, so-called asymmetric relationships (parents and children, masters and servants, community leaders and believers, leaders and citizens), the document cites the admonitions of the late Pauline tradition (the deuterocanonical letters to the Ephesians, the Colossians and the pastoral letters) and the First Epistle of Peter most often. However, it takes into account other biblical passages as well. It appears natural that the earliest texts were concerned, among other things, with justifying the authority of Paul the Apostle and recommending the travelling teachers (*cf.*, e.g. the citation from 1 Thess 5:12–13 in *IAB* 233). However, as communities grew and included larger

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1 Pet 2:18–3:7 and associate these with New Testament texts and early Christian writings that address slaves in particular (1 Tim 6:1–2; *Didache* 4:9–11; *Epistle of Barnabas* 19:5.7; *First Epistle of Clement* 1:3 and 21:6–8; 38:2, etc.).

7 Even though there is an important parallel between Eph 6:4 and Col 3:21, the latter has one new detail which slightly shifts the stress. The verse in Colossians makes a distinction between the admonition given to the fathers and its motivation, reinforcing the effect of parental conduct on the children. The specificity of the admonition is that it confronts the parents (especially the father) with a possible negative consequence. This is a unique feature of the "household codes." Negative behaviour is also condemned elsewhere in the documents, but a lasting negative outcome is mentioned only here. The children may become "discouraged" (ESV, KJV), "frustrated" (JB), or "they may lose heart" (NRSV, RNJB). They may be deprived of a positive quality they would otherwise need. In a single phrase, we have a painfully accurate description of the undesirable state in which children, confined within excessive limits, over-disciplined, not sufficiently strengthened in their own will by arguments and values, can end up for the rest of their life. Col 3:21 has no theological basis; it draws on the assumption that everyday experiences and values affect all areas of life, therefore, implicitly, also religious life. I view this short passage as yet another example of how the human authors of the Bible, while not using psychological analytical concepts, were well aware that a child is vulnerable in a different sense than an adult and that their relationship can be vital and full of life for both.

8 Groups of texts that presuppose reciprocity and try to promote good behaviour are primarily exhortative and are usually grounded in Christian theology. Eph 5:22–33 offers a positive theological foundation for the relationship between husband and wife, and Eph 6:1–3 motivates children with a promising passage from the Old Testament. The relationship of servants and their masters is also regulated by Eph 6:5–9, with reference to the example of Christ and foreshadowing divine judgment. In all this, the exhortations of Ephesians deepen and follow those of Colossians.

families, the attention shifted to these a generation later.[9] The question of correct behaviour towards an external power and the state also appears, though somewhat less frequently. Again, the most critical theological aspect is the expression of obedience to God (*cf.* Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:15–16).[10]

In addition to highlighting the importance of obedience to God, the document broadens the horizon again and again by emphasising the reciprocity of the relationship between the "parties." The biblical texts call for a spirit of service in leaders and a spirit of wise obedience in the guided so that they can recognise the call and will of God in the leaders' words or laws. As I have already mentioned, filial obedience and experience are the examples and sources of this obedience. Christ is both the means of redemption and an example to be followed. We must "become like this Child" (Matt 18:3), the Son, who redeemed us by his death and obedience (Phil 2:5–11). The paradox of Christian leadership is summed up in the idea that a leader must kneel to wash the feet of his disciples, just like Christ did (*IAB* 235, *cf.* John 13:1–20). Being the child of God is the truth of faith, and as such, it is a personal experience. At the same time, it is illustrated by the specific relationship between the church, the world and the kingdom of God.

When presenting these relationships, the document identifies "social order" as the value that sorts expected behaviours (*IAB* 230). Owing to the similar logic behind the recurring issues and following an old tradition of interpretation, the document considers the expected behaviours applicable in other situations. It assumes a kind of analogy, probably built upon some fundamental human and social structures between different areas of life. For example, it speaks of "submission" (*IAB* 230), a concept introduced by the admonitions to spouses in Ephesians (Eph 5:21), and is exemplified in the image of Jesus bending down to his disciples. It also appears as a cosmic metaphor in the Christ Hymn of Philippians (*cf.* Phil 2:6–11).

The warnings of the Pauline letters are based on the possibility of reciprocity of duties and understanding.[11] Their recipients have the freedom, ability, interest and motiva-

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9 The order of discussion makes it clear that it concerns large families that also include other members of the household in addition to parents and children.

10 Paul and his readers certainly shared other conceptual frameworks as well, which then also became part of the Pauline argumentation. Larry L. Welborn ("'That There May Be Equality': The Contexts and Consequences of a Pauline Ideal," *NTS* 59/1 [2013] 73–90) shows how the Pauline reference to "equality" in 2 Cor 8:13–15 might reflect the Greek conceptual framework behind the term, bound to friendship, *polis* and *kosmos.* Welborn pleads for an interpretation of the Pauline letters and their historical circumstances with not only theological categories (*cf. ibidem*, 74). We cannot lay enough stress on the fact that the NT literature was written and read in a certain culture, the knowledge of which enriches our understanding of the text. We should not forget, however, that Paul begins his argumentation referencing Christ's death (2 Cor 8:9) and ends it with another reference to the Scripture (2 Cor 8:15 – Exod 16:18).

11 At this point, our paper continues with the personal-philosophical-theological approach, aiming to describe the basic structure and content of the PBC document. We can neither present nor evaluate all the research done about the "social world" of the first Christians. The novelty lies in the comparison and parallel presentation rather than the detailed evaluation of different relationships. With regard to some established forms of reciprocal and, at the same time, asymmetric relationships in the Hellenistic and Jewish societies,

tion to act for the sake of the relationship and for the sake of "social order," the origin of which is ultimately God. The letters deem the leaders stronger and more powerful since they have the power that they can use to serve others.[12] "Subordinates" are portrayed as if maintaining the present form of the relationship were in their interests, and therefore they were unwilling to change it. By following divine provisions and setting the framework, the leaders seem to be the ones who lay the foundations of these relationships.

I would like to emphasise that the section in question discusses the relationships between parents and children, masters and servants, community leaders and believers, and leaders and citizens as part of the subchapter on "parents and children." Social integration of the individual into school, work, religious community and secular society appears to follow the model of the basic cell of society, i.e. the family. From a theological point of view, this means that man can obey God in all these, that man can discover God's presence and guidance in social structures and shape these structures accordingly. Therefore, the willingness to follow can be understood as a kind of potential that the leader and the guided parent and child are aware of and which they actualise in their way, in accordance with their interests and goals.[13] Obedience and openness to God seek real paths and opportunities; they build human community. Obedience to human beings, in turn, receives its foundation and a positive perspective from living with openness to God. Obedience, in this case, is first and foremost not a practical, pragmatic requirement or an external decision which is independent of personal motives. Nor does it merely reflect the actual state of the relationship between two people. Instead, it is open to the development and perspective we seek in God. A genuine human community is built

see E.D. MacGillivray, "Re-Evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity in Antiquity and New Testament Studies," *JGRChJ* 6 (2009) 37–81.

12 It is noteworthy that the admonitions always address the "weaker" party first, and only then the "stronger," the more responsible one. The logic of reciprocity suggests that obedience or submission remains possible even if it appears as though there were no other means of changing the situation or the attitude of the other party. Appealing to the stronger party is restrictive, i.e. it attempts to curb their possible violent, dominant actions. *Cf.* Witherington – Wessels, "Ethics and Ethos in Colossians," 319–320. Such addresses are usually absent in similar household codes other than the New Testament.

13 On the subject of obedience, see M. Wirth, *Distanz des Gehorsams. Theorie, Ethik und Kritik einer Tugend* (Religion in Philosophy and Theology 87; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2016). Mathias Wirth describes the opposition sources to religious and social forms of obedience in detail and then provides theological examples and conceptual contexts with a positive perspective in mind. He highlights the example of Jesus (*ibidem*, 370–376), who performs a subversive act in washing his disciples' feet, reinterpreting the notions of "master" and "servant." Similarly to Eberhard Jüngel, Wirth also thinks (*ibidem*, 391) that God restrains His power, and it is on the cross where this is the most evident. God leaves room for human freedom, which man experiences not in spite of his being a creature but rather because of being a creature. Obedience, Wirth argues (*ibidem*, 394–395), is ultimately an act of freedom that seeks always to maintain a relationship with the other, and in the name of which liberation must be sought even in the face of existential fear. God wants the freedom of man and the individual. For a shorter but similar discussion, see M. Bracci, "Nell'obbedienza di Gesù, Figlio di Dio e nostro fratello," *Synaxis* 37/2 (2019) 11–24. The obedience of Jesus, the Son towards the Father, is presented here as a theological foundation of possible obedience of believers in freedom and love.

around both personal growth and community goals. Indeed, it is the surprising, gift-like harmony of these two that seems to transcend what humans can create.

Before moving on to the second part of the paper, it should be stressed that the biblical texts and the Commission document are not in any way about the unequal dignity or unequal individual worth of persons. Asymmetries are realised in a relationship, and they require some action. It is precisely this action that the "instructions of the apostolic tradition" describe and associate with norms and patterns. These are rules of reciprocal action that only turn into a momentarily fixed, observed, and therefore seemingly static situation in a logical sense. Anthropological determination is not subordination or helplessness, nor some kind of superiority or power. Instead, it is the ability of the individual to submit himself to someone for something or serve others – perhaps even by leading them – and obey God at the same time.[14]

2. Social and Philosophical Perspectives on Asymmetric Relationships

The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission states in several places that what is revealed in the biblical text must be interpreted correctly. Examples of such interpretation are provided sometimes; at other times, the document is more reticent and leaves the more detailed discussion of the issue to the experts on morality. In regard to particular biblical passages, it expresses its wish to distance itself from them by raising questions.[15] Correct interpretation ensures both the autonomy of the interpreter and the relevance of the text by understanding it in a way that is acceptable today.[16] Raising

14 See F.S. Malan, "Unity of Love in the Body of Christ: Identity, Ethics and Ethos in Ephesians," *Identity, Ethics and Ethos in the New Testament* (ed. J.G. van der Watt) (BZNW 141; Berlin – New York: De Gruyter 2006) 257–288. François S. Malan's summary is as follows: "God put all things in subjection beneath Christ's feet and he is filling the universe in all its parts with his immeasurable love. The church, as the body in submission to Christ, its head, manifests his presence as the community in which his rule of love and unity is anticipated, and through which the wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. It includes the members' submission to one another within the divinely ordered relationships, and their following of God's messengers (4,11). It extends to the wife's submission to her loving husband, children's obedience to their parents who lead them in the ways of the Lord, and labourers' cheerful serving their employers who follow the will of God wholeheartedly (5,22 – 6,9)."

15 Paragraph 203 discusses spousal relationship in such a manner. A similar case with regard to the situation of women is point 134 in *Ispirazione e verità della Sacra Scrittura. La Parola che viene da Dio e parla di Dio per salvare il mondo* (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20140222_ispirazione-verita-sacra-scrittura_it.html [access: 29.12.2021]), a document published by the Commission in 2014.

16 The document understands itself as an example of such an interpretation. The Pontifical Biblical Commission evidently presupposes the rules of interpretation expressed, among others, in *Dei Verbum* 12 and *Verbum Domini* 45. While the former stresses the importance of the whole Bible and thus the unity of the Revelation and its correct understanding, the latter invites Catholic biblical scholars to engage in a fruitful dialogue with bishops and theologians. We would like to emphasise here that "the force and power in the word of God" (*Dei Verbum* 21) unfolds itself in the ongoing process of interpretation, faithful to the tradition, driven by a personal

questions is an excellent way to leave room for further considerations, especially in our age when everything is changing so fast. It is not always clear how the values of biblical times should be understood, preached and followed. Concerning our question about asymmetric relationships, this means that not only the category itself must be analysed but also the role it may play in connecting biblical times and our time.

The document refers to the relationships in question as "asymmetric" in two places (*IAB* 233, 235).[17] Since the concept of asymmetry is used in many contexts today, it is worth asking first what kind of asymmetry is meant in this case and then examining whether clarification of the concept can help mutual understanding.[18]

The most common notion of symmetry and asymmetry refers to static realities. We use these words to describe drawn, shaped, constructed objects, geometrical forms or even living things. These notions help in the structural modelling of compounds in chemistry, the description of forces and counter-forces in physics, the comparison of vectors in mathematics, and even the ordering of sentence systems or forms of thoughts in linguistics.[19] Therefore, symmetry and asymmetry are understood through pictorial or abstract shapes and are mostly used to describe a static or a changing but momentarily graspable system.

Symmetry, and in its absence, asymmetry, are also applied to human relations between individuals and institutions, and even between states. Symmetry has a positive connotation as it is associated with equality before the law, equality in relations and dignity. Asymmetry, in contrast, implies the lack of something – the lack of comparability, equality, equal status and equal dignity. In the case of human (personal) or inter-group relationships, it is questionable from what point of view and to what extent they can be considered static, and what it means that change or development is also present in these relationships, adapting to their changing and evolving participants.

Focusing on the interpersonal relations of asymmetry, I will first briefly present some contemporary examples where asymmetry appears as an interpretative category, and then I will outline its socio-philosophical and socio-ethical implications.

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and ecclesiastical commitment. The biblical text itself invites readers and interpreters to discover the truth and requires faithfulness, while the language and categories might differ over the ages.

17 The document also uses the term "asymmetry" in a few other places. Paragraph 54 refers to the relationship between God and Israel entering into a covenant relationship. Paragraph 151 deals with the asymmetry of a parent-child relationship, explicitly distinguishing it from that of spouses who are considered equals. The latter is nevertheless mentioned as an asymmetric condition in the context of the Epistle to the Ephesians in paragraph 203. Finally, following the sections detailed above, paragraph 237 notes that brothers are in fact always in a different position, i.e. their actual position is "asymmetric."

18 Besides asymmetry, it is also important to deepen today's understanding of other concepts. These include obedience, which has already been partly touched upon, and reciprocity, briefly discussed below.

19 Since biblical and ancient linguistic examples are in focus, a reference to an example from ancient poetry is in order: H. Gzella, "Parallelismus und Asymmetrie in ugaritischen Texten," *Parallelismus membrorum* (ed. A. Wagner) (OBO 224; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht – Fribourg: Presses Universitaires 2007) 133–146.

The symmetry-asymmetry issue is fundamental in cases where an individual meets an institution or a group and where an individual needs help. The person is in a vulnerable situation, and for this reason, it becomes questionable whether entering or agreeing to enter the asymmetric relationship is a good solution. Take just one example: it is debatable whether the doctor-patient relationship should be considered asymmetric. People often claim that it is outdated to say that, on the one hand, the physician's expertise and responsibility and, on the other hand, the patient's vulnerability create asymmetry (real and positive asymmetry). Instead, they stress the importance of cooperation between the two parties.[20] Others argue that even though it is an asymmetric relationship, the physician's competence, training, situational awareness, treatment recommendations and the true purpose warrant the asymmetry (functional asymmetry), and without these qualities, the relationship would not exist in the first place.[21] They highlight that while symmetry may be sought in therapeutic relationships, certain situations, such as online therapy, can complicate the relationship and amplify its asymmetric traits.[22] Still, others note pastoral care relationships similar to psychotherapy as a paradoxical reality. The "mature authority," the helper, defines the framework of the relationship and, having insight into the other party's difficulties, can help and guide the recipient. At the same time, the helper forms a partnership with the recipient, is authentic towards him or her and makes their equality evident, thereby contributing to the recipient's taking responsibility for himself or herself.[23]

Society can tolerate the habits of groups that exist but do not change the norms of social order. It can accept these habits as established without willing to change the values and habits of the majority.[24] It indicates asymmetry in a general sense when the relationship

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20 *Cf.* K.-M. Taube, "Patient-Doctor Relationship in Dermatology. From Compliance to Concordance," *Acta Derm Venereol* 96/Suppl. 217 (2016) 25–29. Klaus-Michael Taube promotes a strategy of cooperation rather than the traditional asymmetric relations. He draws on the example of psychoanalysis and believes that the traditional approach (where the doctor gives instructions and the patient accepts and follows them) has been replaced by an appreciation of intersubjectivity.

21 See I. Saake, "Die Dominanz des Arztes. Warum medizinische Asymmetrien unvermeidbar sind," *Ärztliche Tätigkeit im 21. Jahrhundert – Profession oder Dienstleistung* (eds. S. Klinke – M. Kadmon) (Berlin: Springer 2018) 311–329. According to Irmhild Saake, the doctor-patient relationship is functionally asymmetric, despite modern expectations of symmetry. There is an unbridgeable gap between the professional competence of the doctor and the direct experience of the patient.

22 See S. Cipolletta – E. Frassoni – E. Faccio, "Construing a Therapeutic Relationship Online: An Analysis of Videoconference Sessions," *Clinical Psychologist* 22/1 (2018) 220–229. In online therapies, the relationship between therapist and patient appears to be asymmetric.

23 *Cf.* T. Tomcsányi – L. Fodor, "Segítő kapcsolat, segítő szindróma, segítő identitás," *Egymás közt – egymásért* (eds. I. Jelenits – T. Tomcsányi) (Budapest: HÍD Családsegítő Központ – Szeged: Szeged-Csanádi Püspökség 1990) 19–45.

24 *Cf.* F. Macioce, "Toleration as Asymmetric Recognition," *Persona y derecho* 77/2 (2017) 227–250. The author cites the principle of social tolerance in cases where even though the law is not changed because of a minority's different behaviour from that of the majority (accommodation), the behaviour is still socially tolerated and accepted. The author argues that there is an asymmetric relationship between two groups of different weights in such instances. "Toleration happens in a relationship of power imbalance: this is the reason why I have labelled toleration as a form of asymmetric relationship" (*ibidem*, 250).

between ideological principles and personal attitudes of members of politically opposing parties are being examined.[25]

Philosophy is also concerned with the asymmetry of personal relationships and its significance. Modernity accentuated the freedom, independence and dignity of the person, and it presupposed free persons of equal status in personal relationships. The objective freedom of individuals had to manifest itself in their freedom in the social sense, their capacity to act and their equality before the law. In these, it became tangible and justifiable. The desirable ideal was a responsible, reciprocal relationship between free persons. Postmodern philosophy lays an even greater emphasis on personal freedom and human rights, in parallel with the concept that considers interpersonal relationships as inherently asymmetric.

French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas shaped the notions of double asymmetry and vulnerability of the other. The term "double asymmetry" describes the process of communication between two persons. The one addressing the other and establishing a relationship is always a "leading" role. Human beings get their names from other humans, and thus, from the beginning, the relationship they have is not a symmetric one. However, it is not only the beginning that counts. As Levinas puts it, humans are taken charge of by others – by their faces.[26] Double asymmetry means this strange interconnectedness, this ongoing internal play of power and change of power between persons interacting and communicating. Vulnerability is the permanent situation of the human person, his state of being dependent on being addressed by the other. [27]

25 This is what John T. Jost's surveys ("Ideological Asymmetries and the Essence of Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* 38/2 [2017] 167–208) have found about the personal psychological structures of right-wing and left-wing politicians and people with political party preferences. According to the author, personal attitudes are also reflected in political principles.

26 For a brief introduction to Levinas's ethical thoughts, see T. Tatranský, "A Reciprocal Asymmetry? Levinas's Ethics Reconsidered," *Ethical Perspectives* 15/3 (2008) 293–307. Tomáš Tatranský shows why Levinas's "account of asymmetry" cannot be a foundation for reciprocal relationships in the end. In his view, the "Other" calls "me" to sacrifice myself for him or her, but I cannot expect him or her to do the same. "Levinas's ethics is […] not an ethics of sacrifice *in general*, but an ethics of exclusively and inalienably *my* sacrifice" (*ibidem*, 296). After presenting Levinas's thoughts, Tatranský attempts to "go beyond Levinas" by relying on the observations of Derrida and Ricoeur and emphasising the possibility and value of friendship and gift.

27 See S. Herrmann, *Symbolische Verletzbarkeit. Die doppelte Asymmetrie des Sozialen nach Hegel und Levinas* (Sozialphilosophische Studien 7; Bielefeld: transcript Verlag 2013). Steffen Herrmann analyses and compares the vision of Hegel and Levinas. Hegel, he says, uses the relationship of master and servant to illustrate the dependent relationship in which one depends on the recognition of the other. The master has to acknowledge the servant, and the servant is dependent on this acknowledgement. The dependent man is described by the fear of death: he seems to owe his existence to the other. He can only be himself if others confirm his image of himself. Levinas, however, interprets the relationship with the other not as dependence but as "exposure" or "vulnerability." A person enters into a responsible relationship with another in a way that precedes his or her individual choices and decisions, and even his or her realisations. The "face," the being of the other, addresses me and holds me responsible, and asks me how I relate to him. Responsibility is not actualised by mutual agreement but through confrontation with the symbolic vulnerability of the other. The metaphor of the relationship between master and servant is replaced by the image of "hostage-taking" in Levinas's writings. The master becomes the "hostage" of the servant when the master sees himself in the servant. He can

It follows that the individual not only depends on the recognition and affirmation of his freedom, but it appears that he can participate in an actual encounter with others only in an asymmetrical way.[28] The recognition and assertion of the person's dignity are replaced by the assertion of the woundedness of the individual, which is essentially irremediable and can only be overcome in practice.[29] The need for symmetry between interacting subjects is therefore replaced or complemented by a desire to establish a system of relationships in which the possibility of autonomous action is always left open for the subject.[30] The individual in this situation demands, in principle, total and absolute autonomy. His nature is expressed in activity and participation. This is seemingly the exact opposite of the orientation of obedience, which is receptive and prioritises the other. The desirable goal is not only recognition and affirmation that humans expect from others. Instead of, or rather in addition to this, what is desirable is active involvement and participation in decisions and community processes, in which the individual's actual positive functioning and struggle with the asymmetry of relationships prove

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only realise his own being if he incorporates his responsibility towards the other into his vision of himself. See also T. Bedorf, *Dimensionen des Dritten. Sozialphilosophische Modelle zwischen Ethischem und Politischem* (Phänomenologische Untersuchungen 16; München: Fink 2003) 35–41; J. Czapski, "Ausbruch aus dem Sein. Verwundbarkeit als rätselhafter Sinn der Menschlichkeit im Denken von Emmanuel Levinas," *Verletzbarkeit des Humanen. Sexualisierte Gewalt an Minderjährigen im interdisziplinären Diskurs* (ed. T. Bahne) (Regensburg: Pustet 2021) 44–56.

28 Herrmann, *Symbolische Verletzbarkeit*, 155. "On one side is the subject that expresses its desire for recognition, and on the other side is the subject that must respond to that desire before it can assert its own desire for recognition. This basic communicative structure forces the subjects involved in the social encounter into two completely different positions. As a consequence, the interpersonal relationship can no longer be described as a symmetric relationship – as this would imply the interchangeability of positions – but as an alternating-sided asymmetric relationship. It is an asymmetry that is not one-sided but two-sided: on one side, it is a dependence on recognition, while on the other side, it is a vulnerability to dependence on the former recognition. In this context, I am talking about the double asymmetry of social relations." Thus, according to Herrmann (*ibidem*, 210–211), the parallel "servant" and "hostage" situations in personal relations are realised in a situation of mutual "subjection." It is not a matter of deliberate choice but the order of reality. If we deny, falsify or unilaterally dissolve this, we cause and suffer in "social pathology."

29 Heidemarie Bennent-Vahle (*Mit Gefühl denken. Einblicke in die Philosophie der Emotionen* [Freiburg – München: Alber 2013] 254) presents forgiveness as an asymmetric action. It is difficult to forgive when this fact does not appear to have any meaning for the other party. In the context of our paper, we can say that it is the fundamental asymmetry of existence in relation to which we need to practice unilateral forgiveness in order to become a mature person.

30 Anna M. Riedl (*Ethik an den Grenzen der Souveränität. Christliche Sozialethik im Dialog mit Judith Butler unter Berücksichtigung des Kindeswohlbegriffs* [Paderborn: Schöningh 2017]) analyses the writings of Judith Butler based on the concept of "children's goods." Her starting point in practice is, among other things (*cf. ibidem*, 33–34), the experience of child protection by helping children to grow sometimes goes from one extreme to the other: either it focuses on providing the necessary protection and support, or it shifts the responsibility to the children. When what is highlighted is the asymmetries in the relationship between adults and children, the aim is to defend the interests of both parties. However, usually little participation is achieved. And when participation alone is emphasised, the system tends to reduce adult responsibility and obscure power relations. Riedl follows the analyses of Judith Butler, who radicalises, among other things, Levinas's ideas. Since recognition by the other changes us, Riedl argues, only "undetermined" (*Unbestimmtheit*) openness and presence can be the right attitude in education and a relationship with the other.

successful.[31] In this approach, respect for the other is made theoretically possible by recognising the asymmetry of the relationship, as the other's autonomous right to exist is also recognised and affirmed at the same time.[32]

There is no doubt that, although less radically, theology also tries to respond to the changes in thinking.[33] It is keen to emphasise the truth of God, who gives us space in creation, who liberates us from bondage, who, through freedom, calls us to act responsibly, and who fosters brotherhood.[34] The power of God is shown in different ways in the discourse. In the theology of creation, it is the divine actuality that gives existence. In the soteriology system, it is the proclamation of the vulnerability of the cross in which the powerlessness of God, through Trinitarian and incarnational mediation, defeat the power of the world.[35] As we have observed in the case of asymmetric personal relationships, all power on earth competes with other earthly powers, so this asymmetry makes us contest, at least in an ethical sense. God's power, however, is of a completely different rank and nature. Thus it is precisely the positing of this radically different – infinitely asymmetric – power that allows people to overcome their asymmetries with earthly, practical and negative consequences.[36]

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31 Tatiana Shchyttsova ("Intergenerative Asymmetrie und Gabe. Zur Heuristik und Poetik des Verhältnisses zwischen Erwachsenen und Kindern," *Kontexte des Leiblichen* [eds. C. Nielsen – K. Novotný – T. Nenon] [Nordhausen: Bautz 2016] 219–232) examines the relationship of parent and child. Shchyttsova uses Hegelian categories to observe sharing or gifting across generations in the "gift" or "discovery" of the world. Parent and child do not participate in the relationship in the same way, yet both are renewed when they interact with each other and the world.

32 *Cf.* Riedl, *Ethik*, 153–154. The fundamental vulnerability of man, according to Riedl, is not a kind of negativity but a kind of ethical potential. Addressing the other, on what we depend on in order to be able to exist in the first place, wounds us because it defines and changes us. Our ontological vulnerability is linguistic-performative. It is articulated in addressing and naming the other, as well as in speech. All this is an opportunity to give the other freedom. "Im Anschluss an Butler eröffnet sich eine Perspektive auf Asymmetrie, mit der sich eine ethische Betonung der Achtung von Differenz und von dort eine kindeswohlrelevante Argumentation gegen die Negation der Asymmetrie gewinnen lässt." Based on this approach, the other (the child in this case) must be affirmed in his "otherness" alone.

33 While analysing the connection of faith, theology, and philosophy, Bertram Stubenrauch (*Theologie studieren* [UTB 4932; Paderborn: Schöningh 2019] 52) argues that Christianity is characterised by a kind of asymmetry. Its dogmas are not on the same level as human thought and philosophy. Faith, which already includes theology in its formulation, seeks philosophical reasoning as a secondary consideration, but philosophy in itself never leads to faith or justifies it in the full sense of the word. "Was von der Christusverkündigung her vorgegeben ist und zum Glauben führt, lässt sich philosophisch nicht einholen. Denn der Glaube wird evoziert, er wird erweckt. […] der Glaube weiß die Transzendenz gewissermaßen 'engagiert' – und bezeugt so ihren erkenntnisstiftenden Primat" (*ibidem*, 53).

34 Because of the biblical relevance of the topic, B. Schöning, *Geschwisterlichkeit lernen. Eine neue theologische Einschätzung der Aufstiegserzählung Davids* (BWANT 223; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2019) should be mentioned.

35 *Cf.* Wirth, *Distanz des Gehorsams*, 315. Wirth presents Florian Wagner's thoughts on the "theology of recognition" (*Theologie der Anerkennung*). He claims that Florian Wagner attempts to think about the relationship between God and man in a symmetric way. In Wagner's view, the power of God is most manifested in incapability, indeed, He shows himself as being incapable, and with this, He waives all absolute claims.

36 See W. Freistetter – C. Wagnsonner, "Asymmetrie im Spiegel der Weltreligionen," *Aspekte der Asymmetrie – Reflexionen über ein gesellschafts- und sicherheitspolitisches Phänomen* (eds. J. Schröfl – T. Pankratz – E. Micewski)

3. Questions, Suggestions and Ways to Promote Discourse

I have briefly presented some biblical perspectives on asymmetric relationships, as far as they can be understood in the Biblical Commission document, and some contemporary socio-philosophical aspects of the issue as well. Now I will compare the two in order to learn and look for a common language.

The two systems of thought agree in assuming asymmetry in human relationships. In the biblical texts, actual differences between people concern the order of lineage, social potential and responsibilities, and the role played in the community. Postmodern social philosophy treats vulnerability to the other as a fundamental determinant of human existence. The basic tendency of biblical texts, mostly related to St Paul and the Pauline tradition, is to strive for reciprocity, that is, to overcome inequalities by regulating roles. Radical forms of the socio-philosophical approach view the principle of reciprocity as impracticable. They only attempt to empower and help the parties in their freedom. Religious thought views God, on the one hand, as someone against whom humans can only accept a situation of total inequality and, on the other hand, as someone to whom they owe their freedom, and even as someone with whom, by entering into a deeper relationship, they become freer themselves. It acknowledges the fact of asymmetric relationships and attempts to discover the authority and guidance of God in these by accepting the principle and value of tradition. In contrast, having experienced countless forms of abuse of power, most people only recognise a temporary authority at most in today's societies.

The two systems of thought are indeed in tension with each other. The question of obedience seems to be central to religion, but it is in many ways entirely rejected by contemporary popular thought. Both systems of thought realise the asymmetric situations; however, their attitudes towards them are quite different. While religion tends to look at the positive value of asymmetric relationships (ultimately in terms of obedience to God), contemporary popular thought always tries to restore the individual's freedom with the intention of eliminating asymmetry.

(Baden-Baden: Nomos 2006) 173–179. There is never complete symmetry between states and groups, but it can be observed how asymmetric relations are sought to be ethically legitimised by a group of interested parties. The authors conclude as follows: "Die Bezeichnung 'Asymmetrie' muss hier freilich mit Vorsicht verwendet werden: Er verneint nicht eine zumindest denkbare Symmetrie des Gott-Mensch-Verhältnisses – denn was sollte eine Symmetrie zwischen Gott und Mensch bedeuten? – sondern drückt lediglich aus, dass das Verhältnis zwischen Gott und Mensch sich begrifflich auch mit dem Begriff der Symmetrie keinesfalls festlegen lässt. Allerdings gibt die Bestimmung des Verhältnisses als asymmetrisches ein Mittel an die Hand, den Zusammenhang zwischen dem Verhältnis zu Gott und der Menschen untereinander zu denken: Gerade weil jeder Mensch sein Leben in gleicher Weise Gott bzw. dem göttlichen Prinzip verdankt und weil diese Asymmetrie deshalb für Leben und Handeln entscheidende Bedeutung erlangt, relativiert sich die Bedeutung von Asymmetrien zwischen den Menschen. Es mag sie weiterhin geben, aber vor Gott oder im Hinblick auf das Göttliche sind alle Menschen gleich. In dieser Einsicht liegt der Kern des sozialethischen Anspruchs der Weltreligionen."

The reality or the meaning of reciprocity also appears problematic.[37] The biblical text testifies to the possibility of genuine reciprocity in shaping the relationships through apostolic exhortations. What makes this possible despite the momentary difference in roles is the existence of a third party before Whom the relationship is alive and interpretable. The approach emphasising the woundedness and vulnerability of the individual uses the hermeneutics of suspicion. It is driven by the urge for a constant liberation from the presupposed asymmetry since this is the only thing it deems possible.

To think about these obvious differences together in some way, I believe that as a theologian, I must first emphasise that asymmetry is not about static "essences." It is about dynamic and functional "roles." Humans can dissociate a person from his role at a given moment. And this is true conversely as well, i.e. humans can assess not someone else's personal qualities but the decisions associated with his role. Not everyone is suited to every role because not everyone can step out of the role at the right moment and recognise the limitations of the role. For this reason, the asymmetry of roles does not presuppose the fact that persons are evaluated differently. On the contrary, it may offer the possibility of finding one's way to the right and good desire for true equality, for being genuinely addressed by the other.

Secondly, people carry their childhood experiences with them, so it is indeed not automatic that in actual leadership structures, the other is an "adult" in a psychological sense. Encouragement is usually needed in a community for people to exercise their rights. Raising children to be free means, among other things, encouraging and helping them, asking them how they can live their freedom at a given moment and what they feel good about. Leading communities involves asking their members to express their opinion and their values. Religious obedience does not mean that the superior (parent, leader, etc.) is aware of prescriptions in advance and, therefore, can recall the obedient conduct appropriate in the given situation. Instead, it means that they have learnt to live in a way attentive to God as He is revealed in the law, the Scripture, reality and the Church. It also includes the idea that humans can discover how the man entrusted to them also evolves in this attentive freedom, the "law" of which is sometimes partly a momentary experience of his situation in the world. There is no doubt that instead of a one-sided emphasis on the authority of parents and leaders, we must remember that God wants to be present

37 Among other things, Hartmut Rosa's theory of resonance provides an apt picture of how human beings long for a relationship with their environment, or at least a part of it, in which not only are they given recognition, but they are also involved and touched. Humans seek to experience reciprocity in their relationships, even at the elementary level, in relation to objects or phenomena. The specificity of such an encounter is the "transformative appropriation" of the other. *Cf.* H. Rosa, "Resonanz als Schlüsselbegriff der Sozialtheorie," *Resonanz. Im interdisziplinären Gespräch mit Hartmut Rosa* (ed. J.-P. Wils) (Baden-Baden: Nomos 2019) 11–30; A. Laumer, "Beschleunigung und Resonanz. Pastoraltheologische Perspektiven zu Hartmut Rosas Sozialtheorie," *TGl* 111/1 (2021) 1–15. Rosa's theory is not explicitly or exclusively about two individuals meeting. Instead, it expresses the reciprocity, the specific quality of a person and his or her environment and its influence on him or her. However, an encounter with the material world can also be a model for what happens between individuals, and an encounter between two persons can also be a specific model for larger group processes.

in the little ones for the "big ones." If this emphasis gained more and more ground in the life of our communities, it could help us experience what it means to move from "double asymmetry" to "dynamic mutuality," where the former stresses the fundamental personal vulnerability in a negative sense, while the latter sees asymmetry as a challenge and attempts to take advantage of it in a positive sense.

Thirdly, with regard to the vulnerability and inherent woundedness of the individual, I would like to point out that vulnerability also applies to the leader. Even though the Biblical Commission document does not mention this aspect in describing the letters of the Pauline school, I believe that the party in the "stronger position" of an asymmetric relationship necessarily becomes vulnerable when he or she is involved in the relationship. Paul is also wounded while writing his letters. It is probably no coincidence that many today perceive certain leadership situations as distorting personality. Flexible role changes – jobs, community and family relationships – seem more acceptable and even desirable today than ever before. Nonetheless, the infinite altering of roles is hampered by the finite nature of human existence. Properly regulating how to lead a community is a matter of practice and experience. Vulnerability does not only characterise human relations in a metaphysical sense but also in a bilateral and reciprocal way. Although the "more adult" person can do more in a more responsible and conscious way to improve the quality of a relationship, their entering the relationship also comes with personal and social vulnerabilities, precisely if they genuinely seek to connect, if they choose to act according to their experiences and the principle of responsibility for the other.

Finally, we must not forget that biblical texts reflect the social expectations of different ages. Therefore, it cannot be expected that all their statements can be brought into line with today's vision and deeper understanding of the truth about humans. We do not understand the truth and the correct interpretation of the biblical message if we try to make it immutable.[38] The texts presented underline the value of reciprocity and rest on the possibility of action and the presence of God. There is always a "tertius," the third party before Whom reciprocity is called into question, the balance gets upset, and boundaries become unstable or violated. It does make a difference in what kind of God we believe in, how liberating the community which advocates freedom is, and what kind of liberation it enables.

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38 See R.E. Ciampa, "Ideological Challenges for Bible Translator," *IJFM* 28/3 (2011) 139–148. Roy E. Ciampa presents the potential dangers of the so-called "direct transferability," that is, the idea of Bible translators to transmit the thoughts of the Bible from their original cultural context and age into ours without noticing possible underlying ideological motifs. Ciampa's examples include relationships also present in the PBC document: slavery and marriage, husband and wife. From our perspective, these examples show and reinforce the necessity of the task undertaken in this short study: it is essential to examine asymmetric relationships and notice how much and what significance the true values of the biblical message have today.

Conclusions

Let us briefly summarise the results of our investigation. The first section followed the lead and interpreted a section of the Pontifical Biblical Commission document entitled *What is man?* (230–234) about different yet parallel human relationships. We called its structure "genetic" because it observes the development of human relationships and the history of human beings from their beginning, that is, from the parental relationship and the Creation by God, respectively. There is a change of direction in this sense: at first, children imagine God based on their parents' behaviour. Later it may be God whose care and love help adults take responsibility for each other. We have noted how the document suggests a multiplication of the same relational patterns in human life: our various relationships with God, parents and different types of leaders appear to show similarities. The strength of theology manifests itself in the fact that it describes a real relationship with God, offers models and structures that can shape this relationship and may encourage people to reorganise their other relationships.

The second section of this paper analysed the concept of asymmetry, looking at its "physical" meaning, and developing first a dynamic, then a static view of it, arriving at a philosophical evaluation of human relationships as thoroughly asymmetric. Among Emmanuel Levinas's ideas, we find the concept of personal vulnerability that can be, on the one hand, a source of the negation of the very possibility of reciprocity in human relationships – and, at the same time, the very foundation of it. But this can only happen if we assume the presence of a "third," assuring the ongoing interchange of gifts, goods, love and care between two persons. Asymmetry is a part of human reality and experience which must be in some way reckoned and dealt with. The inherent dynamic asymmetry of human relationships is mirrored in the social and institutional parallels analysed in the first section.

The third part combined the different areas of theological anthropology and social ethics discussed in the first two parts. Though employing different concepts, both anthropology and ethics reflect fundamental aspects of human relationships. New Testament writings stress obedience to God and submission to each other, thereby forming a triangle of duties. Modern thought, in contrast, tends to neglect or even deny the existence of an objective "law" that could serve as a standard measure. It also searches for and tries to defend the interests of the weaker party by requiring greater respect for the other before the "otherness" and by promoting active participation, assuming an open system of values instead of a closed one. In this context, theology points at the humiliated Jesus and his presence in both vulnerable parties. Reciprocity builds on different duties, values and possibilities in an ongoing process of change in every human relationship. The very process of biblical interpretation shows how vulnerable the "Word of God" is. By interpreting it, we admit our limits, vulnerability and fallibility.

We chose a direction for our study that appeared to develop some aspects of the PBC document. The document's focus on anthropology and development, the combination of essential and relational categories, did not require presenting the otherwise well-studied socio-historical background of early Christianity, which in this case remains a silent but very rich treasury of examples and concretisations. The document presupposes an unchangeable reality in the changing situations of humans and history and values and ways of action that help people positively relate to each other. We have already mentioned that asymmetry is a part of human reality acknowledged by both the PBC document and the socio-ethical discourse. The question is, then, how we should deal with it. In church statements, we notice greater consciousness of equal dignity of men and women, especially in marriage, just as in the clear refutation of slavery in any form. It seems that the outlines of a wishful parent-child relationship are also present. Still, their practicable form in schools, parishes and even families is less understood. The child abuse crisis has raised many questions about the exercise of power in church communities. These issues may prove to be areas where church communities and other social institutions can learn together and from each other. More sensitivity to these questions is the beginning of change.

This study remains fragmentary and unelaborated in many respects. The impact and correlation between the image of God and parental relationship call for a psychological investigation as well. This area, touched upon several times, deserves attention also from theology if theologians want to make their voice heard in a society that very often thinks in categories of personal growth. However, in theology, questions of church discipline, that is, of canon law, arise. Are norms and rules of obedience practicable? How should they remain practicable in communities described by asymmetric relationships? These are some of the many questions that merit attention and further consideration about asymmetry and theological anthropology.

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Luca Mazzinghi, *Libro della Sapienza. Introduzione – traduzione – commento* (Analecta Biblica. Studia 13; Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press 2020). Pp. 848. € 115. ISBN978–8876537226

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The number of studies dealing with exegesis and theology of the Book of Wisdom is constantly growing, although it still seems that not enough attention is being paid to that work. In the early days of the Church, the Book of Wisdom enjoyed great interest and was often quoted by the Fathers of the Church. Due to its numerous references to philosophy, its elaborate language and theological innovations, commenting on it is a real exegetical challenge.

The commentary written by Luca Mazzinghi is a highly recommended work. It can be considered the culmination of the research works of the author, who, after preparing a commentary published in German (*Weisheit* [IECOT; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2018]) and English (*Wisdom* [IECOT; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2019]) also published a commentary in Italian, which is an expanded and thoroughly thought out version.

Luca Mazzinghi is a respected Italian exegete, a specialist in wisdom literature. He studied at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and at the École biblique et archéologique française in Jerusalem. The topic of his doctoral dissertation was the analysis of Wis 17:1–18:4 and the work was published in the Analecta Biblica series. His doctoral dissertation, written under the supervision of Maurice Gilbert, along with studies by biblical scholars such as Michael Kolarcik, Pierre Dumoulin and Michelangelo Priotto, is an important contribution to the studies of the Book of Wisdom. Moreover, Mazzinghi is the author of many scientific papers devoted primarily to wisdom literature. The books published by him are often the result of the lectures conducted at the Theological Faculty of Central Italy at Florence, at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and at the Pontifical Gregorian University, where he is currently a lecturer.

The most recent commentary by Mazzinghi is more extensive than the German or English versions and it is the culmination of the studies of the Italian exegete on the Book of Wisdom. The commentary consists of an extensive general introduction (pp. 7–54), in which the most important issues concerning authorship, context, literary genre, dates and the literary structure of the Book are addressed. Then, the author discusses the individual parts of the Book (Wis 1:1–6:25, pp. 55–280; Wis 7–9, pp. 281–408; Wis 10–19, pp. 409–758). The commentary includes a bibliography divided into sections (comments:

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pp. 759–760; general studies: pp. 760–785; other studies: pp. 786–789). At the end of the commentary, there is a useful index of Greek terms (pp. 791–800), an index of biblical quotations (pp. 801–814) and an index of texts from ancient literature referred to in the commentary (pp. 815–828).

The general introduction deals with issues related to the context, structure and general introduction to the subject of the Book. The unique character of the Book is presented and the fact that it constitutes an important link between the Old Testament and the New Testament is emphasised. The author dedicates a short paragraph to the Greek text and the translations of the Book, and then, he analyses its structure, which is still the subject of a debate. A lot of attention is paid to the style of the Book. Mazzinghi emphasises the presence of numerous *hapax legomena* in the text, as well as the elegance and precision of the language, which includes many elements characteristic of the ancient rhetoric practised in Alexandria. A separate paragraph is devoted to the literary genres that the inspired author used in his work. In addition to Greek genres (*encomiums*, *logos protrepticos*), the use of the Midrash style, which is skilfully combined with typically Greek genres, is analysed. In the next paragraph, Mazzinghi shows the relation between the Book of Wisdom and other biblical texts, pointing out those that may have been a source of inspiration for the author. The relation between the Book of Wisdom and the writings of Judaism, both the ones in Hebrew and those in Greek (*Letter of Aristeas*, *the Third and Fourth Books of the Maccabees* and the Writings of Philo of Alexandria) is also presented. The topics of the relation between the work of Pseudo-Solomon and the broadly-understood Hellenism, the polemics against idolatry and the reference to popular philosophical trends are also raised. Next, the author of the commentary shows the links between the Book of Wisdom and the New Testament, especially the writings of Paul. The issue of the canonicity of the Book and its reception in the days of early Church is discussed.

After the introduction, the author proceeds to comment on different parts of the Book. Presenting the first part of the Book (Wis 1:1–6:25), he briefly discusses its literary structure and genre. Then, he analyses individual pericopes, following the literary structure he had adopted. Sections devoted to the praise of wisdom, the philosophy of godless, the attitude of the righteous and the godless, as well as the topic of eschatological judgment are analysed. Finally, Wis 6 is discussed, in which the inspired author reiterates the call to embrace wisdom as a guide to life, included in Wis 1. A passage from Wis 6:22-25 is also discussed, which is structurally related to the first part of the Book and, at the same time, constitutes the introduction to the second part of it.

In the second part of the commentary, which is an *encomium* of Wisdom, chapters 7–9 are discussed. Mazzinghi shows the precise structure of that part of the Book, based on the results of the research conducted by Paolo Bizzeti, and analyses individual sections of the work that concern the person of Solomon and his origin, the discovery of Wisdom as the most precious gift and the relationship between Solomon and Wisdom described with the use of the conjugal metaphor. The ninth chapter – the heart of the Book – contains a prayer for Wisdom and closes the second part of the Book.

The last part of the Book (chapters 10–19) refers to the history of Israel and presents the events of salvation history, updated and interpreted in the Midrash style. First, the Italian exegete analyses chapter 10, devoted to the eight figures of salvation history contained in the Book of Genesis and then, he presents seven diptychs comparing the Israelites and Egyptians, mentioned in the third part of the Book. In the analysis, he emphasises the so-called "digressions," which are a reflection on God's mercy (Wis 11:15–12:27), and chapters 13–15 that contain a critique of idolatry.

The commentary by Mazzinghi is an important milestone in the study of the Book of Wisdom. It is a valuable supplement to the monumental works by Carl Larcher and Giuseppe Scarpat, which are still points of reference in historical-critical and literary studies. Based on those works and other studies, Mazzinghi creates a valuable theological synthesis that reveals the state of research on the Book and its current theological interpretation. Based on his experience and scientific workshop, he makes some significant theological findings. The above can be noticed, for example, in his analysis of Wis 2:23 (p. 131), where he refers to and confirms James M. Reese's thesis on the meaning of the preposition *epi*. His interpretation significantly influences the way of translating and understanding that passage and seems to be the best interpretation of that extract at the moment. While making important findings, Mazzinghi does so in a logical and convincing manner. While referring to other commentaries, he does not overwhelm the reader with an excess of information but advises the sources and, at the same time, presents his own theological synthesis in a clear and logical way.

The commentary is very clearly structured. The author resigns from the division of the work into synchronic and diachronic analysis, which was noticeable in the German and English versions (however, the content remains practically the same). At the beginning of each pericope, he refers to important articles and studies that concern individual verses and sections of the Book. Then, he makes a precise translation of each pericope. He gives a lot of attention to the structure of the Book as well as to textual and philological issues. Finally, he presents his exegetical and theological commentary in a synthetic way, trying to show the theological message and the essential relations of the Book with the world of Judaism and Hellenism. His theological syntheses at the end of the larger sections of his work are also valuable as they clearly show the message of the author without overburdening the reader with excessive detail of a purely erudite nature.

The commentary, which was first written in Italian (the Italian version was published as the last one, after the German and English version were published by Kohlhammer), is a valuable synthesis of knowledge about the Book of Wisdom extended by important additions, which were not included in the previous versions (it can be noticed, for example, in Wis 2:21-24, in the case of which there is a more extensive commentary on the devil's envy and references to extra-biblical literature in the Italian version). The advantage of the work by Mazzinghi is that the author does not repeat the issues known from other studies but provides important interpretation and guidelines for understanding particular expressions. What is unique about that commentary is also the fact that, in addition to biblical references and the presentation of the influence of Judaic thought, the author constantly emphasises the importance of Hellenistic culture (Platonism, Stoicism and others), which undoubtedly had a great influence on the way of thinking of the inspired author.

In the commentary, one can notice the typical style of the Italian exegete, known from his many books and characterised by the fact that precision and accuracy of argumentation are combined with a clear message. The commentary is the result of many years of in-depth research of the author and his ability to create an up-to-date and convincing synthesis of knowledge about the Book of Wisdom based on the available literature on the subject. The work can be included, without a doubt, in the group of commentaries that will always be the point of reference in the studies on the Book of Wisdom.

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Jacques van Ruiten – Koert van Bekkum (eds.), *Violence in the Hebrew Bible. Between Text and Reception* (Oudtestamentische Studiën 79; Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill 2020). Pp. 438. ISBN 9789004434677

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Violence in the Hebrew Bible. Between Text and Reception – a collective work edited by Jacques van Ruiten and Koert van Bekkum is the 79 volume of the Brill's series Oudtestamentische Studiën. The publication is a record of methodological reflection on texts of violence in the Hebrew Bible. The texts included in the volume were delivered during a joint meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study in the Netherlands and Belgium, the British Society for Old Testament Study and the Old Testament Society of South Africa. The meeting was held on 22–24 August 2018 in Groningen. The publication includes an introduction preceded by a list of contributors and five main chapters followed by indexes.

Main editors indicate in the introduction that biblical texts of violence have often been subject of change which, through the rewriting process, adapts the message to new socio-historical conditions. Thus, their theological and ideological potential is revealed. The general premise of the volume is therefore to read the biblical texts in close connection with their reception history which allows to observe the internal dynamics of biblical message.

The first part contains contributions regarding the Hebrew Bible in general. The opening text by Jacques van Ruiten "Religious Violence and the Hebrew Bible" introduces the methodological challenges related to the topic of the volume and points out hermeneutical strategies to address biblical texts of violence. Historical-critical exegesis is listed as the most important because it helps examine historical setting through in-depth contextual study. David Clines in the text titled "The Ubiquitous Language of Violence in the Hebrew Bible" tries to study linguistic field of violence preserved in the Hebrew biblical tradition. The list of terms for violence contains 235 items with 5400 occurrences in the Bible (1.8% of the Bible as a whole). They are placed in several semantic categories: to destroy, to kill, to strike, to break, to crush, to cut. The author highlights the most common words for violence (e.g. "strike," "army," "sword," "war," "enemy"). A separate list of the most common terms for violence attributed to the deity is provided too. The third text of the first chapter by Heather McKay "Violence with Humour: Is This Possible in

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the Hebrew Bible?" explores the purposes behind the combination of humor and violence although the conjunction itself is rather infrequent in the Bible with the humor being mostly black or wry.

The second section of the volume focuses on texts of violence in the Torah and opens with an article by Koert van Bekkum "Violence in the Flood Narrative: Text and Reception". The story of elimination of humankind by the flood belongs to one of the most violent chapters of the whole Bible. The author, referring to parallel Mesopotamian sources, presents the biblical narrative from the perspective of the dichotomies which are essential to understand the text: blessing and curse, order and chaos, God and humankind against the background of divine violence. The contribution deals also with reception history referring to the intertestamental literature (*Enoch, Jubilees*). Christo Lombaard in his article: "The Murderous God of Genesis 22 (*the Akedah)* in Three Recent Public Discourses: a Popular British Anti-Religious Book, a US Television Series, and a South African Poem Or: Criteria for Godhood and Faith in Secular Media" broadens the interpretative perspective of the narrative about Abraham's sacrifice to include modern communication media. Examining a book by Richard Dawkins *The God Delusion*, a crime series *Bones* and a poem by Lina Spies *Sacrificium* where the problem of the murderous God is treated, the author indicates implicit criteria for godhood and a legitimate faith. The next contribution by Miracle Ajah "Narratives of Violence in Numbers 25: Between Text and Reception" underlines the complex literary and canonical context of the violent passages based on the injunction of Numbers 25:17: "Treat the Midiantes as enemies and kill them." In theological and ethical considerations, the author includes a series of contrasting interpretations regarding the concept of enemy and friend, divine judgment and violence as commendation or condemnation. The last part of the second chapter "The Canaanites in Deuteronomy 7 and the Book of Jubilees" by Jacques van Ruiten deals with the impact which Deuteronomy's violent passages concerning extermination of the people of the land in relation to the Israel's election had on the book of Jubilees. One can observe several strategies to treat the command to annihilate the Canaanites of which figurative interpretation plays a major role. Jubilees emphasize a curse Canaan has called down upon himself instead of direct extermination summons.

The third section on violence in the Former Prophets opens with a chapter "Violence in the Book of Joshua" by J. Cornelis de Vos. The author argues that violent passages are subject to the message concerning God's gift of the land to the people of Israel. Irony is an interesting narrative strategy in the book (story of Rahab in chapter 2, Gibeonites deceiving the Israelites in chapter 9). One should notice that not all the inhabitants of the land are annihilated – against the Deuteronomy's demand. "Two Poles of the Exodus: Conquest as the Oppressive Pole in Joshua 6:21" by Ntozakhe Simon Cezula shows that the exodus narrative can be understood in the context of an antithesis: liberation and oppression (liberation from the Egyptians, oppression of the Canaanites). The author examines elaboration of liberation theology against the background of the exodus biblical paradigm suggesting that the model can be fruitful in promoting a process of reconstruction in newly liberated nations. June F. Dickie's contribution "Jael: Mighty Hero or Slippery Man–Slayer? Perspectives on the Interpretation of Judges 4–5, Then and Now" deals with the figure of Jael in all its complexity: from a courageous hero to a deceitful murderer. The goal is to explore different interpretations of Jael's actions and evaluate them in the light of the Hebrew text. The study is extended to include an analysis of the impact of the text on contemporary South African society. "Benjamin's Brides: Different Forms of Violence in Judges 21" by Klaas Spronk provides the reader with a survey of the interpretation history of the passage in question. The following structural and literary analysis shows that the horrific aspect of the story takes priority over probably more original humorous and ironic character of the second part. The consideration is based on the study of tradition and redaction history of the book. Paul Sanders in "God Appeased by Homicide? 2 Samuel 21:1–14 in View of Some Hittite and Assyrian Parallels" underlines that the present reader feels shocked by the account of execution of seven Saul's descendants. The elimination is read not only in the context of David's election history but is explained also against the background of ancient Near East texts. The analysis demonstrates that the biblical episode is shaped according to a pattern known in Middle Eastern literary tradition which describes the conduct of a prudent king in times of misery. This fact allows a broader view of the text in the context of ancient religious and literary tradition. The last contribution of the third part titled "Yhwh's War with Whom? Foreign Deities and the Biblical Portrayal of Kings" by Izaak de Hulster deals with the problem of absence of foreign deities in several stories of military confrontation recorded in the books of Kings. The author mentions two examples: 1 Kings 20 and 2 Kings 18–19 and tries to examine whether two foreign kings may be considered as direct God's enemies since their deities are not recalled. This analysis opens up a wider field for considerations on the biblical perception of foreign kings and deities.

The fourth part of the volume examines texts of violence in the books of the Latter Prophets. The first contribution "Divine Tears Over Divine Violence: God's Lament in the Oracle Against Moab in Jeremiah 48" by Eric Peels shows the radicalism of divine judgment recorded in the oracle of Jeremiah. It is of particular interest because of alternation of punishment and lament. The author notes that both divine anger and divine regret are part of the oracle. The most significant theological point of the text is the fact that God is most likely the subject of weeping in several passages which is not to be understood in figurative sense but as a sign of divine *pathos*. In "Reading the Book of Micah as Mediation between Two Perspectives on the Enemy" Wim de Bruin examines the positioning of the book of Micah between Jonah and Nahum in the Masoretic text. The author indicates different perspectives on the enemy in the prophetic tradition along with their theological motivations. In the book of Micah one can observe "multiperspectivity" on the enemy which is a sign of a complicated theological and hermeneutical process at the editing stage. In Wilhelm J. Wessels's contribution "A Critical Reflection on the Presentation and Reception of Yahweh as a Violent Deity in the Book of Nahum" one encounters three different readings of the prophetic message: theological, contextual and a reader-response. This diversity provides interesting insights into the question of Yahweh presented as a violent god. Nahum's message includes ancient traditions and is examined critically in the light of social and ideological contexts playing a decisive role in the reception process.

The last fifth part of the volume focuses on violence in the Writings. Matthew J. Lynch in "Scheming Violence in the Psalms" explores a new approach which has not been brought up in the critical study – relation between scheming (deceitful and hidden violence) and violence experienced by the psalmist "in public." The author underlines the psalmist's perspective on scheming – its formal and literary constituent elements. Violence emerging from the biblical texts is a broad enough phenomenon that it includes also an attitude of scheming. In theological terms, it is therefore subject to divine retribution that puts an end to violence and restores justice. Next article of the volume "Knock the Little Bastards' Brains Out: Reception History and Theological Interpretation of Psalm 137:9" by Arie Versluis mentions some hermeneutical strategies in reception history of this text which evokes feeling of disgust among modern readers. The author deals with the question whether it is possible to find an acceptable interpretation without application of allegorical exegesis. Investigating literary and theological context of the psalm he points out the symbolic value of the contrast between Babylon and Zion and a zealous stand for justice. The two factors influence the dramatic language of the examined text which is first and foremost an individual lamentation of a victim to God. The last contribution "Esther 9 Through the Lens of Diaspora: The Exegetical and Ethical Dilemmas of the Massacres in Susa and Beyond" by Tsaurayi K. Mapfeka indicates that an awareness of the diaspora provenance of Esther plays an important role in reading the violent passages in chapter 9 of the book. The concept of diaspora is crucial to understand the reality of violence described in Esther. It sheds light both on the form of the message and its origin. Modern comparative studies help to establish the nature of social processes characteristic of the diaspora, which may facilitate a more adequate reading of the biblical text.

Looking more generally at the volume introduced here, one should note that its great advantage is the wide range of analyzed texts. For this reason, the reader can see examples of texts of violence present in different traditions of the Hebrew Bible: from the Pentateuch to the Writings. The variety of studied passages emphasizes a plurality of meanings both when it comes to reception history and classical biblical exegesis. Contributions collected in the volume allow two general remarks to be made. Biblical texts of violence have been the subject of rewriting process (noticeable in an analysis based on the tradition and redaction history) and hence the subject of multiple reinterpretations which can be examined both through text–oriented as well as reader–response approaches. Another essential remark is the fact of strict relation between the new interpretation and the social and religious worldviews conditioning a new meaning. Development of the reception history is based on constructive ideological critique of the text itself and its social context. This original and broad approach seems to be the main advantage of the volume.

Contributions which compose this study quite clearly show how important it is for the hermeneutic process to consider the relation between the text, its historical context and the life context of the reader. On the other hand, there are some methodological inconsistencies resulting, as it seems, from the volume of the book and the scope of the covered topics. Despite the clear assumptions of the editors regarding the adopted methods of examining biblical texts of violence, critical exegesis based on literary analysis is not always the starting point. It seems that some studies violate the balance that should exist between the study of the text in its context and the history and present of its reception. The reference to the experience of a modern reader is a particularly valuable contribution to the study of the continuity of the reception history of the analyzed passages. However, it should not be the primary element in the process of interpreting the biblical text. One notices also that the chapter on violence in the Former Prophets may be seen as too complex and extensive in relation to the others. It seems that too much attention was given to the traditions of conquest of the Promised Land.

The above–mentioned imbalances occurring here and there are not so serious as to rule out the positive contribution of the volume to the exegetical–hermeneutic discussion on texts of violence. The contributions included in the volume allow for a certain synthesis about the traces of violence in the Bible. This synthesis is both phraseological–exegetical and historical–theological in nature. Thanks to the thematic diversity, the authors managed to show that the biblical text – especially the one difficult to interpret, is a dynamic reality which has continuous potential to inspire the reader, in our time too.