

toral dissertation written at the University of Oxford under the supervision of Hugh Williamson – undertakes a historical investigation into the period between 587 BCE and 539 BCE, typically known as the exilic period, to discern characteristic theological attitudes and worship practices among the post-war Judahite community. She argues that the typical designation of the period as ‘exilic’ glosses over the distinctiveness of the Judahite perspective of the age, which she in turn identifies as the ‘Templeless Period.’ She assesses the historical, archaeological, and biblical material of this time in reference to Judah and concludes that at this time Judah experienced a degree of political and social stability and that scribal activity likely continued in Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem.

This however, drives her to question the distinctiveness of theological formulation among the post-war Judahite community over and against the *Golah* community in Babylon. Middlemas highlights biblical texts that attribute the fall of Jerusalem to syncretistic worship practices among Judahites, both prior to and after the destruction of the capital. She argues that *Golah* authors wrote these texts to provide social, theological, and ideological unity among their community, often at the expense of the perspective of those in Judah. Thus much of *Golah* literature programmatically denounces foreign or syncretistic worship practices and bars those who participated in such activities (e.g., the post-war Judahite community) from blessed future in the land of Judah. This perspective, however, does not accord with the perspective of those *within* the land during the same period.

Middlemas copiously assesses archaeological, historical, and biblical data and concludes that cultic practices persisted in Judah (in Jerusalem’s temple ruins and perhaps Bethel) during the Templeless Period though in a diminished state. But how did these Judahites actually worship and what was their theological distinctiveness? With this question in mind, Middlemas assesses texts that scholarly consensus deems as Judahite composed during the exile (Pss 74, 79, 89, 102; Is 63.7-64.11), and argues that these laments cannot *with certainty* be attributed to Judahite provenance or thought milieu. Rather, she prefers to locate the religious ideology of the Judahites in the book of Lamentations. Middlemas argues that chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 are of a piece and belong to post-war Judahite provenance while chapter three belongs to a different thought milieu. She bases this argument on the provenance of the book on linguistic dating, formal similarities between the chapters, a focus upon Judah and Jerusalem in these chapters, and similarity of perspective as eyewitness accounts of the disaster that befell Jerusalem. From chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5, she attempts to trace responses to the disaster of Jerusalem that were indicative of Yahwistic worship during the Templeless Period. Middlemas discovers that these chapters employ distinctive themes that differentiate them from *Golah* literature. The themes are as follows: a

preponderance of human suffering, a lack of confidence in a future hope, a lesser emphasis on sinfulness and sin in the community with a greater emphasis on protest against Yahweh’s punishment, an emphasis on expressing pain, and finally expression of grief that is situated in a stylistic manner so as to provide a glimmer of hope by the time the reader concludes reading chapter five. Thus Middlemas concludes that the post-war Judahite community did in fact have distinctive theology that distinguished it from the *Golah* during the Templeless Period.

This work is a welcome addition to the influx of interest into and publications on the exilic age. The distinctiveness of this contribution lay in Middlemas’ concentration on the Judahite perspectives on theology and worship, an area that has not received prolonged reflection. Especially helpful in this regard is her attention to the material culture of Judah during the exilic age (Chapter 3), which enriches the value of the work, particularly with regard to the viability of locales for Judahite worship in this time, and sets her later analysis of the biblical material on solid ground. This monograph should be consulted along with other recent works into the period, especially the recent monograph of Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, which is omitted from the bibliography as it was published at virtually the same time as Middlemas’ work.

Not all will agree with Middlemas’ delineation of the themes of Lamentations, and this impacts her understanding of theology of the period. In this regard the theology of *Lamentations* is much more ambiguous and equivocating, especially in regards to sin (c.f. Adele Berlin, *Lamentations*). Also it may be that the exclusion of Lamentations 3, at least the parenetic section (Lam 3.22-39), hinders a fuller understanding of Judahite perspectives on theology during the exilic age. These points notwithstanding, this monograph serves as a welcome addition to Lamentations research and to study on the exilic age.

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*Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies:
A Guide to the Background Literature*

Craig A. Evans

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SUMMARY

This work is an extensive revision of Evans’ previous book, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Hendrickson, 1992). This recent volume is an invaluable reference tool that gives a very brief introduction to virtually all cognate literature (Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Literature, Greco-Roman authors, etc.) composed near the time of the writing of the New Testament. Perhaps the most helpful contributions of the book are the

extensive bibliographies at the end of each section and the appendices that include a very helpful list of allusions in cognate literature that parallel New Testament passages.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Werk ist eine erhebliche Neubearbeitung von Evans' früherem Buch *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Hendrickson, 1992). Der vorliegende Band ist ein unschätzbares Nachschlagewerk, das eine sehr kurze Einleitung in mehr oder weniger die gesamte verwandte Literatur bringt (Apokryphen, Pseudepigraphen, Qumran, griechisch-römische Autoren etc.), die in zeitlicher Nähe zur Verfassung des Neuen Testaments geschrieben wurde. Der vielleicht hilfreichste Beitrag des Buches sind die ausführlichen Bibliographien am Ende jeden Abschnitts und die Anhänge, die eine sehr hilfreiche Liste der Anspielungen in der verwandten Literatur enthalten, die in Parallele zu neutestamentlichen Abschnitten stehen.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage est une édition amplement révisée d'un livre antérieur intitulé *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (1992). On a là un ouvrage de référence de grande valeur qui fournit une brève introduction à pratiquement toute la littérature composée à une époque proche de la rédaction du Nouveau Testament et pouvant être utile à l'étude de ce dernier (les Apocryphes, les Pseudepigraphes, les écrits de Qoumrân, les auteurs gréco-romains, etc.). Les bibliographies fournies qui se trouvent à la fin de chaque section et les appendices qui recensent les textes de cette littérature ayant un parallèle dans le Nouveau Testament sont parmi les plus utiles contributions de cet ouvrage.

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This book by Craig Evans, distinguished professor of New Testament at Acadia Divinity College (Nova Scotia), is an important tool for students of the New Testament. Evans himself notes that this book "has been written to serve the needs of students who aspire to become New Testament interpreters. Although it has been prepared primarily for the student, veterans of academy and church will find it useful as well" (from the preface). The book, in fact, provides both an introduction and extensive bibliography to the cognate literature relevant for the study of the New Testament. The literature examined includes: The Old Testament Apocrypha, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls (including other works found on Masada, at Nahal Hever, Marabba, and other locations near the Dead Sea), other versions of the Old Testament (e.g. the LXX, the Samaritan Pentateuch, etc.), Philo, Josephus, the Targums, Rabbinic Literature, the New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Early Church Fathers, Gnostic Writings, relevant Greco-Roman authors, and Samaritan writings. In short, there is no piece of ancient literature significant for the study of the New Testament that is not covered in Evans' work, as far as I can see. (He even covers various Papyri, Inscriptions, Coins, and

Ostraca, see pp. 306-28.)

Within many of these sections, there are sub-sections that give a brief summary of the contents of individual works. For instance, in chapter three on "The Dead Sea Scrolls," Evans not only summarizes the contents of the Qumran Literature as a whole, but gives a concise summary of all the major documents in this corpus. In chapter eleven titled, "Other Writings," the author gives a very brief description of all the major Greco-Roman writers who produced material around the time of the New Testament. This is not true of every chapter, however. In the section on Philo for instance (pp. 167-73), there is only a brief description of Philo's writings together with a section on the relevance of his work for the study of the NT, but no description of Philo's individual writings. Similarly, the section on Rabbinic writings (216-55) was fairly brief in comparison to the vast amount of literature in this corpus.

Evans has also included a section titled, "Examples of New Testament Exegesis," where he looks at some difficult passages where the NT writer has used an OT passage or theme in ambiguous ways. He shows how parallels in the cognate literature can help the modern interpreter understand why the NT writer has interpreted the OT passage in an (apparently) enigmatic way. For instance, Evans discusses Paul's use of Deut 30:12-14 in Rom 10:6-8 (pp. 335-36) and shows that a similar interpretive manoeuvre in *Targum Neofiti* may demonstrate a helpful parallel to Paul's interpretation of Deuteronomy.

At the end of this work, Evans gives six appendices including, "Parallels between New Testament Gospels and Pseudepigraphal Gospels" (pp. 410-17) and "Jesus' Parables and the Parables of the Rabbis" (pp. 418-23). The most extensive, and perhaps the most helpful, appendix is number two: "Quotations, Allusions, and Parallels to the New Testament" (pp. 342-409). This section lists all (or, at least many) parallels in the cognate literature to almost every passage in the New Testament.

The one major drawback of the book is that in light of the vast amount of literature examined, the description and summary of each group of writings are necessarily brief. Even for those who have only a basic understanding of, say, the Pseudepigrapha, Evans' introductory section will be rudimentary. But given the diversity of the literature covered (from Jewish material to Magical Papyri), it is likely that the aspiring reader will find some introductory portions – brief as they may be – a very helpful start to one's own study. In all, I have found the extensive and current bibliographies, together with the appendices the most helpful portions of this book.

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