Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations

Adam Jonathan Aja [Ph.D. 2010]

Philistine Domestic Architecture in the Iron Age I

Material reminiscent of an Aegean-style culture, distinct from that of the indigenous population in southern Canaan, appeared some time near the beginning of the twelfth century B.C.E. Scholars have long associated this material with the arrival of a group of newcomers called the Philistines and known as the famous antagonists of the biblical Israelites. Limited excavation and publication of Philistine settlements have restricted previous studies to the available portable artifacts such as pottery. While such studies have advanced our understanding of Philistine culture, *le mobilier* is vulnerable to post-depositional disturbances and other issues that potentially remove them from the proper context of those people who created and used them. Unlike such portable elements of material culture, archaeological strata and built architectural features cannot be traded; thus they reflect the activity of people at the site. The current research has shifted the emphasis away from that of previous Philistine studies, from an examination of portable items, to the examination of fixed domestic structures, which thereby helps to augment our understanding of the composition and culture of the people living in the territories of Philistia.

A house model, based upon an assessment of the unpublished excavation records of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, is compared here with evidence from the rest of the Philistine Pentapolis settlements to determine common building patterns. These elements—the use of axial pillars, multi-purpose vestibules, constructed hearths, and a linear arrangement of room access—are then sought in the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean in order to identify the potential source of the building tradition. The results support previous scholarly assertions that the Philistines originated from settlements on the Greek mainland, although some may have landed for a time in parts of Cyprus before settling in the land of Southern Canaan. These settlers carried notions of Aegean building traditions with them to their new settlements and built according to the practices of their homeland. Strong evidence points to cultural contact, but little evidence supports any assertion that the indigenous populations controlled or built the structures of Philistia proper.

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Finally, the domestic architecture is used to suggest details regarding Philistine household structure.

Rachel Margaret Billings [Ph.D. 2010]

"Israel Served the Lord": The Book of Joshua as Paradoxical Portrait of Faithful Israel

Two major frameworks have dominated scholarly reading of the book of Joshua within the past century: The literary discovery of the Deuteronomistic History and the archaeological discovery of evidence that enabled analysis of the historical data underlying the story of Israel's occupation of Canaan. This dissertation addresses the fragmentation often brought about by the latter development and offers a more holistic reading of the book with a focus on its meaning and purpose as a literary work. In the process it builds upon several other recent attempts at such a reading.

In response to the scholarly observation that the book of Joshua is fraught with tensions that are not easily understood or resolved, this study proposes as a starting point the surprising "verdict" in Josh 24:31 that "Israel served the LORD during all the days of Joshua." When taken seriously as a literary clue that points to a theological interpretation of the totality of Israel's actions in the book of Joshua, this verdict broadens and deepens the reader's understanding of Israel's service to the LORD. It allows the understanding of that service to encompass Israel's repentance and YHWH's mercy, not only Israel's obvious acts of obedience.

Through this hermeneutical and literary lens, this study considers two pairs of stories and a major set of themes in the book of Joshua: the stories of Rahab and Achan, the stories of the Gibeonites and the Transjordanian altar, and the themes of Israel's complete or incomplete taking of the land of Canaan. It argues that the way in which the book of Joshua presents these stories reminds Israel of the dynamic nature of its identity as YHWH's people—an identity that demands a continued response of obedience parallel to YHWH's ever-unfolding work on Israel's behalf. The book of Joshua portrays Israel's obedience as not merely an unattainable ideal or a thing of the past but as a living reality that unfolds when YHWH's people acknowledge His claim upon them and strive to serve Him. In this way the book of Joshua tells the story of Israel's early days in the land in a way that makes it available as a resource for Israel's life before YHWH throughout the ages.

Cavan W. Concannon [Ph.D. 2010]

Ecclesia Laus Corinthiensis: Negotiating Ethnicity under Empire

Focusing on issues of ethnicity, civic identity, and empire, this dissertation examines the earliest reception of the letters of Paul to the Corinthians. At its core the dissertation seeks to understand how Paul's earliest audience in Corinth heard and responded to Paul's rhetoric of ethnicity. This dissertation makes three important contributions to the study of Paul, the Corinthian correspondence, and

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the city of Corinth. First, it lays out the local context of myths, stories, practices, and experiences with which Paul's audience could interpret his letters. This shift requires pairing literary and archaeological materials as a means of reconstructing the ways in which the rhetoric of ethnicity was deployed in Corinth. Second, placing Paul within this local context shows him to be one among many orators using the rhetoric of ethnicity to persuade Corinthian audiences. This focus on the multiplicity of voices in Corinth seeks to open up spaces or cracks in the interpretation of the Corinthian correspondence in order to hear the voices of the Corinthians, who heard and interpreted Paul's letters.

Attention to ethnicity and its importance in the Corinthian correspondence constitutes the third contribution of this study. Studies of Paul and ethnicity have generally focused on the letters to the Galatians and Romans except when discussing specific confrontations that Paul might have had with Jewish missionaries (e.g., the "super apostles" of 1 Corinthians 10–13). Thus, in Pauline studies, scholars have tackled the topic of ethnicity only when seeing Judaism and Jewish voices that oppose Paul's voice in particular letters. Ethnicity, however, pertained as well to the Gentiles, who heard and responded to Paul's preaching. This dissertation shows that the rhetoric of ethnicity played a central role in how Paul presented himself to his Corinthian audience and how he argued over community boundaries and practices. Ultimately, this study allows Paul to emerge as one of many orators who used the rhetoric of ethnicity to persuade discerning Corinthian audiences.

Cory Daniel Crawford [Ph.D. 2010]

Architecture and Cultural Memory: Iconography and the Visual Program of the Solomonic Temple in Historical, Political, and Social Context

This study seeks to assess the impact of architecture on identity and experience in pre-exilic Israel and argues that crucial to this assessment is an interdisciplinary treatment of the iconographic system of the Temple of Solomon.

It begins with a look to theoretical approaches to architecture generally and Israelite architecture specifically, approaches that move beyond singular meaning and builder's intent. The author's reconstruction of the Temple is set forth using primarily the description in 1 Kings 6–7 read together with extant archaeological material from the ancient Near East. It is argued at this point that the decoration of the architectural space was not piecemeal but rather constituted a coherent system. This system is further argued to be clearly situated within intercultural iconographic traditions of the Iron Age and therefore is to be more carefully understood by reference to recent studies of similar construction projects. An understanding of the iconography is then sought via an examination of selected texts from the ancient Near East, including the Hebrew Bible. In many instances the Temple can be seen as both a receptacle for and attractor of important memories of Israel's corporate past. The performance of cultic and other dramas in this space concretized these memories and helped constitute corporate identity. From the results of these studies,

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it is argued, meaning in Temple architecture is appreciated best as a participant in the dynamic negotiation of cultural identities via commemorative memorialization, as a landscape on which such identities were made, challenged, and remade.

Louis Demos [Th.D. 2010]

***The Cult of the Saints and its Christological Foundations in Eustratios of Constantinople's* De statu animarum post mortem**

This study proposes that the cult of the saints in Eustratios of Constantinople's *De statu animarum post mortem* has a Christological foundation. It examines this thesis with reference to cultural, historical, and theological contexts. The first chapter serves as an introduction and focuses on the theological and political processes that lead to the Christological definition promulgated by the Council of Chalcedon (451), which declared that Christ has two natures, divine and human, united in one hypostasis or person. Chapter 2 examines Eustratios's motivation for writing his work as a defense against the claims proposed by some persons, unnamed by Eustratios, that the souls of the departed rest in a state of sleep and have no power to intervene in human affairs after death. The third chapter argues that Eustratios wrote his work between 582 and 593. The evidence for this proposal comes from a careful comparison and analysis of Eustratios's *De statu animarum* and Gregory the Great of Rome's fourth book of *Dialogues*. The comparison reveals that Eustratios wrote his work first. The final chapter demonstrates how the saints and their activities, as described by Eustratios, have a Christological basis. Drawing upon a Christological model of imitation of the life Christ and the Christological neologisms of the sixth century, Eustratios holds that the souls of the saints, in carrying out God's work, participate in his virtues in their enhypostasized realities (merged divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ). Closely aligned with this foundation in Eustratios's work, the theme of theosis (deification) describes the souls of departed saints as perfected, God-like, and participating in an immortal life with God in heaven through salvation in Jesus Christ. In his work, which this study translates and presents in an appendix, Eustratios argues that human souls remain intelligible, incorporeal, and active after death, since they have transcended the time and space limitations of the human body. After death the saints can only achieve activity as holy and gentle souls in cooperation with the power of God, who aims at human salvation. Eustratios's text concludes with an argument that the souls of the departed benefit from the prayers of the living.

Elisha Russ-Fishbane [Ph.D. 2010]

Between Politics and Piety: Abraham Maimonides and His Times

Thi dissertation is a historical investigation into Egyptian Jewish society of the thirteenth century and the legacy of its leader, Abraham Maimonides (1186–1237). The dawn of the thirteenth century witnessed transformations and upheavals in Egypt along with a series of devastating natural disasters, whose economic and

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demographic impact was felt for years to come. In the midst of this hardship, Egyptian Jewry absorbed hundreds of Jewish immigrants, from Byzantium in the east to France in the west, who further tested its resources and resolve.

The beginning of the thirteenth century also marks the flowering of a spiritual movement among Egyptian Jewry, whose rituals and inner ideals reflect the impact of contemporaneous Sufism. Abraham Maimonides emerged as the spokesman for the nascent movement and utilized his influence and prestige as head of the Jews to bring legitimacy to the pietists, who found themselves on the defensive with their fellow Jews and the Muslim authorities. His controversial initiatives were not confined to pietism but were felt in a range of reforms that cast him in the role of conservative defender of the tradition. This dissertation delves into all of these measures, both as a window into the Nagid's religious leadership and as a key to the changes in the spiritual and communal life of Egyptian Jewry.

The present work makes use of the Cairo Genizah documents as its primary source of historical information. While previous scholars have noted many of the Genizah fragments discussed here, a number of these fragments receive their first treatment and translation in this study. This work marks the first systematic attempt at a historical portrait of the socio-economic, spiritual, and communal developments of Egyptian Jewry on the eve of the Mamlūk period. As the present work has benefitted from the research of other scholars, the author hopes that this contribution will stimulate further inquiry into thirteenth-century Egyptian Jewish society.

Jonathan Kaplan [Ph.D. 2010]

A Divine Love Song: The Emergence of the Theo-Erotic Interpretation of the Song of Songs in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

Jewish and Christian communities have classically understood the Song of Songs as a statement of divine love for God's chosen people: Israel or the church, respectively. I adopt the term "theo-erotic," in contrast to the more commonly used term "allegorical," to describe this interpretive mode. I then chart the hermeneutical and rhetorical shape of Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Song in the first centuries of the common era. The Song portrays an ideal world in which the lovers can be understood as archetypes with which other lovers can be identified, thus enabling theo-erotic interpretation. I argue that the Song's transmission and translation in the Septuagint and the Qumran manuscripts, references to the Song's use in *Against Apion* (Josephus), *4 Ezra*, Mishnah, and Tosefta, as well as purported allusions to the Song in numerous works from the Second Temple period provide limited evidence for the theo-erotic interpretation of the Song.

The first verifiable allusions to and echoes of the Song appear in *4 Ezra* and Revelation. I argue that these texts make use of a theo-erotic reading of the Song (as part of a complex of allusions) that recasts the Song into eschatological time and apocalyptic space in describing the community's ideal and affective relationship

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with God. Rabbinic texts that record traditions from the Tannaitic Period (ca. 70–200 C.E.) interpret the utterances of the Song typologically as prefigurations of ideals in Israel's relationship with God. The twenty-five passages that contain interpretations of the Song in *Mekilta de-Rabbi Yishmael* exemplify this mode of interpretation. In *Mekilta* the sages historicize and connect many of the Song's verses with the period of Israel's exodus from Egypt and the divine revelation at Sinai, understood in ideal terms as the period of Israel's betrothal to God. In this reading Israel adopts the woman's praises for her lover and reciprocates God's fidelity through acts of devotion expressed in characteristically rabbinic ways as the *mitzvot*, or divine commandments.

Juhwan Joseph Kim [Th.D. 2010]

"What Is This Word?": An Early Christian Narrative of the Universal Spread of the Spirit of the Spirit-Accompanied Word

This dissertation investigates the divine word (*logos*/*rēma*) and the Spirit (*pneuma*) as co-narrative themes in Luke-Acts. While scholars have recognized the thematic importance of the word in Luke-Acts, the examination of the particular ways in which the word constitutes the overarching theme of Luke's double narrative by ordering and constructing the entire narrative program remains jejune. On the other hand, while studies in Lukan pneumatology abound, the precise nature of the pneumatic role remains moot aside from the general consensus that the Spirit refers to a Spirit of prophecy. This study discerns the function and role of the word and the Spirit by exploring their narrative interrelation.

An examination of the deployment of the word in the Scriptures (LXX), Hellenistic-Jewish literature, and the New Testament indicates that in the Lukan writings the word takes on a most prominent significance. Luke places the word at center stage and insists that the word is sent, proclaimed, accepted, and praised. The word saves, grows, spreads, prevails, constrains, and creates the early Christian *ekklēsia*. The theme of the word comprises the foundation of the entire work. In conferring an overriding narrative function and role to the centrifugal word, Luke assigns the Spirit an indispensable role in collaboration with this narrative goal. For Luke, the Spirit works in service of the ubiquitous expansion of the word in the midst of escalating opposition.

This dissertation engages the narrative of Luke-Acts as a single continuous whole in its historical, literary, and theological embeddedness. The discrete narrative components (e.g., geographical scheme, travel motifs, configuration of various human characters) make up the entire narrative plot of the twofold work and come under coherent alignment in light of the pivotal theme of the Spirit-accompanied word. Luke-Acts represents an early Christian narrative, which recounts the stepping stones of the universal spread of the Spirit-accompanied word in the face of Roman claims to universalism.

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Ann B. McClenahan [ThD 2010]

"Big Boston": The Impact of Community Organizing on Christian and Jewish Congregations in Boston

Recent scholarly work has shed light on various contributions made by community-based community organizing (CBCO) to civic life in the United States. Through national organizations, such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), local CBCO affiliates engage members in a variety of relationship- and leadership-building practices to address and solve common community, regional, and statewide problems. This dissertation examines one IAF affiliate, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO). GBIO was founded in 1996 to organize across Boston's religious, racial, ethnic, class, and neighborhood lines for the public good. Versus earlier studies, this study reverses the lens in order to understand how congregations *qua* religious institutions are impacted by and interpret democratic practice.

By means of participant observation, in-depth ethnographic conversations, and an examination of written documents, this study examines Jewish and Christian congregations as they engage in the campaign to bring progressive healthcare reform to Massachusetts. Its interests are interdisciplinary and draw on disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Its grounding discipline is Religious Studies with a focus on lived religion, which locates religious creativity within culture. It engages current sociological scholarship in its subfields of religion, culture, and social movements. Finally, it examines political science scholarship interested in civic engagement and social capital in a diverse society.

This research finds that when religious practice engages CBCO democratic practice, it can produce pluralism without reducing difference. Congregations that draw on situated religious traditions can foster pluralism, which they understand as self-conscious, active, and intentional engagement with diversity. This case study demonstrates that congregations engaged in civic activity have religious resources to mediate conflict that might be intractable in the political sphere.

David John Mozina [Th.D. 2010]

Quelling the Divine: The Performance of a Talisman in Contemporary Thunder Ritual

This dissertation explores images of the efficacy of talismans (*fu* 符) as manifested by a lineage of Orthodox Unity Daoist priests currently practicing thunder ritual in central Hunan Province, PRC. A close reading of the ritual production of a specific talisman, called the Talisman to Summon General Yin, challenges scholarly notions of what constitutes talismans and how they work. Recent scholarship on medieval Daoist talismans has tended to attribute their efficacy to the incomprehensibility of their distinctive scripts. The present analysis of the Talisman to Summon General Yin within the ritual context of an ordination sheds light on emic notions of efficacy as flowing from the quality of the ritual performance that produces the

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talisman and on conceptions of talismans as modes of communication between Daoists and deities. Focusing the study on the ritual production and materiality of a single talisman allows one to ascribe meaning to the strange graphs and to demonstrate their function as comprehensible symbols that refer to aspects of the ritual procedures that produce them.

The first chapter introduces the thesis of the dissertation, recent debates about how to interpret talismans, and prevalent theoretical issues in the study of present-day Daoist ritual. Chapter 2 introduces the locale of the ethnographic fieldwork and the two interlocutors—a Daoist ordinand and a thunder deity—who interact in a particular instance of the ritual production of the talisman during an ordination attended by the author in 2004. Chapter 3 examines the inner aspects of the production of the talisman and argues that its efficacy flows from the self-divinization of the inscriber by means of theurgic procedures that access cosmogonic and bureaucratic power. Chapter 4 explores the outer aspect of the talisman as the inscriber's exteriorization of cosmogonic breath through the media of ink on cloth. The charged graphs have a perlocutionary quality—they refer to mythic narratives that function to persuade the deity to subjugate himself to the ordinand. Chapter 5 places the talisman in the context of the larger ordination to show that the talisman itself constitutes an aspect of that rite of passage. The text makes references throughout to video clips that the author made of the ritual performance, and one can view these clips as supplementary files.

Ryan Overbey [Ph.D. 2010]

Memory, Rhetoric, and Education in the Great Lamp of the Dharma Dhāraṇī Scripture

The preacher has a central place in the transmission of the Buddhist religion. As a charismatic and eloquent speaker, master of memory and debate, and keen observer of his students and their proclivities, the Buddhist preacher has earned great importance in many Buddhist scriptures. But until now scholars have had to cobble together a composite picture of this elusive figure from many disparate sources.

The *Great Lamp of the Dharma Dhāraṇī Scripture*, an obscure text extant only in a single sixth-century Chinese translation, provides the clearest and most detailed picture of the Buddhist preacher yet discovered. Surveying all fifty-two chapters of this massive scripture, this dissertation argues that the *Great Lamp* constitutes a homiletical manual focused on the problems and opportunities of pedagogy and upon the moral formation of the Buddhist preacher and his community.

The study shows how the *Great Lamp* positions the preacher as the inheritor of the Three Treasuries of the Tathāgatas. This unique concept encapsulates the totality of the teachings and deeds of all Buddhas. The teacher safeguards a *dhāraṇī* (Buddhist mnemonic spell) and contemplates the letters of the Indian syllabary. This study shows how the *Great Lamp*'s *dhāraṇī* functions as a token of the productive power of emptiness itself and authorizes the utterance of new Buddhist sermons.

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This dissertation also investigates the vivid details of the preacher found in the *Great Lamp* and analyzes the text's attention to quotidian concerns such as the preacher's hygiene, the height of his seat, and the size of his retinue. The *Great Lamp*'s preacher does not come across as a paragon of unconquerable virtue but as a human figure who faces considerable obstacles. This study argues that the act of preaching, fraught with tension, serves at the same time as an act of evocation in which the preacher instantiates the presence of the Buddha.

This dissertation shows how the text integrates abstruse Buddhist doctrines and ritual technologies into a curriculum of practice and makes them relevant for the real concerns of Buddhist preachers and their communities.

Song-Mi Park [Ph.D. 2010]

The Development of the Hezekiah Complex: Literature, History, and Theology

This study examined the development of traditions about King Hezekiah of Judah in the Hebrew Bible. The biblical narratives about Hezekiah are not only numerous but also oddly divergent. Hence, in order to elucidate the significance of this figure, this study focused on two, as yet unresolved, questions: Why does the Hebrew Bible have so many stories about King Hezekiah. Why do these stories present contrasting portraits of this particular figure?

Two types of literary developments were analyzed in order to answer these two questions. The first development concerned the redactional growth of the stories about Hezekiah in 2 Kings. A continual tension between Judah's theology and historical events drove the growth of the traditions about Hezekiah in 2 Kings. As history clashed with theology, redactional layers were added in order to redress theological insecurities and questions that had been unsatisfactorily answered in the preceding pericope. The second development focused on the insertion and reutilization of the stories about Hezekiah in the books of Isaiah and 2 Chronicles. The conflicting portrayal of Hezekiah played a key role in the reutilization and adaptation of the stories about Hezekiah in these books. By tracing these literary developments about Hezekiah, I have tried to outline to a greater degree how and why such a complicated group of stories became associated with Hezekiah.

Taylor G. Petrey [Th.D. 2010]

Carnal Resurrection: Sexuality and Sexual Difference in Early Christianity

This dissertation explores the ways in which early Christians thought about resur-rected bodies in terms of desires, sexual practices, reproduction, and how to distinguish maleness and femaleness. Early Christian treatises on the resurrection addressed a set of interrelated and overlapping questions and goals. First, they sought to define the degree of continuity that existed between the mortal self and the resurrected self. In doing so, they specified which substances, desires, dispositions, and practices persisted in resurrected bodies and which did not. For

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early Christians, sexual acts, desires, and reproduction did not have any place in the resurrection. Second, they sought to underscore the importance of having a correct view concerning the resurrection—especially in what ways it is continuous and discontinuous with the mortal body and flesh. The body's "parts" hold the key to a continuity of identity, although how these "parts" are defined is disputed. The differences between the mortal and resurrected "parts" produced a set of problems for describing not only the relationship of sexual practices, desires, and reproduction to resurrected bodies but also the value of such practices in mortality. Third, as these writers wrangled over what kinds of morphological and substantive bodies would persist in the resurrection, they confronted questions concerning the nature of male and female difference. While suggesting that sexual desires, acts, and reproduction become inessential to resurrected bodies, they argued that maleness and femaleness remained essential features of resurrected bodies. This dissertation explores the instability of the early Christian attempts to separate maleness and femaleness, located in resurrected "parts," from the gendered discourses of sexual desires, acts, and reproduction.

Justin R. Ritzinger [Ph.D. 2010]

Anarchy in the Pure Land: Tradition, Modernity, and the Reinvention of the Cult of Maitreya in Republican China

This dissertation addresses an apparent anomaly of Republican-era reform Buddhism: Why did reformers, often portrayed as demythologized and deritualized, seek to promote devotion to the bodhisattva Maitreya and to secure rebirth in his heavenly paradise? This study attempts to resolve this apparent contradiction by developing a theorization of alternate modernities derived from Charles Taylor's analyses of the moral dimensions of modernity. This study argues that Taixu, the leader of the reform movement, reinvented the cult of Maitreya in order to articulate a vision that provides a place for two hypergoods—Buddhahood and utopia, perfected self and perfected society.

While the former derives from Buddhism, the latter came from Western traditions of radicalism. In part one this study draws on heretofore unstudied sources to show that Taixu's youthful involvement with radicalism went much deeper and was more sustained than the often-asserted flirtation. It analyzes a series of essays that he wrote for radical journals to show that the utopian vision of radicalism fired his imagination and that his thought in this period represents a series of shifting and unstable attempts to bring this ideal together with that of Buddhahood.

While Taixu ultimately rejected radicalism, its utopian vision continued to provide an orienting framework for his moral imagination and drove the reinvention of the cult of Maitreya. In part two this study traces the history of this movement from its beginnings as the "house cult" of Taixu's seminaries to later attempts to promote it more widely. This history reveals the importance of devotion and ritual to the reformers' religious lives. The core texts of the cult reveal important theological

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points of convergence with anarchism, which Taixu augments in his commentaries. In the vision that emerges, utopia and Buddhahood appear simultaneously secured through inculcation of transformative knowledge, adherence to an activist ethic, and devotion to Maitreya. Although an object of a great deal of activity in the 1920s and 1930s, a series of historical misfortunes disrupted the cult's development and left it forgotten until today.

Glenn E. Snyder [Ph.D. 2010]

***"Remembering the* Acts of Paul"**

In this dissertation I study the composition and reception of the *Acts of Paul*. Scholars often work on the assumption that the *Acts of Paul* was composed as a whole in the mid- to late second century, and on the basis of this assumption, a diverse group of manuscripts and traditions has been attributed to the *Acts of Paul* and its hypothetical reconstruction. To critique this practice, I study the traditions attributed to the *Acts of Paul*, using comparative and historical-critical arguments to identify and evaluate its discrete units. I argue that the manuscripts attributed to the *Acts of Paul*, rather than providing partial attestation to an early whole, may be better explained as evidence that various compositions and collections occurred under the title "*Acts of Paul*."

The argument has two parts. In the first part, I analyze traditions that circulated both independently and—in at least one of the manuscripts—with the title "*Acts of Paul*," considering each tradition separately: the *Martyrdom of Paul* in chapter 1, 3 Corinthians in chapter 2, and the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* in chapter 3. I use, among other methods, comparison with different genres to highlight each text's particularities. The function of these chapters is to exhibit the diverse and composite character of *Acts of Paul*.

The second part discusses attestation to the *Acts of Paul*. Chapter 4 discusses the earliest manuscripts that use the title "*Acts of Paul*," introducing additional acts and reconsidering the texts from chapters 1–3. Then chapter 5 asks how the earliest references to the *Acts of Paul* relate to what may otherwise be inferred from the extant manuscripts. I conclude that at least three distinct narrative sequences used the title "*Acts of Paul*" and that collections of "*Acts of Paul*" varied geographically and chronologically.

Ester-Basya (Asya) Vaisman [Ph.D. 2010]

Being Heard: The Singing Voices of Contemporary Hasidic Women

This dissertation is a study of the context and content of vocal music in the lives of contemporary Yiddish-speaking Hasidic women and girls. While the music of Hasidic men has been collected, published, and analyzed, very little is known about the songs of Hasidic women. Because of a Jewish religious law called *Kol B'Isha* ("woman's voice"), Hasidic women are unable to perform publicly or to record songs commercially. The insular nature of Hasidic communities furthermore makes

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this material almost inaccessible. I obtained information through fieldwork that consisted of conducting interviews with women from the communities, recording their songs, and observing school performances. Fieldwork took place over the course of four years in Williamsburg and Borough Park, New York; Jerusalem and Rehovoth, Israel; London, England; and Antwerp, Belgium. The Hasidic women belonged to the Satmar, Bobov, Pupa, Vizhnits, Tosh, Belz and other communities.

The primary purpose of this project is to describe and analyze the women's Yiddish songs and to study the role that songs and singing play in a Hasidic woman's life. Among the issues addressed are song authorship and provenance, community perceptions of qualities important to singing, the role of song as an educational tool, the representation of the outside world in girls' performances, and generational differences in song repertoire. This research provides insight into the creative world of the Hasidim and helps people unfamiliar with the community to understand this cultural minority. It also contributes to our understanding of how women can creatively express themselves despite the restrictions on their public voices.

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