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Locating Matthew in Israel

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Locating Matthew in Israel

by

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Abstract

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"Locating Matthew in Israel" renders visible the Second Temple Jewish *ethos* of Matthew's gospel, while at the same time producing a more ethical contemporary scholarly reading of the First Gospel. This inquiry is undertaken without recourse to the *arborescent* and *epochal* framings that characterize most scholarly inquiries of Matthew. Drawing on an eclectic mix of conversation partners – including the works of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Bertolt Brecht – this reading begins the progress of remediating the *epochal* blockage pervasive in Matthaean studies through the introduction of the *off-epochal*. By off-setting *epoch*, new possibilities and space are opening in this reading. "Locating Matthew in Israel" demonstrates that Matthew's composition is best described as *Torah-formed*. Additionally, this close reading centers on three key *divine presence* passages (Matthew 1:23; 18:20; 28:20) to provide an alternative non-incarnational figuration of Jesus. Functionally, Matthew's *bricolage* presents Jesus as *Torah-transfigured* not as the incarnate *logos*.

Chapter One: Towards an Off-Epochal Reading

עֲשׂוֹת סְפָרִים הַרְבֵּה אֵין קֵץ
וְלַהַג הַרְבֵּה יְגִעַת בָּשָׂר
- Qoheleth[1]

1.1 A Second-Order Participant Observer

This present work is neither dispassionate nor disinterested; it is the result of a life-long love affair, including all the complexities that such a description suggests.[2] I am "a twenty-first century Western-educated queer Christian intellectual" and the inquiry into τὸ κατὰ Μαθθαῖον εὐαγγελίον[3] that follows, is openly informed by that cultural knowledge and subject-position. Such an orientation places me at the intersection of overlapping and often conflicting domains. On the one hand, the texts of the New Testament are not only the texts of my youth, numerous passages of which I have committed to memory,[4] but they continue to be the scriptures that I celebrate each Sunday morning. On the other hand, these are not texts that I can merely read; they are voices with which I, as a gay scholar, find myself perpetually wrestling and arguing.

Unlike Saint Paul, it seems that I am unable (or perhaps willing) to put away childish things, continuing as I do, to seek a stance *vis-à-vis* the New Testament that is both faithful to the texts, but also fully present in a secular Western world. This present inquiry, to be clear, is not

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[1] *Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh*. (Qoheleth 12:12, personal translation). Unless otherwise noted all translations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

[2] Daniel Boyarin's autobiographical note in the opening of *Border Lines, "*As long as I can remember I have been in love with some manifestation of Christianity (not always ones that my Christian friends would themselves love or even approve)" has always resonated with me in a way that only an illicit and exiled lover of the New Testament scriptures can properly understand. I am deeply indebted to Boyarin's bold articulation of the situatedness of his own work and take it as an encouragement to do likewise in my own work.

[3] "The Gospel According to Matthew" is the traditional appellation. Davies and Allison, among others, have persuasively argued that the opening lines of the gospel, Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ, should be understood to function as the actual title for the work. See W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, ed. J.A. Emerton, C.E.B. Cranfield, and G.N Stanton, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (New York: T&T Clark Int'l, 2004), 153. See also Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, 3 vols., vol. 1, Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 69-70. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the author and text of the first gospel as 'Matthew'. For the same reason, I will use the generic masculine singular pronoun. In doing so I am not suggesting any connection between the apostle so named in the gospel and the actual author(s) of the text.

[4] The version playing in my head being the immortal and majestic King James Version.

speculative, but consciously directed at myself.[5] The stakes are high and they are personal. To borrow the words of Hans Frei, "I am ethnographer and native at once."[6]

This anthropological inflection situates my present inquiry within a minority cadre of contemporary New Testament scholarship.[7] While not always explicit, an anthropological second-order inflection is a constant thread weaving throughout my inquiry into τὸ κατὰ Μαθθαῖον εὐαγγελίον. As a *second-order participant-observer*, I am particularly attentive to the ways in which sacred texts, especially those of the New Testament, are taken up in modern and contemporary forms of scholarly discourse with their respective technologies of power relations (including the interplay and interference with knowledge relations in the present).[8] Thus, in my reading, I seek to both engage traditional questions of the historical-critical and literary variety; and render visible the ways in which various *anthropoi* of the biblical studies persuasion continue to grapple with the *logoi* of the New Testament.[9] Such considerations, *anthropos* inextricably-intertwined with *logos,* are what one might generally expect of an ethnographer not scholar of religious texts, but they nonetheless occupy a privileged place in my reading.

Throughout this project, I have attempted to conceptualize this anthropological inflection of my inquiry in terms of, what Hans Blumenberg has called, a *movement-space*[10] (*Bewegungsraum*), in which, "both the subject conducting inquiry and the objects and objectives of inquiry are in motion."[11] Such a priming, openly acknowledges the challenges of reading

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[5] The challenge is described by Tom Burke, as the attempt to explain, "experience as situated" not "situations as experienced" where "situations are bounded by the reach, scope or content of a living creature's experience." Tom Burke, *Dewey's New Logic : A Reply to Russell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 37. Discussed at length in Paul Rabinow and Anthony Stavrianakis, "Movement Space: Putting Anthropological Theory, Concepts, and Cases to the Test," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6, no. 1 (2016): 417.

[6] Cited in Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), ix.

[7] This aspect to my work is due to the influence of Paul Rabinow, whose encouragement and guidance has been one of the true joys of my graduate study at the University of California, Berkeley. The credit for whatever success may result from this inflection is his, while I accept full responsibility for the shortcomings.

[8] Here I draw on the concept of the *second-order participant-observer* following the work of Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System* (Stanford University Press, 2000). For a fuller discussion of the work of Luhmann and its significance for anthropology see Paul Rabinow and Anthony Stavrianakis, *Designs on the Contemporary Anthropological Tests* (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[9] For a more exhaustive exploration of the interplay of *anthropos* and *logos* as the grounds for a contemporary conceptualization of anthropology as both a discipline and problem space for inquiry. see Paul Rabinow, *Marking Time : On the Anthropology of the Contemporary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); also Rabinow and Stavrianakis, "Movement Space: Putting Anthropological Theory, Concepts, and Cases to the Test."

[10] For a discussion of Hans Blumenberg's *Bewegungsraum,* see Anthony Stavrianakis, Gaymon Bennett, and Lyle Fearnley, eds., *Science, Reason, Modernity: Readings for an Anthropology of the Contemporary* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 28-29.

[11] Here following the definition given in Rabinow and Stavrianakis, "Movement Space: Putting Anthropological Theory, Concepts, and Cases to the Test," 404.

Matthew from within a topological field, encompassing both reader and text, that is neither well-defined nor stable. "Locating Matthew in Israel" renders visible the Second Temple Jewish *ethos* of Matthew's gospel, while at the same time producing a more ethical contemporary scholarly reading of the First Gospel.

As the reader will soon note, this inquiry cannot be characterized by any one particular method or theory, nor do I propose to offer one.[12] At most, the assemblage offered in this reading can be said to result from a mode of inquiry that resembles both *bricolage* and *braconnage*.[13] It is arguably eclectic, but not random. The rationale guiding the selection of my disparate band of conversation partners in this inquiry is a consequence of embracing Max Weber's observation that it is not a *factual* interconnectedness of things, but rather a *conceptual* interconnection of problems that forms the basis for inquiry.[14] Thus this reading claims no "factual connection" between the Gospel according to Matthew and any of my various interlocutors, only a certain conceptual interconnectedness, even perhaps of my own creation.

In addition, I undertake this project in the full knowledge, that even now, nearly two thousand years hence, we have not yet reached the end of making many books concerning the Gospel according to Matthew.[15] And so it is with Qoheleth's timeless observation in full view that

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[12] Following Paul Rabinow, I prefer *concept work* and *anthropology* over *theory*. See ibid., 407. For a discussion of historical-critical inquiry, form-criticism, redaction-criticism and other tradition methods see C.M. Tuckett, *Reading the New Testament: Methods of Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1987). For an introduction to many of the newer methodologies (as well as some of the older ones) see Joel B. Green, *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation (2nd Edition)*, 2 ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010).

[13] The figure of the *bricoleur* or tinkerer is drawn from the work of anthropologist Levi-Strauss. This figure will be further explored in a following chapter. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée Sauvage* (Paris: Plon, 1962). The concept of *braconnage* (poaching) is drawn from the work of Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). My thanks to Prof. Jean-François Racine for not only directing me to the concept of *braconnage,* but also for his patient guidance throughout the writing of this dissertation.

[14] Here following Max Weber who wrote, "It is not the 'factual' interconnection of 'things', but rather the conceptual interconnection of problems, which forms the basis for zones of inquiry. A new 'science' emerges where new problems are pursued by new methods and truths are thereby discerned which open up significant standpoints." Original German, "*Nicht die »sachlichen« Zusammenhänge der »Dinge«, sondern die gedanklichen Zusammenhänge der Probleme liegen den Arbeitsgebieten der Wissenschaften zugrunde: wo mit neuer Methode einem neuen Problem nachgegangen wird und dadurch Wahrheiten entdeckt werden, welche neue bedeutsame Gesichtspunkte eröffnen, da entsteht eine neue »Wissenschaft«."* Both the above translation and original German are drawn from ongoing studio work by the Anthropological Research on the Contemporary Collaboratory (see http://anthropos-lab.net/studio/episode/48-0) at which I am currently a research member.

[15] Scholars still debate whether Irenaeus (circa. 180CE) or Papias (circa. 95-120CE) should receive credit for producing the first commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. For a discussion of these two early commentators' relationship to the Gospel of Matthew see David C. Sim, "The Gospel of Matthew, John the Elder and the Papias Tradition: A Response to R H Gundry," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 63, no. 1 (2007). We have long since passed the point where any single lifetime would be sufficient to truly grapple with the ever expanding secondary literature on the New Testament and Christianity. In many ways, we must be content with curated collections instead of exhaustive bibliographies. Here the heroic work of Ulrich Luz is richly appreciated. See Ulrich Luz's

I, nonetheless, venture here to offer my own modest contribution to the ongoing *weariness of the flesh* occasioned by an ever-growing corpus of Matthaean scholarship. I can only hope, that whatever *weariness of the flesh* that this inquiry engenders may also be rightly called "work" in the sense so wonderfully described by Michel Foucault, in *Des Travaux,* as, "That which is susceptible of introducing a significant difference in the field of knowledge, at the price of a certain difficulty for the author and the reader, and with the eventual recompense of a certain pleasure, that is to say an access to a different figure of truth."[16]

1.2 Of Humus and Hubris

"If there is one thing that Christians
know about their religion,
it is that it is not Judaism.
If there is one thing that Jews
know about their religion,
it is that it is not Christianity."
–Daniel Boyarin[17]

1.2.1 A Little History by Way of Introduction

To properly understand the blockage in contemporary Matthaean studies that this present work attempts to begin remediating, it is necessary to step back and examine a little history by way

three-volume commentary on Matthew in *Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible.* Not only does Luz's three-volume commentary on Matthew provide vast bibliographic references, but his commentary also offers what can only be described as a near encyclopedic survey of nearly two thousand years of exegesis. In addition to Luz, the other magisterial treatment of Matthew can be found in the three-volume commentary by Davies, W.D., and D.C. Allison on Matthew in *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*. Throughout this project the work of Luz, and Davies and Allison will feature prominently as my primary conversation partners drawn from the world of New Testament scholarship. For a good discussion of Matthaean scholarship prior to 1995, see Graham N. Stanton, *The Interpretation of Matthew*, 2nd ed., Issues in Religion and Theology (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 1-26. For more recent trends in Matthaean scholarship see Daniel M. Gurtner, "The Gospel of Matthew from Stanton to Present: A Survey of Some Recent Developments," in *Jesus, Matthew's Gospel and Early Christianity: Studies in Memory of Graham N. Stanton*, Library of New Testament Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2011). Other recent/current bibliographies may be found online including, Daniel J. Harrington, "Gospel of Matthew," Oxford Bibliographies, http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393361/obo-9780195393361-0078.xml. or Mark Allan Powell, "Bibliography: The Gospel of Matthew," Baker Academic, http://cdn.bakerpublishinggroup.com/processed/esource-assets/files/814/original/hyperlink-05-28.pdf?1417401783.

[16] Michel Foucault, "Des Travaux " in *Dits Et Écrits Vol. 4* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), 367. My thanks to Paul Rabinow for drawing my attention to the above referenced passage.

[17] Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: New Press, 2012), 1.

of introduction.[18] The turn to higher criticism within biblical studies in the mid-eighteenth century introduced several *topoi* into the scholarly discourse, specifically relative to the study of New Testament literature and Christian origins, that continue to shape the landscape in ways that are less than helpful.

The work of Protestant theologian Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) provides a fruitful entry into this discussion. Prominent New Testament scholar James Dunn has described Baur's pivotal place in the shaping of modern biblical studies, by singling out Baur's role in focusing scholarly attention "again on the fact that Christianity emerged from a Jewish matrix, or perhaps better, from its matrix within Second Temple Judaism."[19]

This emergence, to which Dunn refers, takes a particular form in the writings of Baur and his contemporaries. In a chapter devoted to the doctrine of justification in his highly influential work, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi* , Baur writes, "In the conception of δικαιοσύνην, it has its roots in the soil of the Jewish religion, to which that conception belongs; but in the peculiar Christian conception of faith, it departs from that religion, and takes up an attitude of decided opposition to it."[20] Baur's claim that the usage of δικαιοσύνην as a concept in the New Testament has its "roots in the soil of the Jewish religion," carries a certain conceptual force that needs to be interrogated.

This metaphor of roots and Jewish soil, pervasive from the beginning of modern Western-critical New Testament and Christian origins scholarship, is hardly the generous tip of the hat that Dunn seems to think. As Baur's other writings make clear, his mention of Jewish soil was not due to a fondness on his part towards either Jews or Judaism[21]. In fact, rhetorically, the mention of Jewish soil in Baur's discussion of δικαιοσύνην explicitly functions to separate the Christian conception of faith from "that religion" to which it now takes up an attitude of decided opposition.[22] This fixation with *humus* becomes a well-established trope within New Testament and early Christianity scholarship that extends into the present.

One additional representative from early biblical scholarhsip should suffice to introduce the basic contours of these early *topoi,* whose persistence I find to be so problematic. In the winter of 1899-1900, Adolf von Harnack, Berlin University's Professor of Church History, and arguably the most prominent historian of Christianity of his generation, delivered a series of sixteen lectures

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[18] My thanks to Margaret Conkey, to whom I owe much, the least of which being the delightful phrase, "a little history by way of introduction."

[19] James D.G. Dunn, *Neither Jew nor Greek: A Contested Identity*, 3 vols., vol. 3, Christianity in the Making (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2015), 13.

[20] Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings [Two Volumes in One]* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 2:134. German original, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi, sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre* (1845).

[21] As Prof. Boyarin pointed out in reviewing this project, Baur's view of the Jewish soil from which Christianity is more aptly described as a kind of Jewish *skybala*.

[22] As will be noted in the next chapter, δικαιοσύνην plays an important role in Matthew's gospel. There I demonstrate that Matthew's conception of δικαιοσύνην is not oriented along lines of opposition, but remains well within Second Temple Jewish conceptions. Commonplace readings in contemporary scholarship to the contrary can be traced to Baur *et al.,* and the early *epochal* framings here being discussed.

entitled *Das Wesen Des Christentums.*[23] In one lecture, Harnack describes Christianity as a religion, "born in Palestine" on "Jewish ground," [24] which then endures and survives a later "uprooting."[25] In another of the lectures, Harnack speaks of the gospel being removed, "from the mother-soil of Judaism and being placed...upon the broad plain/field of the Greco-Roman empire."[26] As with Baur, the *humus* imagery in Harnack's work is far from generous.

In a striking image, Harnack writes that in the separation of Christianity from Judaism, history itself has shown with unmistakable clarity, "what was kernel and what was husk." [27] The husk, according to Harnack, being the Jewish limitations attached to Jesus' proclamation.[28] Once again, the image of *humus*, embellished with additional botanical metaphors, is deployed not as an affirmation of Judaism or of the Jewish people, but rather as a distancing mechanism that serves to differentiate Christianity from Judaism.

Any doubt as to the patronizing and pejorative connotations of these metaphors should be erased when we note that the subtext for both Baur and Harnack's analyses is Hegel.[29] In his 1798 essay, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," Hegel depicts Jesus' relationship to Judaism as being indexed by *opposition*. This should not be confused for an outright denial of Jesus' Jewishness, for unlike Kant's, Hegel's Jesus was self-consciously Jewish.[30] Jesus' Jewishness for Hegel, however, is of a particular variety, "namely a Jew who appears, 'shortly before the last crisis' of the Jewish fate, and fights not 'merely against one part of the Jewish fate; ...he set himself

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[23] *Adolf von Harnack, Das Wesen Des Christentums: Sechzehn Vorlesungen Vor Studierenden Aller FakultäTen Im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an Der Universität Berlin Gehalten Von Adolf V. Harnack., 3 ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012)*. Published in English as, *What Is Christianity? Sixteen Lectures Delivered in the University of Berlin During the Winter-Term, 1899-1900*, trans. T. B Saunders (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2010).

[24] The full passage in the German original reads, *"Diese Religion aber, in Palästina geboren und von ihrem Stifter auf dem jüdischen Boden festgehalten, ist bereits nach wenigen Jahren von ihm losgelöst worden. Paulus hat sie der israelitischen Religion entgegengesetzt: "Christus ist des Gesetzes Ende."*In *Das Wesen Des Christentums: Sechzehn Vorlesungen Vor Studierenden Aller FakultäTen Im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an Der Universität Berlin Gehalten Von Adolf V. Harnack.*, 104. Here Harnack's sympathies are shown to be much like those of Baur; Christianity is in opposition with Israelite religion which is how Harnack reads Paul's declaration that, 'Christ is the end of the law.'

[25] German original "die Entwurzelung," ibid.

[26] German original *"von dem mütterlichen Boden des Judentums"* and *"auf den weiten Plan des griechisch-römischen Reichs,"* ibid., 110.

[27] Ibid., 105.

[28] Ibid.

[29] It is important to avoid caricaturing Hegel. Recognizing the nuanced stance Hegel takes *vis-à-vis* Judaism is important if we are to recognize that many of the supposedly sympathetic or Jewish-friendly metaphors in New Testament and Christian origins scholarship of the last several decades are nonetheless still hopelessly mired in an *epochal* framing that continue to function as distancing mechanisms.

[30] For a brief discussion of Kant's view of Jesus' Jewishness see Eric Michael Dale, "Hegel, Jesus, and Judaism," *Animus* 11 (2006): 4-8.

against the whole. Thus, he was raised above it and tried to raise his people above it too.'"[31] Hegel thus frames Jesus' Jewishness as a heroic resistance to Judaism.[32]

Hegel's early view of Judaism and Jesus standing in opposition to one another does not remain static, but shifts, such that in 1827, his view of Jesus' relation to Judaism can now be described as, "the fulfillment of the promise of the religion of sublimity."[33] This shift in Hegel's view of Jesus's role from, "a confrontation with Judaism to a consummation of Judaism,"[34] is such that Judaism is now reduced to being merely a stage in the dialectical process of the self-realization of Spirit.[35] Judaism for Hegel, is just one partial manifestation of the total Spirit.[36] Thus the index for Hegel's 1827 lectures might be more rightly called *fulfillment,* where earlier it had been *opposition.*[37]

Importantly for our discussion, this shift in index illuminates Hegel's successful effort to conceptualize the Jewish Jesus' role *vis-à-vis* Judaism within an *epochal* framework.[38] While fulfillment may sound less polemical than opposition, this shift in index from *opposition* to *fulfillment* is far from benign. Perhaps most famously Hegel writes,

> The fate of the Jewish people is the fate of Macbeth who stepped out of nature itself, clung to alien Beings, and so in their service had to trample and slay everything holy in human nature, had at last to be forsaken by his gods (since these were objects and he their slave) and be dashed to pieces on his faith itself.[39]

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[31] Ibid., 8. Citing and commenting upon Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," in *Early Theological Writings* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 205. Dale rightly notes that for Hegel, even though Jesus comes in *opposition* to Judaism, it is nonetheless opposition from within Judaism that forms its antithesis. Something similar seems to be in operation in Baur's understanding.

[32] In this respect Hegel's reading and others like it are modern.

[33] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: The Lectures of 1827*, trans. R.F. Brown, P.C. Hodgson, and J.M. Stewart, One-volume ed. (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1988), 208. Cited and discussed in Dale, 12-13.

[34] Ibid., 17.

[35] Nathan Rotenstreich, "Hegel's Image of Judaism," *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 1 (1953): 42.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," 206 n.30. Cited and discussed in Dale, 2ff. Dale offers a worthwhile examination of Hegel's shifting understanding of Jesus' relationship to Judaism. It should be noted that Hegel, like many of his academic contemporaries, maintained an antagonistic relationship towards Judaism even as his views of Jesus shifted.

[38] While Hegel's earlier oppositional index could, it need not necessarily, suggest progressive linear movement.

[39] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T.M. Knox, with an introduction and fragments translated by Richard Kroner. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 205. This Hegelian framing of fulfillment is evident in the work of Ernst Troeltsch, an influentional member of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule,* who writes,

> Since we have learned that the early accounts in Genesis are Israelitish legends, not unlike the primitive legends of other peoples, and since we have come to know that the Israelitish people entered very late into the circle of the oriental history which we now know, it is clear that the origin of Yahweh-religion is no longer a problem to be solved purely by the use of the information given in the Bible; it demands for its solution a knowledge of contemporary

Fulfillment, for Hegel, effectively means that Jesus is the end of Judaism.[40] Importantly, what was explicit in the oppositional index has become implicit in an index of fulfillment.

This Hegelian index of fulfillment is the subtext for the *epochal* framing of modern New Testament and early Christianity scholarship. Baur, who is nothing if not Hegelian, maintained that second-century Christianity was a synthesis of two opposing theses: Jewish Christianity, which he identified with Petrine Christianity, and Gentile Christianity, which he aligned with Saint Paul.[41] Likewise, while Harnack maintains that the essential content of the Gospels belongs to the, "Jewish epoch of Christianity," it is significantly both *short* and an *epoch*. In proper Hegelian form, Harnack goes on to refer to this Jewish epoch of Christianity as the "paleontological."[42]

> religions, and especially acquaintance with the religion of the Arabian nomads. It is no longer a biblical problem, but rather a problem of the history of religions. The same may be said of the further development of Yahweh-religion into prophetism, into legalism and priestly religion, into messianism, and into apocalpticism. (Ernst Troeltsch, "The Dogmatics of the "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule"," *The American Journal of Theology* 17, no. 1 (1913): 13.).

[40] Dale, 11. This position is not uniquely Hegelian. It is arguably anticipated in the writings of Gotthold Lessing, who a generation before, had referred to Judaism as being underdeveloped and childlike. For Lessing, the Hebrew scriptures with all of its hint, allusions, and allegories "throughout full of tautologies" had "all the properties of excellence which belong to a Primer for a childlike people, as well as for children." Gotthold Lessing, "The Education of the Human Race," in *Lessing's Theological Writings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), §§47-50. In situating Jesus, Lessing writes,

> But every Primer is only for a certain age. To delay the child, that has outgrown it, longer in it than it was intended for, is hurtful. For to be able to do this in a way in any sort profitable, you must insert into it more than there is really in it, and extract from it more than it can contain. You must look for and make too much of allusions and hints; squeeze allegories too closely; interpret examples too circumstantially; press too much upon words. This gives the child a petty, crooked, hair splitting understanding; it makes him full of mysteries, superstitions; full of contempt for all that is comprehensible and easy. The very way in which the Rabbis handled *their* sacred books! The very character which they thereby imparted to the character of their people! A Better Instructor must come and tear the exhausted Primer from the child's hands. CHRIST came! (Lessing, §§51-53).

Here Lessing's writings reveal the polemical nature of fulfillment as opposition.

[41] Dunn, 3, 685. In an earlier work, volume 2 of his 3 volume *Christianity in the Making* series, James Dunn offers a useful survey of modern scholarly engagement with the question of Christianity and Judaism in his chapter on the *Quest for the Historical Church Beginning from Jerusalem*, 3 vols., vol. 2, Christianity in the Making (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), §20.3 especially note the modern reappraisal discussed in pp 46-51.

[42] German original *"Sie gehören ihrem wesentlichen Inhalte nach noch der ersten, jüdischen Epoche des Christentums an, jener kurzen Epoche, die wir als die paläontologische bezeichnen können."* Harnack, *Das Wesen Des Christentums: Sechzehn Vorlesungen Vor Studierenden Aller FakultäTen Im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an Der Universität Berlin Gehalten Von Adolf V. Harnack.*, 21. Biblical studies, in general, it seems has always had a science fetish. Paleontology, according to the OED, is "the branch of science that deals with extinct and fossil humans, animals, and plants, or more generally with evidence of organic life during the geological past; (occas.) *spec.* paleozoology. Also: the fossil evidence relating to a particular geological formation, group of organisms, etc." "palaeontology | paleontology, n.". OED Online. September 2016. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/136187 (accessed October 19, 2016).

From there it is but a short distance for Harnack to conclude that Paul had in fact, "led the Christian religion out of Judaism"[43] and that, "the Jewish age/dispensation (*Zeit*) itself is now at an end."[44]

Here I should note that it was not only early Christian scholars who went to great lengths arguing for a fundamental difference between Christianity and Judaism. Prominent Jewish scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were active participants in the task of emphasizing the rupture occasioned by the New Testament. Interestingly enough, it is Paul, not Jesus, who most often plays the role of hero (or villain depending on one's approach) in these narrations. Both Heinrich Graetz, a prominent nineteenth-century Jewish historiographer, and the twentieth-century rabbi, scholar and theologian Leo Baeck, shared Baur and Harnack's view of Pauline theology and subsequently viewed Christianity and Judaism as being fundamentally opposed to one another.[45]

There is much more that can and should be said about the ideological topology of biblical studies in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, but such an examination warrants a separate investigation. This *little history* should be sufficient to demonstrate that the dominant metaphors introduced to New Testament and early Christianity scholarship by Baur, Harnack, *et al.,* and still in use today, are part and parcel of an *epochal* orientation.[46] Furthermore, acknowledging Jesus' Jewishness, in and of itself, is an insufficient safeguard against supersessionist or even anti-Jewish readings so long as it remains indexed to an *epochal* concept of fulfillment. So, while Dunn's reference to Baur's work may seem at first glance to offer a friendlier orientation towards Judaism, I would argue that it actually reveals that functionally, the distancing mechanism seen in early New Testament scholarship is still very much in operation in contemporary New Testament scholarship. Dunn's designation that, "Christianity emerged from a Jewish matrix" to be a "fact" reveals an important, albeit toxic, link between New Testament scholarship of the 19th century and that of the 21st century. The use of arborescent metaphors of roots, soil, trees and plants–central to the conceptualization of Christianity as *epoch*–in New Testament scholarship must be discarded. These images, which continue to appear in modern biblical studies, most often in as *guarantees of continuity,* are in fact false friends that orient our inquiry towards dead ends.[47]

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[43] German original *"Paulus ist es gewesen, der die christliche Regligion aus dem Judentum herausgeführt."* Ibid., 103.

[44] German original "die Zeit des Judentums ist jetzt vorbei." Ibid., 104. One may here be reminded of Bultmann's later declaration that, "According to the New Testament, Christ is the end of salvation-history (*Heilsgeschichte*) not in the sense that he signifies the goal of historical development, but because he is its eschatological end." Rudolf Bultmann, "Prophecy and Fulfilment," in *Essays Philosophical and Theological* (New York: 1955), 191.

[45] Peter J. Tomson, "The Didache, Matthew, and Barnabas as Sources for Early Second Century Jewish and Christian History," in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014), 349, esp fn 3. Cf. Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews, 6-Volumes (1891-1898)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1956).; Leo Baeck, *Das Wesen Des Judentums (1905)* (Fourier, 1991).

[46] As my earlier reference to Gotthold Lessing revealed, it is important to recognize that while this *epochal* framing is most developed in the work of Hegel, it is not uniquely Hegelian.

[47] Margaret Conkey, "Original Narratives: The Political Economy of Gender in Archaeology," in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, ed. Micaela di Leonardo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), has identified "guarantees of continuity" as one of the key devices deployed in the narration of origins.

1.2.2 Troubling Tropes

The hell lurking just beneath the surface of modern New Testament and early Christianity scholarship erupted with full force in the gas chambers and fires of Auschwitz and Treblinka.[48] As Hans Küng has rightly noted, the horrors of Nazi Germany, "would not have been possible without the almost two thousand years' pre-history of 'Christian' anti-Judaism"[49] In response to a growing awareness of the role played by Christian theology in the Shoah, in the 1970s, a number of Christian scholars began to re-examine the scholarly paradigms of the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism.

While acknowledging the very real consequences of supersessionist and triumphalist readings of the New Testament, most post-war scholars nonetheless seemed intent on simply reworking the problematic metaphors discussed above in such a way that would allow them to retain the near universal scholarly view of Christianity as a new religion that was, if not opposed to, then at least distinct from the Judaism.[50] At the risk of oversimplification, most New Testament and early Christianity scholarship continues to employ some variant (or mix) of two overlapping tropes, *religions as kinfolk* and *parting(s) of the ways.* Both of these troubling tropes operate with an *epochal* orientation that this work explicitly seeks to begin the process of remediating.[51]

1.2.2.1 Religions as Kinfolk

The first of these two tropes, "religions as kinfolk," has a long history dating back to the Church Fathers.[52] Modern versions of the trope, initially imagined the familial relationship between Judaism and Christianity to be one of mother and daughter, Judaism being the mother and

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[48] The list of death camps in which more than six million Jews were murdered is much larger than the two representatives noted here.

[49] Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 169. The role played by Christian anti-Semitism in so-called enlightened New Testament and early Christianity scholarship from the time of the reformation is not exempt from that two-thousand-year history. Even as Martin Luther sought to return to the original teachings and values of the early church, he did not break with the deeply anti-Semitic ruts of the tradition. In 1543, after it became apparent that the Jews were not interesting in converting to faith in Christ, Luther, felt compelled to author a 65,000-word anti-Semitic treatise, *On the Jews and Their Lies (Von den Jüden und ihren Lügen)* in which he describes Jews as a, "base, whoring people, that is, no people of God, and their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth." Martin Luther, "On the Jews and Their Lies (1543)," in *Luther's Works, Volume 47: Christian in Society Iv*, ed. Franklin Sherman (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1971).

[50] Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). Christian and Jewish scholarship beginning in the late 1970s and continuing up until present times is eerily similar to the landscape of the 3rd-5th centuries when Church Fathers and Rabbis likewise pursued similar heresiological programmes. For a discussion of both time periods see the work of Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philiadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2004); also Boyarin's *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*.

[51] For a thorough deconstruction of these two tropes see the opening chapter in *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[52] Ibid., 1-6. While modern versions of these tropes drawn on the philosophical work of Hegel, as we have already noted, *epochal* readings of the New Testament predate Hegel.

Christianity being the daughter.[53] Historical and political complexities however rendered this hierarchical relationship problematic and it was largely replaced by a reconfiguration of the metaphor in which Judaism and Christianity were now envisioned as two rival male siblings. While intended (or at least proffered) to be an alternative to supersessionist readings of the New Testament, the trope's *epochal* substructure ensured that it was doomed from the start.

Rosemary Ruether's pioneering work, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism,* provides an example of the double-bind inherent in this trope.[54] Published in 1974, Ruether's book signaled an important shift in New Testament and early Christianity scholarship in response to the Shoah.[55] Significantly, Ruether locates the origins of Christian anti-Semitism precisely in the relationship of Christianity and Judaism as siblings; note the framing metaphor in the title of her book, *fratricide*. She writes, "Hatred between groups who have no stake in a common stock of religiously sanctioned identity symbols can scarcely be as virulent as hatred between groups whose relations express a religious form of 'sibling rivalry.'"[56] She goes on to say, "In my judgement, the special virulence of Christian anti-Semitism can be understood only from its source in a religious fraternity in exclusive faith turned rivalrous."[57]

In Ruether's analysis, the resurrection of Jesus creates a new dispensation or *epoch*. She writes that prior to Jesus' death, "one cannot speak of Christian faith at all, but only of those preconditions that prepared for its revelatory moment."[58] In her reading, christology is the key to the gospel's treatment of Judaism.[59] For Ruether, the source of Christian anti-Judaism is in the New Testament proclamation of Jesus as the risen savior. This proclamation divides history into two dispensations, the death of Jesus marking the end of one *epoch* and the beginning of another.[60]

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[53] This trope is not limited to Christian scholarship but is also found in the work of Jewish scholars from the early to mid-nineteenth century. For example, the mother/daughter image of Judaism/Christianity appears at length in the work of Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, "Jesus in the Talmud," in *Rabbinic Essays* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1951).

[54] Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*. (New York: Seabury, 1974). Ruether, it should be noted, was an important pioneer among Christian scholars and should be saluted for her willingness to address the legitimate issue of anti-Semitism in New Testament scholarship. For a discussion of anti-Semitism in the New Testament itself see James D.G. Dunn, "The Question of Anti-Semitism in the New Testament," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1992).

[55] I think it best to refrain from using the designation "post-Holocaust" given that the Holocaust is not something that one moves beyond. I think it more accurate to describe scholarship as being inflected by or in response to the Shoah/Holocaust.

[56] Ruether, 30.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 68.

[59] Here Reuther may be on to something but not in the way that she thinks. Christology does shape one's stance vis-à-vis Judaism but in a contingent fashion due to the multiplicity of christologies in the New Testament and even within individual books themselves.

[60] Glenn T. Miller, "Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism. By Rosemary Ruether. New York: Seabury Press, 1974. 294 Pp. $9.50.," *Journal of Church and State* 18, no. 2 (1976): 355-56. See also the work of Hans Conzelmann, *Die Mitte Der Zeit: Studien Zur Theologie*

Ruether's analysis is important because she correctly identifies kinship and *epochal* metaphors and language as key sources of strife in both historic and ongoing Jewish and Christian relations. Missed in her analysis is a recognition that neither the kinship metaphor, nor the *epochal* aspect of the New Testament *kerygma* that she describes are essential. Both are later scholarly overlays.[61] The problem, as is made abundantly clear in Daniel Boyarin's thorough deconstruction of the kinship metaphor as deployed in Christian origins narratives, is the scholarly framing.[62] Popular attempts to sympathetically portray Judaism and Christianity as Rebecca's children would do well to remember that it is their very birth not a particular familial relationship that is the primary problem.[63] After all, in Genesis 25:23, Rebecca was told that two nations were *in* her womb (בְּבִטְנֵךְ), but division would come *from* her womb (מִמֵּעַיִךְ יִפָּרֵדוּ).[64]

1.2.2.2 Parting(s) of the Ways

The second of these troubling tropes, commonly referred to as, *the parting(s) of the ways*, offers another option for scholars who prefer a less familial notion of progress.[65] In 1977, three years after Ruether's pioneering work, E.P. Sanders' published his landmark work, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.[66] Sanders' systematic refutation of the prevailing scholarly, and largely

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Des Lukas, ed. Albrecht Beutel, Revised ed., Beiträge Zur Historischen Theologie (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck Ek, 1993).

[61] There is no doubt that subsequent Christian theologians, and arguably to some extent perhaps Paul himself, saw an *epochal* divide in the resurrection of Jesus. Such a claim however is inapplicable to the gospel of Matthew. I remain unconvinced by Ruether's claim that anti-Semitism/Judaism is a necessary consequence of the Gospels' proclamation. For a critical appraisal of Ruether see Thomas A. Idinopulos and Roy Bowen Ward, "Is Christology Inherently Anti-Semitic? A Critical Review of Rosemary Ruether's: 'Faith and Fratricide'," review of *Faith and Fratricide*, Rosemary Ruether, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45, no. 2 (1977). Contra Ruether, in *Rebecca's children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman world*, Alan Segal attempts to deploy the sibling metaphor as a way to ameliorate the conflict between Judaism and Christianity.

[62] Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*. While Boyarin's work addressed the problematic nature of kinship metaphors, it is my contention that his analysis needs to be extended to the problem of *epochal* framing, a framing which needs further remediation.

[63] There is much to commend in Alan Segal's pioneering work but the kinship metaphor really needs to be retired. See Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).; also David B. Capes, Larry W. Hurtado, and Alan F. Segal, *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children : Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity : Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado and Alan F. Segal* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007)..

[64] I was delighted to find a comment from Rashi that seems to echo my reading. Speaking of Genesis 25:23, Rashi, comments, "as soon as they leave thy body they will take each a difference course." Rashi, *Pentateuch with Rashi's Commentary*, trans. M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silbermann (Sefaria: https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Tanakh/Commentary/Rashi), commentary on Genesis 25:23.)

[65] For an excellent historical survey of the "Parting of the Ways" trope see the introductory chapter in Becker and Reed.

[66] E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

Christian, views of first century Jewish practices and beliefs opened the door to a fresh reading of New Testament texts in light of first century Jewish literature.[67] In spite of this new found clarity and "respect" for first century Judaism, scholarly discourse continued to be framed in *epochal* terms .

Initially, it seemed to many scholars that a *parting of the ways* metaphor would provide a less ideological paradigm for New Testament scholarship while nonetheless preserving the distinction between Judaism and Christianity. As Becker and Reed note, "the metaphor of 'parted ways' allows for both Judaism and Christianity to be approached as authentic religions in their own right, with equally strong links to the biblical and Second Temple Jewish heritage that they share."[68] Like that of the *religions as kinfolk*, the *parting of the ways* trope has typically been coded as a way to respect both Judaism and Christianity.

As pleasing (ecumenically and otherwise) as it may be, the historical and textual evidence however do not support a clean-cut *parting of the ways* narrative.[69] As Daniel Boyarin notes,

> Everything that has traditionally been identified as Christianity in particular existed in some non-Jesus Jewish movements of the first century and later as well. I suggest, therefore, that there is no nontheological or nonanachronistic way at all to distinguish Christianity from Judaism until institutions are in place that make and enforce this distinction, and even then, we know precious little about what the nonelite and nonchattering classes were thinking or doing.[70]

Boyarin's observation implicitly undercuts any *epochal* framing of the New Testament by virtue of removing the claims of novelty and rupture necessary to any such framing. In a further critique, Paula Fredriksen notes, "The problem with the paradigm of the 'parting of the ways' is the clarity

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[67] The impact of E.P. Sanders's book as a keystone work affecting New Testament scholarship relative to first century Jewish practices and beliefs is hard to overstate. The first significant shift to a result from Sanders' work was a reappraisal of the letters of Paul. In a 1982 lecture, James Dunn dubbed this shift, "The New Perspective on Paul." The lecture was then published in 1983 as, "The New Perspective on Paul" originally appeared in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 65, 1983, pp. 95-122 See also Michael B. Thompson, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2002) or Michael Bird, "The New Perspective on Paul: A Bibliographical Essay," (2009), http://www.thepaulpage.com/the-new-perspective-on-paul-a-bibliographical-essay/. See also Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[68] Becker and Reed, 15-16. While admirable, the success of such motivations is debatable. In the preface to the second edition of his book, *The Partings of the Ways,* James Dunn explicitly states that he had intentionally attempted to avoid triumphalism in the first and second editions of the book. Despite his best intentions, several Jewish reviewers of Dunn's work still read triumphalism. The question this paper now raises is this, could it be that the conceptual repertoire that accompanies *epochal* thinking makes such triumphalism inescapable? James D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2006), xxvii.

[69] Becker and Reed, 16f.

[70] Daniel Boyarin, "Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (To Which Is Appended a Correction of My Border Lines)," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99, no. 1 (2009): 28.

that it (falsely) both presupposes and promises."[71] This observation further dismantles the usefulness of the trope by calling into question its heuristic utility in any effort to describe the practices of first century Jews, be they followers of Jesus or not.

In an effort to salvage the trope, some scholars pluralized *parting* such that one should now speak of the *partings of the ways;* the plural signaling a multiplicity of turns and stances that are taken up in a multiplicity of forms, times, and places.[72] This shift, accomplished primarily by rightly noting the previously unacknowledged complexity of the subject, only reinforces the claims of scholars like Fredriksen and Boyarin that the trope itself should be retired. As with *religions as kinfolk*, the *parting(s) of the ways* trope was doomed from the start by the baggage inherent in any epoch-based model. [73]

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[71] Paula Fredriksen, "How Later Contexts Affect Pauline Content, Or: Retrospect Is the Mother of Anachronism," in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014), 47-48.

[72] e.g. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, xi; or Huub van de Sandt, "The Jewishness of Jude-James-Hebrews in Light of Purity," in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014), 80. Huub van de Sandt notes,

> The process by which Christian and Jewish-Christian groups separated from their Jewish roots, which is often regarded as largely accomplished by the turn of the second century CE, probably progressed at different rates in different locations and communities. In many cases the division between Jews and non-Jews took place gradually and disproportionality. Sometimes it is even very hard to distinguish between 'Jewish' and 'Christian' at this stage because these groups were so sociologically and theologically too closely related and – in different respects – just about to become separate groups. Most extant literary sources tend to ignore this complexity; in order to strengthen the identity of their own group they stress differences and minimize commonalities.

While I disagree on both the timing and the use of the roots metaphor, Sandt's analysis nonetheless brings out an important point that should be kept in mind. The complex milieu that comprised the first few centuries of the common era in Judea was not monolithic in form nor was its rate of transformation and change uniform in spatial distribution or through time. I do find it striking that 'normal scholarship' continues to retain such a hold that even in a volume dedicated to the task of crafting a, "different approach and a concomitant new paradigm" (Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz, eds., *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014), 4.), Sandt continues to note the 'very hard' nature of distinguishing between Jews and non-Jews but avoids a simpler and more compelling framing that such a distinction is artificial and imposed by scholarship (already described in the work of Daniel Boyarin, see "Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism").

[73] I am not suggesting that there is not now something called Christianity which is distinct and separate from Judaism. The so-called parting(s) of the ways, however, did not take place at least until the fourth century of the common era, which is well beyond, several centuries in fact, the dates of composition for all of the texts in the New Testament. For an excellent reappraisal and discussion see Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*; Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*.; *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*; also Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted : Jews and Christians in Late*

1.2.2.3 The Judaism that Wasn't

Fundamental to both of these troubling tropes is the problematic task (already attempted in the work of Hegel, Baur, Harnack, etc.) of distinguishing Christianity from Judaism. Most contemporary New Testament scholars have adopted E.P. Sanders' basic claim that most Jews in the Second Temple period could be described as holding to a *common Judaism,* which Sanders generally defined as, "what the priests and the people agreed on."[74] While this may sound good, trouble soon surfaced when scholars attempted to find some sense of agreement as to what the "what" in Sanders definition actually was. The continued instability of the *what,* is evident in the continually fluctuating lists offered up by scholars in an attempt to articulate some sort of umbrella under which the vigorous debates of the Second Temple period could take place.

For example, James Dunn has identified monotheism, election, Torah, and the Temple as key concepts that form Judaism of the Second Temple period.[75] Another prominent New Testament scholar, Richard Bauckham writes, "A shared Land promised to Jews, a common Pentateuch, the Decalogue, ethnicity, the *Shema*, purity, and monotheism united most Jews. Thus, we may image sects and groups related to an 'established Judaism' centralized in Jerusalem and the Temple."[76] The inability of scholars to agree on a unified definition for Second Temple Judaism (aka the religion of first-century Jews) is the result of a fundamental problem with the categories themselves. Whatever the formulation–common, established, or plural–essentialist conceptualizations of Second Temple Judaism have repeatedly run aground.[77]

Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, Texte Und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry, *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Simon Claude Mimouni, *Le JudéO-Christianisme Ancien : Essais Historiques*, Patrimoines, (Paris: Cerf, 1998). A recent and important collection of essays is Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007).

[74] E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE* (London: SKM Press, 1992). For a recent example of a work building on Sanders' conception of *Common Judaism* see Anders Runesson, "Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations: Matthean Community History as Pharisaic Intragroup Conflict," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 1 (2008). In his earlier landmark reappraisal of first century Jewish practice and believe, E.P. Sanders argued that *covenantal nomism* constituted a common Judaism. See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, 422. For an explanation of *covenantal nomism* see E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 262-78.

[75] Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 26-48.

[76] Richard Bauckham, James Davila, and Alex Panayotov, eds., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2013), xiii.

[77] Paula Kredriksen has trenchantly demonstrated the inadequacy of many of the supposedly fixed or unique concepts to provide a workable framework for inquiry into the Jewish practices and beliefs of the first centuries CE. Most recently, Paula Fredriksen, "How Later Contexts Affect Pauline Content, Or: Retrospect Is the Mother of Anachronism," in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014), 47-48. See also Kredriksen

Repeated failures to find the essential nature or a common thread of Second Temple Judaism lead some scholars, first being the work of Jacob Neusner, to refer to a plurality of Judaisms.[78] This shift from an all-encompassing Judaism to the seemingly pluriform Judaisms turns out to be less helpful than one might initially suppose, as it invariably circles back round to a series of essentialist categories that are effectively variants on a singular theme. As Philip Davies rightly notes,

> The replacement of the concept of 'Judaism' by the concept of 'Judaisms' solves one problem only to create another, perhaps even more fundamental one – namely what it was that made any 'Judaism' a Judaism... The plural 'Judaisms' requires some definition of 'Judaism' in the singular, in order itself to have any meaning.[79]

It should be said that Neusner's formulation of Judaism(s) in the plural was an important and necessary move in beginning the remediation of the concept of Judaism in the first century.

As I noted above, both the *religions as kinfolk* and the *parting(s) of the ways* tropes were doomed from the start owing to their *epochal* framing. This is to say that both models are dependent on some narration involving two separate entities, Judaism and Christianity. While it may be correct to speak about Judaism and Christianity as distinct religions in the present, such designations are inapplicable to the Second Temple period, including the time of Matthew's composition and early circulation.

While scholars and historians of Judaism and Christianity increasingly recognize that the premise underlying much of biblical scholarship[80] from the last few centuries – the conception of

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"Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 35, no. 2 (2006).

[78] See Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Jacob Neusner, *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: A Systematic Reply to Professor EP Sanders* (Scholars Press, 1993).

[79] Philip R. Davies, "Scenes from the Early History of Judaism," in *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms*, ed. Diana Vikander Edelman (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 147, 51.

[80] Biblical scholarship being the supposedly detached, objective study of the Bible adopting rules from post-Enlightenment intellectual disciplines (e.g. history, anthropology, or literary criticism) in order to produce plausible and rational explanations of how the texts came to be written. The most famous of these early works is that of Baruch Spinoza who in 1672 published his landmark, *Theological-Political Treatise,* in which he set out a systematic argument for a logical and historical reading of the Bible independent from religious faith. Prior to Spinoza, systematic objections to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch had been raised by Isaac La Peyrère in *Prae-Adamitae* (1655) as well as in the work of Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651) but Spinoza's work heralded a shift in the academic study of scripture. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Spinoza's approach to the scriptures is picked up by scholars such as Hermann Samuel Reimarus and David Friedrich Strauss, who then applied it to the Gospels in an effort to discover the historical Jesus. For a short description of the changes in New Testament scholarship over time see James D. Ernest, "How Has New Testament Scholarship Changed over Time?," https://www.bibleodyssey.org:443/en/tools/bible-basics/how-has-new-testament-scholarship-changed-over-time. The definitive work on the subject still remains "The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede" by Albert Schweitzer. I should note that earlier writers had raised similar questions. Centuries before Spinoza, the Islamic scholar Ibn Hazm (994-1064) had offered his own serious intellectual challenge to the Mosaic

first century Judaism and Christianity as two distinct entities – is not only inadequate, but creates a significant blockage for inquiry into the study of the New Testament, this flawed conception nonetheless remains the default subtext for *normal biblical scholarship*.[81] As Tomson and Schwartz eloquently write in the introduction of, *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*,

> [normal scholarship], to adapt a phrase from Thomas S. Kuhn, seems to be dealing with two separate histories and two historiographies: two sets of sources, two frameworks of interpretation and reflection, two programs of teaching, researching, and writing, and two canons of judging and reviewing – Jewish history, and Christian history. One may ask to what extent this paradigm is adequate for the Middle Ages and for modern times. In any case it is neither adequate nor effective for the study of the first two centuries CE.[82]

If this normal scholarship is to ever change, the role of an *epochal* priming must be addressed.

The most straightforward and compelling remediation of the problematic task of separating out Christianity from Judaism can be found in the controversial work of Daniel Boyarin. In a provocative essay, *Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*, Boyarin lays out a compelling case that neither Judaism nor Christianity existed in the Second Temple period.[83] Boyarin points out that in the Second Temple period, the Greek Ἰουδαῖος

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authorship of the Torah. Ibn Hazm's work was followed a few decades later by the work of the Jewish scholar Abraham ibn Ezra (1092-1167), who likewise questioned the unity of the Torah. That being said, La Peyrère, Hobbes and Spinoza do mark a turn in modern approaches to reading the scriptures. For further discussion see Jeffrey L. Morrow, *Three Skeptics and the Bible: La Peyrère, Hobbes, Spinoza, and the Reception of Modern Biblical Criticism* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016).

[81] Tomson and Schwartz's adaptation of Kuhn's 'normal science' to describe the state of contemporary biblical scholarship is particularly *apropos*. See Tomson and Schwartz, 3. Kuhn's 'normal science' being, "research based on acknowledged achievements and represented in textbooks expounding accepted theory, embodying and reconfirming the standard paradigm." Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10.

[82] Tomson and Schwartz, 3-4. This edited work by Tomson and Schwartz is a welcome and much needed contribution to ongoing scholarly efforts aimed at moving outside normal scholarship to craft new concepts and paradigms relative to the study of Jewish literature in the first four centuries of the common era (be it study of the New Testament, Midrash, or the Talmud). For an earlier discussion about the continued viability of early Christianity and New Testament studies as a field separate from that of Second Temple Jewish literature see Leander E. Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," *New Testament Studies* 32, no. 03 (1986): 367. For an extended discussion of his argument see "Is the New Testament a Field of Study? Or From Outler to Overbeck and Back," *The Second Century: a Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1981).

[83] Boyarin, "Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to Which Is Appended a Correction of My Border Lines)." Also Boyarin's *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, 7-11. For a thoughtful, howbeit ultimately unconvincing, critique of Boyarin's article see Akiva Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah: Redefining Identity and Ethos in the Shadow of the Second Temple's Destruction*, vol. 418, Wissenshaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 109-22. For a more extended engagement with Boyarin's claims see a worthwhile collections of essays in James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity*, vol. 251, Wissenshaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

(*Ioudaios*) simply meant Judean or Jew, as did the Hebrew יְהוּדִי.[84] Furthermore, the term Ἰουδαϊσμός (*Ioudaismos*) is more properly understood to have meant something like *the ways of the Judeans/Jews* as a people.[85] In adopting this understanding of Ἰουδαϊσμός (*Ioudaismos*), we are, as Boyarin explains, "talking about the complex of rituals and other practices, beliefs and values, history and political loyalties that constituted allegiance to the People of Israel, not a religion called Judaism."[86] What Boyarin's analysis makes clear is this, whatever is meant by Ἰουδαϊσμός (*Ioudaismos*), it does not mean Judaism (aka the religion of the Jews).

As radical as it may appear, the core of Boyarin's thesis is arguably anticipated more than thirty years ago by Raymond Brown. Then Brown, in his erudite fashion, had noted that, "[a first-century] theological distinction signaled by 'Jewish Christianity' and 'Gentile Christianity' is imprecise and poorly designated."[87] Brown described four types of what he termed Jewish/Gentile Christianity, types that do not reflect an opposition between Judaism and Christianity, but are the results of differing requirements for Gentile converts in the first century. [88] The four groups, according to Brown, may be described as follows:

- Group One: "insisted on *full observance of the Mosaic Law, including circumcision*, for those who believed in Jesus."
- Group Two: "did *not* insist on circumcision but did require converted Gentiles to keep *some Jewish observances*."

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[84] Boyarin's argument draws upon the important work of Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38, no. 4-5 (2007).

[85] For a more complete discussion of these terms see Daniel Boyarin, "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/'Christianity'," in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 67-74.. See also Shaye J.D. Cohen, "Ioudaios: 'Judean' and 'Jew' in Susanna, First Macabees, and Second Macabees," in *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflection: Festschrift Für Martin Hengel Zum 70*, ed. H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger, and P. Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 1.211-20.; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *Ii Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 41a, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 192.

[86] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, 2. Also "Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (To Which Is Appended a Correction of My Border Lines)," 8. In *The Jewish Gospels,* Boyarin nonetheless admits that no acceptable shorthand term seems to be at hand and thus reverts to using "Judaism" as a "convenience" that refers "to that part of Jewish life that was concerned with obedience to God, worship and belief, though I recognize that the term is an anachronism" (p. 3). I must likewise confess that in this present work I occasionally use the phrase New Testament as a way of referring to the collection of texts adopted by what would become know as Christianity. This is merely for the sake of convenience and it is admittedly anachronistic and perhaps even occasionally impedes the aims of this present inquiry.

[87] Raymond E. Brown, "Not Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity but Types of Jewish/Gentile Christianity," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1983): 75. See also the important discussion in the introduction chapter of Raymond E. Brown and John P Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 1-9.

[88] Raymond E. Brown and John P Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 2-9.

- Group Three: "did *not* insist on circumcision and did *not* require observance of Jewish ("kosher") food laws."
- Group Four: "did not insist on circumcision or observance of the Jewish food laws and *who saw no abiding significance in Jewish cult and feasts*."

Notice how well Brown's grouping anticipates Boyarin's claim, noted above, that in the Second Temple period we are not dealing with religion *per se,* "but the complex of rituals and other practices, beliefs and values, history and political loyalties that constituted allegiance to the People of Israel."[89] Brown's four groups reflect various possible answers to the question of, "what do Jews do?," not the expected, "what constitutes the Jewish faith?", or even, "what is Judaism?"[90]

The question taken up in my reading of Matthew is a variant of that asked by David Frankfurter in an excellent examination of: the *Ascension of Isaiah;* the two prophecies commonly designated as 5 and 6 *Ezra*; and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. In his examination, Frankfurter asks the following,

> What happens in the discussion of these texts if one *abandons* the category 'Christian' – as a distinct stage in these texts' composition and, implicitly, as a distinct religious mentality? What if we were to look at these texts, rather, as the work of *continuous* communities of halakhically-observant Jewish groups – perhaps of a sectarian nature – that incorporated Jesus into their cosmologies and liturgies while retaining an essentially Jewish, or even *priestly*, self-definition?[91]

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[89] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, 2.

[90] Following Brown and Boyarin, I will use the terms "Christian Jews," "non-Christian Jews," and "Christian Gentiles," not the more common "Jewish Christian" as a preferable way of distinguishing Jews, like the Jewish author of Matthew, from say his contemporary, the Jewish author of 2 Baruch. For further discussion of this problem of definition see *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, 11. Also, Skarsaune's chapter, *Jewish Believers in Jesus in Antiquity–Problems of Definition, Method, and Sources* is excellent discussion of the problem of definition, however I would take issue with the conclusion in §1.3 relating to the question of "Jewish-Christian" or "Christian Jew" as the most appropriate designation. Earlier Skarsaune had rightly noted that Jewish signals ethnicity not ideology. I find it strange then that when it comes time to signal specific practices of a sub-set of that ethnic grouping that Skarsaune would then effectively reverse the primary ethnic marker and subordinate it to the narrower descriptor of Christian. Hence his adoption of "Jewish Christian," while purporting to be "a designation of ethnic Jews who, as believers in Jesus, *still practiced a Jewish way of life,"* is in fact, a return to the untenable practice of subordinating ethnicity to modern notion of religion. One may speak of a *blue tree* in comparison to a *green tree* but it makes no sense to speak of the relationship between a *tree blue* and a *tree green*. For the earliest Christians, Jewishness was not the variable characteristic. I can't think of anything that Matthew would find more absurd than to suppose that one could somehow apply a Jewish sensibility to the question of faith or belief in Jesus. The phrase, "Jewish Christian," with respect to the first centuries of the common era, falsely implies that Jewish is a descriptor that may be applied to someone otherwise identifiable as Christian and apart from other folks doing whatever Jews did. It is regrettable that my terms still seem to implicitly foreground Christian as the operative descriptive term within what is clearly a Jewish topological field. In the next chapter I will discuss the possibility that Christian refers to a particular Antiochean synagogue, but at present, I am unable to find an alternative and so for the time being Christian will have to do.

[91] David Frankfurter, "Beyond "Jewish Christianity"," in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko

My variation on Frankfurter's questions is significant within Matthaean scholarship for the following reasons. First, while recent scholarship on Matthew has made an effort to situate Matthew within Judaism (often framed as Matthew's Jewish background or matrix), I am unaware of any attempts that also abandon Judaism as a distinct stage in the text's composition or as a distinct religious mentality.

So while Boyarin's "radical" position has not, as far as I can tell, been adopted within the academy, drawing on his insights, I would nonetheless offer this present work as an experimental attempt to read Matthew without recourse to an *epochal* framing of Judaism and Christianity.[92] I am particularly interested in second-order observations, like that raised by Becker and Reed when they observe, "It is, however, perhaps less profitable to debate the exact date of the 'Parting' than to question our adherence to a model that prompts us to search for a single turning point that ushered in a global change for all varieties of Judaism and Christianity, in all communities and locales."[93] What I'm suggesting in this experimental reading is more than an affirmation of Boyarin's thesis that no such distinct entities (Judaism and Christianity) existed, but also one asserting that the *epochal* impulse that drives scholars to seek distinct entities is itself misguided.

My brief review of both the *religions as kinfolk* and *the parting(s) of the ways* tropes above is not intended to rehash the extensive scholarly literature on the subject. I only wish to highlight the overlooked yet pervasive *epochal* thread in both troubling tropes. Both tropes are effectively variants on the same Christianity is not Judaism argument fundamental to all epochal readings of the New Testament. It is this scholarly bias, that merits both interrogation and remediation. As we shall see in the next section, this *epochally* impulse is namely a quest for origins.

1.2.3 Origins

Another way to approach the pervasive heresiological fetish in New Testament scholarship is through the work of pioneering feminist, archaeologist, and anthropologist Margaret Conkey. The *epochal* metaphors in New Testament and early Christianity scholarship that we have discussed thus far, all appear within a very particular type of narrative, namely *origins narratives*.[94] This is no minor aside, but as Conkey has trenchantly demonstrated, *origins narratives* not only reflect existing power relations, but serve to consititute power relations through their ability to regulate the flow and disseminsation of knowledge.[95] Conkey and Williams write,

> There is no doubt that there has been great public interest in the spectacular results acheived by archaeological research in extending the record of the human past, but this has been at

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Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 134. There are a number of nuances to Frankfurter's formulation of the question that my reading will make, but the basic question remains the same.

[92] One scholar, James Carleton Paget, goes so far as to label Boyarin as "one of the most radical participants" in the ongoing discussion of early Christianity and Judaism in the Second Temple period. See Paget, 251, 5-6.

[93] Becker and Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, 23.

[94] Conkey and Williams note, "origins research derives from and constitutes a methodology of narration." Conkey, 104.

[95] Ibid., especially 112-13 including the discussion of figure 2 "The 'Research' Cone". Earlier Conkey and Williams also warn that origins research all too often seduces scholars into staking out untenable positions. Ibid., 102.

> the expense of understanding the *processes* by which the results have been achieved (Rowe 1956). To understand these processes, one must turn just as much to an analysis of the practice of archaeology, as a historically, culturally, and politically contingent enterprise, as to an analysis of the new techniques (e.g. radiometric dating techniques) and innovations in theory and method. Among the most favored research problems are those that implicitly or explicitly address "origins": from the origins of hominids to the origins of the state; the origins of agriculture, of ranking, trade, status, fire, art, toolmaking, hunting, the family, gender asymmetry, language, consciousness, symbolism, pottery, and so forth. From the primacy of origins research comes its power to structure the inquiry of the discipline, to influence the career success of archaeologists, to reach the public, and to serve as a vehicle of politcal messages.[96]

Replace a few key words in Conkey's observation and the above paragraph easily applies to New Testament and early Christianity scholarship. Scholarly knowledge of Jewish practices, texts, and material culture from the Second Temple period has never been greater. Too often, however, processing this glut of information has overshadowed the equally important analysis of the practices of biblical scholarship as "historically, culturally, and politically contingent enterprise."

It is precisely an analysis of this practice of origins narration in New Testament and early Christianity scholarship that I have taken up in the first part of this present work. We might even call this initial work *diagnostic*. Like other ethnographic texts, scholarly narrations of early Christianity include: *allegories of conquest*; *allegories of comparison*; and *allegories of origins,* all of which merit critical interrogation.[97] My central claim is that the *epochal* nature of such narrations, revealed by the continued deployment of soil and arborescent metaphors, is a blockage that obscures rather than renders visible the purported object of inquiry, and thus requires remediation.

Astute readers of the biblical texts may object that it is within the scriptures themselves that we first encounter arborescent metaphors. Was it not the Apostle Paul who used these same images when he described the inclusion of Gentiles as children of Abraham? After all, Paul did write in his *Letter to the Romans*,

> But if some of the branches were broken off, and you [Gentiles], a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. (Romans 11:17-18)

A close reading, however, reveals that Paul's usage of botany imagery in *Romans* could not be further from the arborescent metaphors of Hegel, Baur, and Harnack (as well as those of Dunn, *et al*). First, the images in the New Testament are from within a pre-modern agrarian society/culture. In such a context, agricultural metaphors would have carried a cyclic sense of time. For example, following the flood, Noah is given the following divine promise in Genesis,

> "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22)

Notice that the use of seedtime and harvest are part of an endless, but effectively non-teleological cycle.

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[96] Ibid., 104.

[97] George E. Marcus and James Clifford, "The Making of Ethnographic Texts: A Preliminary Report," *Current Anthropology* 26, no. 2 (1985).

Secondly, the lines of motion in Paul's botany metaphor are clearly inward moving. Paul's use of the verb ἐγκεντρίζω implies entering into the stock of a growing plant. Its usage should not be construed to suggest an image of moving beyond. Here, we need not speculate, given that three chapters later, Paul explicitly forecloses such a reading, when he asks, "I ask, then, has God rejected his people?", then answers, "By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin" (Romans 11:1).

We would do well to remember that Paul was not present for Mendel's 1865 paper, "Experiments on Plant Hybridization," presented to the Society for Research in Nature in Bruin, Moravia (currently part of the Czech Republic).[98] To read pre-industrial agrarian-based botany metaphors through the lens of some modern linear concept of progress is a serious mistake. Ancient farming practices do not inhabit the same register as modern rules of phylogenetic genealogy.[99] The modern *ethos* is one inflected by two hundred years of scientific discourse. Thus, while our words and those of the New Testament writers may be the same, our terms of engagement are vastly different.

Returning now to the recent monograph already noted above in the introduction to this section; when the author suggests that the reopening of Baur's original question, "the question of Christianity's emergence" is a consequence of Christian scholarship's reaction to the Holocaust/Shoah two observations must be noted.[100] First, on the one hand, we are being told that an awareness or sensitivity to Christian mistreatment of Jews is prompting a fresh recognition of the Jewish background to the New Testament.[101] On the other hand, the Jewish milieu of early Christianity is simultaneously being reduced to being a point of origins, from which Christianity emerges, that is to say a point of departure. The problem with this origins narrative should not be quite evident.

As we have seen with Hegel's Jewish Jesus, merely acknowledging a Jewish context for the New Testament is insufficient to guard against a simultaneous move that reduces that Jewishness to a lesser status of background. Background, is itself, a reduction or even a form of mitigation when it is used as a contrast for something one wishes to foreground. It is not an exaggeration to say that Hegel still haunts New Testament and Early Christianity studies insofar as most inquiry remains a matter of origins narration, necessarily undertaken within an *epochal* framework.

While Dunn describes Baur as focusing attention on the "emergence" of Christianity from a "Jewish matrix," as far as I can tell, Baur himself never refers to any matrix, Jewish or otherwise, from which Christianity emerges. The fact that the term matrix, relative to the emergence of Christianity, seems to have entered the scholarly discourse more recently is significant for the

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[98]Gregor Mendel, "Experiments in Plant Hybridization," *Verhandlungen des naturforschenden Vereins Brünn. Available online: www.mendelweb.org/Mendel.html (accessed on 1 January 2013)* (1865). I point this out not to be flippant, but to raise an important point. The conceptual milieu inhabited by Hegel, Baur and Harnack was unlike that of the New Testament writers.

[99] Here noting the distinction between words, concepts, and terms is helpful. Following Paul Rabinow, "we can define a term as a word + a concept + a referent. Thus the same word, for example 'philosophy' or 'anthropology,' can take its place in different terms." Rabinow is himself following the work of John Dewey and Richard McKeon see Rabinow, 6.

[100] Dunn, *Neither Jew nor Greek: A Contested Identity*, 3, 13.

[101] Such critical reflection on the part of Christian scholars and theologians is indeed warranted. Here I take issue not with the warrant, but with the framing that results.

following reason. From at least the beginning of the eighteen-century, New Testament scholars have repeatedly adopted the changing language and terminology of the biological sciences in their attempts to narrate both the origins of New Testament literature as well as Christianity.

Within recent New Testament and early Christian scholarly literature, there are numerous references to a *Jewish matrix* within which Christianity develops or from which it emerges.[102] Perhaps people have forgotten that matrix first meant womb? It is by extension that it comes to mean, "a place or medium in which something is originated, produced, or developed; the environment in which a particular activity or process begins; a point of origin and growth." [103] In an apparent attempt to maintain a certain scientific patina for their own origins narratives, biblical scholars have continually updated their vocabulary to reflect vocabulary changes in popular scientific origins narratives.

What most biblical studies scholars seem to miss, even as they continue to appropriate the language of modern genetics and evolutionary biology, are the nuanced notions of complexity and directionality illuminated by recent evolutionary biology and genomic studies. If anything, evolutionary biologists and genetisist have provided ample evidence that tinkering and change while occuring in time, need not be directional or teleological. On the contrary, organisms seem to be cobbled together from chance as much as necessity. Evolution results not in optimal or efficient, but in functional.[104] This of course runs counter to the *epochal* way in which scholars have appropriated the vocabulary of the life sciences.

In any case, here in the 21st century we are back round to describing how Christianity is *not* Judaism. Or as Dunn puts it, "the key question remains: how and why did Christianity emerge from Second Temple Judaism? With its corollary: in emerging more fully into the Hellenistic world, to what extent did the new movement change in character and become something

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[102] Larry W. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods : Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 89. As we noted earlier, Dunn explicitly uses this phrase to describe the earlier work of Baur. One cannot reasonable expect to adopt a conceptual framework forged by Hegel and Baur but somehow escape the de-Judaizing implications of such a conceptual framework.

[103] "matrix, n.". OED Online. September 2016. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/115057?rskey=DyBnWn&result=1 (accessed October 27, 2016).

[104] See the work of François Jacob, "Evolution and Tinkering," *Science* 196, no. 4295 (1977). In a more recent work, Neil Shubin details several features of human anatomy that cannot be explained in terms of engineering, but only as the inefficient tinkering of earlier structures. See Neil Shubin, *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body* (Vintage, 2008). Recent work in evolutionary biology has also upended not only the commonsense notion of directionality in nature, but also notions of complexity itself. Physicist Sean Carroll rightly calls humans "terrible temporal chauvinists." Sean Carroll, "Arrow of Time Faq," in *Preposterous Universe* (12/3/2007). As a recent article in *Nautilus* reminds us, this idea of nature as "a gradient from simple to complex" is not new, but one that already existed among the ancient Greeks, who called nature *physis*, meaning growth. Amy Maxmen, "Evolution You're Drunk: DNA Studies Topple the Ladder of Complexity," *Nautilus*, no. 9 (2014), http://nautil.us/issue/9/time/evolution-youre-drunk. While outside the present scope of this work a more thorough examination of the ways in which New Testament and early Christianity scholarship continue to appropriate the changing vocabulary of the biological sciences would be well warranted.

different?"[105] The *epochal* framing of this question however is a one that cannot be sustained when looking at either the New Testament texts proper or at the Second Temple period in general.

Let me note one final work to further demonstrate that the blockage I've have identified above, shows no signs of dissipating, even in light of the serious scholarship produced by Boyarin, Fredriksen, *et al.,* in recent years. In a mode similar to that of Dunn, a no doubt well-intentioned Larry Hurtado, nonetheless writes in 2016, that the "birth" of Christianity, "*emerged* initially as a new religious movement in Roman-era Jewish tradition."[106] He goes on to suggest that the birth of Christianity can rightly be described as either a, "significant '*mutation*' in ancient Jewish religious tradition," or in a following passage, "the Jesus-movement [is] a novel '*mutation*' in ancient Jewish tradition."[107] An alert reader quickly realizes that the deployment of this kind of terminology is just another way to tip one's hat to Jesus the Jew, while simultaneously maintaining that the New Testament is in fact not Jewish literature.[108]

Further evidence of this is found in Hurtado's chapter, "A New Kind of Faith," under the subheading "The Christian God," where we find this telling passage,

> The Greek term early Christians preferred, however, to depict their God's love, and the love that they were to show for God and others, even their enemies, was *agapē* and its cognate verb *agapaō.* These words appear very infrequently in pagan texts of the time but copiously in early Christian texts. For example, in the New Testament, *agapē* appears some 143 times, and the verb *agapaō* 116 times. These words also appear prominently in some Jewish Greek texts. So the early Christian preference for *agapē* and the cognate verb *agapaō* may be another instance of the influence of the Jewish matrix of the early Christian movement.[109]

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[105] Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 2, 50-51.

[106] Hurtado, 15, italics mine.

[107] Ibid., 19-20, 68, italics mine. Hurtado's work provides a thoughtful survey of many contrasts between what he terms pagan practices and beliefs and those of Christians, but his conclusion that Christianity and Judaism are likewise distinct (and by distinct he does seem to mean that Christianity is unique aka non-Jewish) often seem very forced. Again and again he concludes a subject with a comment like, "Just as *eidōlon* is not used in classical/pagan texts to refer to the gods, so these other words are not used *at all* outside of Jewish and Christian texts" (ibid., 51. italics in original) or, "the exclusivist stance of early Christianity was so odd, unjustified and even impious in the eyes of ancient pagan observers and critics that they often accused Christians of being atheists, just as Jews had been labeled previously" Ibid., 56. Such special pleading seems to only reinforce the claims of those like Boyarin, who as we have noted, contra Hurtado, argues quite compellingly that Christian practices were not distinct from those found among Jews of the Second Temple period. See Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*.; *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*; or more recently *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*. Repeatedly, Hurtado notes that the very things he lists as being distinctly Christian within the Greco-Roman world also happen to be the same things that make Jews distinct within the Greco-Roman world.

[108] While Hurtado, in several places, explicitly writes that early Christianity should not be seen as something distinct from Judaism, his book as a whole however seems to convey a very contrary notion.

[109] Hurtado, 64. It is not my intent to suggest Hurtado's work is uniquely framed or that it is uniquely problematic. In fact, I think it is just the opposite. Hurtado's work is just the most recent scholarly work exploring early Christianity, especially within a coterie of scholars advocating for what has been called "high Christology" in the New Testament. A common feature of the High Christology club seems to be a shared assumption that Judaism was somehow breached by either unique claims Jesus

Regardless of intent, Hurtado's reference to, "the influence of the Jewish matrix of the early Christian movement" does not clarify, but rather obscures the fact that 143 instances of *agapē,* along with 116 instances of *agapaō,* are found in Second Temple Jewish texts.[110] It seems that we have truly come back round to Baur and Harnack and yes, to Hegel.

Here is the significant blockage that my reading seeks to both render visible and to begin remediating. Because of a shared *epochal* orientation, it is not only the patronizing and arguably anti-Jewish works of earlier scholars like Harnack and Baur, but also the well-intentioned origins narrations of later scholars like Dunn, Hurtado, and even Ruether, that continue to be mired in a Hegelian swamp. This arc from Hegel through Harnack and Baur and on into current New Testament scholarship is a totality that has fully closed upon itself.[111]

This present reading can in no way offer an exhaustive genealogical account of the soil and arborescent metaphors deployed in New Testament and Christian origins scholarship. And while I am unaware of any such genealogical inquiry, my inability to undertake such a task in this present work should in no way suggest that the task is not worth undertaking. Such genealogical work is not only necessary but it should also explore the terminological and conceptual parallels of such images in scholarly work in New Testament and early Christianity with those found in the scientific discourse (e.g. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was only published in 1859).[112]

Notice the results of a quick google Ngram search[113] charting the appearance of the trifecta of emergence/emerge, matrix, and mutation as metaphors in English language publications since 1800,

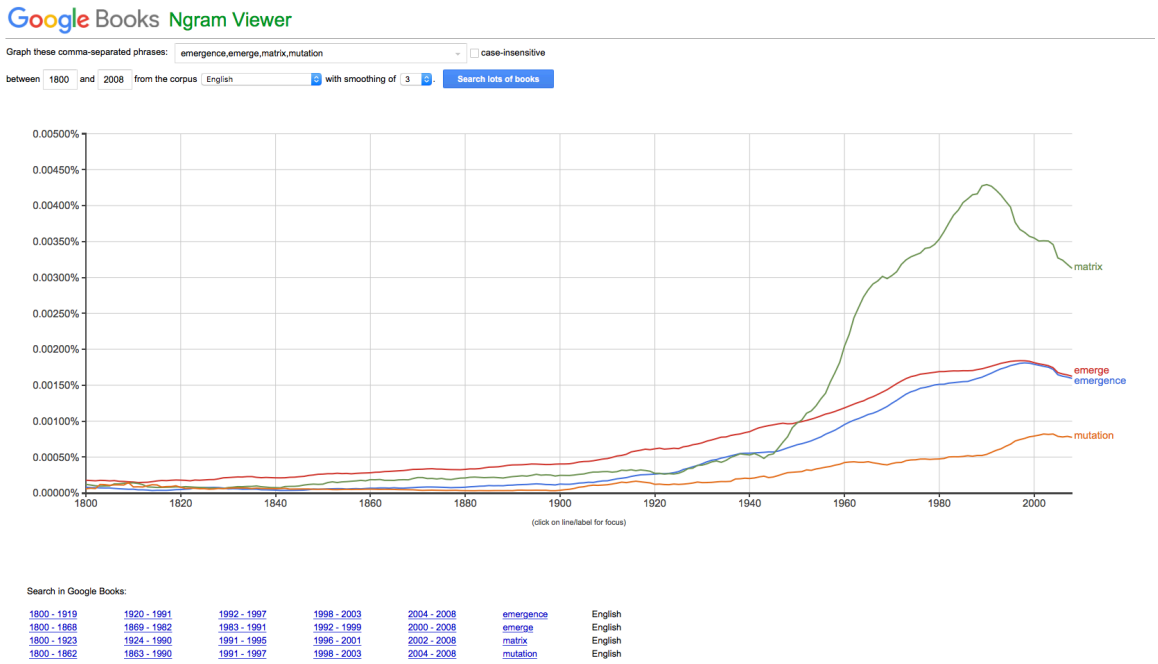
himself made about his own divine status or the practices and beliefs of his first followers that should be understood to uniquely accord him divine status. If, in fact, I am singling out Hurtado's work, it is only because of the domination and influential position it occupies in contemporary New Testament scholarship.

[110] On some level it seems that Hurtado is aware of the effective de-Judaizing of the texts resulting from his analysis because he feels compelled to occasionally make remarks like the following, "But, to underscore the point again, in the earlier decades of the first century the emergent 'Christian' religious stance was a development within the variegated Jewish tradition of the time" (ibid., 67.) I would note that variegated is itself an adjective often used in describing both flora and fauna.

[111] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 152.

[112] For a brief introduction to the history of modern genetics see Peter J. Bowler, *The Mendelian Revolution: The Emergence of Hereditarian Concepts in Modern Science and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), especially chapters 2 and 3. For another important work see Pálsson Gísli, *Anthropology and the New Genetics*, New Departures in Anthropology (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[113] A simple search of emergence, emerge, matrix and mutation entered into the google Ngram viewer at:
https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=emergence%2Cemerge%2Cmatrix%2Cmutation&year_start=1800&year_end=2008&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cemergence%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2Cemerge%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2Cmatrix%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2Cmutation%3B%2Cc0 (accessed August 22, 2017)



Likewise, this introductory work is not intended to offer a comprehensive treatment of Hegel's influence upon early New Testament and Christian origins scholarship.[114] What I have attempted to show is that soil and arborescent metaphors within modern scholarly work on New Testament literature, as well as Christian origins, are inextricably bound up with concepts of progress, supersessionism, and even outright anti-Judaism/Semitism. Arborescent and soil metaphors were introduced into the discourse of modern scholarly study of the New Testament and early Christianity as part of a conceptual scaffolding by which Christianity might be distinguished from Judaism. The *epochal* framework within which this conceptualization was undertaken, shaped how these arborescent and soil metaphors were deployed, namely to demonstrate how Christianity had superseded Judaism.

These essentialist *topoi* have long outlived whatever heuristic value they may have once held. To again cite Paula Fredriksen's insightful 2006 piece, "Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go," Fredriksen identified four terms–conversion, nationalism, *religio licita* ("legitimate cult"), and monotheism–as interpretive concepts that, "lead us down the path of anachronism and abstraction, ultimately obscuring the

[114] My goal here is not an exhaustive reappraisal, but to draw attention to a conceptual repertoire anchored in a Hegelian subtext, that still permeates modern New Testament and Christian origins scholarship. In interrogating *epoch*, it is my hope that this totality is at least fractured such that space for further inquiry may be opened up. For a concise discussion of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (history-of-religion school) see Hurtado, Appendix pp. 191-96. As Hurtado rightly notes, the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* by and large viewed the New Testament as having been corrupted by "oriental" and other pagan religious ideas and practices and saw its primary task as stripping away these corruptions. Ibid., 195.

lives and concerns of the ancient people whom we seek to understand"[115] This recognition is all the more striking given the resurgence of such metaphors and images as part and parcel of attempts to reframe New Testament and Christian origins scholarship in view of the Holocaust and Christian anti-Semitism.

Fredriksen is correct in arguing that their effect of obscuring more than they clarify is more than enough reason to retire such terms.[116] To her suggestion, I would add not only the litany of arborescent and soil metaphors still prevalent in New Testament and early Christianity scholarship, but also the *epochal* scaffolding upon which these metaphors are constructed. Or to use the more forceful language of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, they clearly produce bad fruit and should therefore be cut down and cast into the fire (Matthew 7:19-20).

It is in seeking to remediate this *epochal* blockage that I now proceed to an exploration of other possibitities for forms of narration. It is my aim, throughout this work, to render visible a form of narration relative to Matthew that does not involve origins narratives. This reading is not a new attempt at the "erecting of foundations" relative to Matthew's gospel. On the contrary, to once again poach the words of Foucault, my hope regarding this inquiry is only that, "it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagine consistent with itself."[117]

1.3 Topological Field of Inquiry

We're tired of trees.
We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles.
They've made us suffer too much."
–Deleuze and Guattari[118]

1.3.1 Rhizomes

Having sufficiently demonstrated that arborescent and *epochal* origins narratives are less than helpful, I now turn to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in hopes of poaching a conceptual repertoire more agreeable to the task at hand.[119] In the opening chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari remark, "It is odd how the tree has dominated Western reality and all of Western thought, from botany to biology and anatomy, but also gnosiology, theology, ontology, all of philosophy...: the root-foundation, *Grund*, *racine*, *fondement."*[120] As we have

[115] Fredriksen, "Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go," 232.

[116] Ibid., 244.

[117] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 82.

[118] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 15-16.

[119] Northrop Frye once noted, "reading, like eating, is a predatory activity" and so it is without apology that I confess, that my appropriation of Deleuze and Guattari is just that, an appropriation. See Northrop Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1990), 113.

[120] Deleuze and Guattari, 18.

already seen, this description is by no means an overstatement when it comes to biblical scholarship.

Even the brief examination above was more than sufficient to demonstrate that the *religions as kinfolk,* as well as the *parting(s) of the ways* models, are both fundamentally *arborescent* in form. Even the most nuanced of scholarship seems entangled with in this *arborescent* image. For example, in trying to describe Second Temple Judaism, Gabriele Boccaccini attempts to weave something of a middle path between the works of E.P. Sanders and Jacob Neusner by first suggesting Judaism be loosely defined as "the set of monotheistic belief systems associated with the deity named YHWH."[121] He then goes on to describe the history of Judaism as a genealogical tree, thus embedding a Judaisms within Judaism. He writes,

> the roots of Judaism are in the ancient polytheistic religion of ancient Israel. Since the beginning, the genus Judaism was made of various synchronic species, of Judaisms – movements in competition, diachronically influencing each other by means of dialogue or opposition, having their own distinct identity yet sharing a common sense of membership to the same religious community. Since the beginning, we do not have one system of thought but rather many parallel systems.[122]

Rather than resolving the issue, Boccaccini's work only serves to reveal that efforts at "reforming" the old epochal paradigm have very limited currency.

Instead of attempts to reform the old paradigms, what if we simply abandon the dominant model of "arborescent descent going from the least to the most differentiated"?[123] That is to say, what if we quit playing the origins game altogether? This is the question, I wish to now pursue.

In the place of *origins*, *epoch* and *arborescent* tree, I propose, poaching the work of Deleuze and Guattari, to adopt a *rhizomatic* conceptualization for Jewish literature of the Second

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[121] Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 10-14, 35. Boccaccini here follows the conclusions drawn by Diana V. Edelman in Diana Vikander Edelman, ed. *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 15-25.

[122] Boccaccini, 36.

[123] Deleuze and Guattari, 10. Aside from the work of Daniel Boyarin, there has been little appetite for retiring the traditional *arborescent* subtext of New Testament and early Christianity scholarship. Boyarin has suggested that scholars adopt a wave theory model to describe the relationships between various Jewish groups in the Second Temple period, including what will become Christianity beginning in the fourth century. Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, 9. These interactions would then be conceptualized much like stones thrown into a pond (the Second Temple period). The ripples from each stone interacting with one another to form nodes of convergence as well as divergence. In physics this is called constructive and destructive interference. As Boyarin writes,

> In order to make sense of how such developments could take place, we need to imagine the modes by which new religious ideas, practices, and discourses could be shared. I tend to think of Judaism and Christianity in late antiquity as points on a continuum. On one end were the Marcionites, the followers of the second-century Marcion, who believed that the Hebrew Bible had been written by an inferior God and had no standing for Christians and who completely denied the "Jewishness" of Christianity. On the other were the many Jews for whom Jesus meant nothing. In the middle, however, were many gradations that provided social and cultural mobility from one end of this spectrum to the other. Ibid.

Temple period, which includes the New Testament.[124] Such a proposal involves a significant shift in scholarly focus/interest given that a rhizome has no point of origin, nor does it possess a singular entry point, nor is it structured according to a linear movement of increasing differentiation. In other words, a rhizomatic reading of Matthew (as well as of the New Testament in general) requires that we give up the quest for origins. There is no origin to discover, only a heterogeneous assemblage of, "already differentiated lines with multiple entryways" that can be explored in the middle.[125] Thus Deleuze and Guattari write,

> A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and... and... and..." This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be." Where are you going? Where are you coming from? What are you heading for? These are totally useless questions. Making a clean slate, starting or beginning again from ground zero, seeking a beginning or a foundation—all imply a false conception of voyage and movement (a conception that is methodical, pedagogical, initiatory, symbolic...).[126]

I'm sure that New Testament scholars will no doubt take umbrage at the suggestion that the questions embedded in traditional origins narrations of early Christianity are totally useless. A reaction motivated owing perhaps to the fact that much of the scholarly appeal in such narrations is no doubt due to the sense of control and structure that the *arborescent* paradigm purports to provide. As Deleuze and Guattari also note, the tree-root "plots a point, fixes an order."[127] And, as we have already discussed, origins narratives are fundamentally about control and structure. Let us nonetheless attempt a narration of the middle.

It seems clear to me that *arborescent* models, with their Hegelian *epochal* subtexts, are hopelessly flawed. As such, it is my proposal that a rhizomatic paradigm offers us a mode of engaging with the texts of the New Testament that finally allows us to dispense with the *epochal* subtext once and for all. I cannot, in this present work, interrogate the entirety of the arborescent tree image in biblical studies, but I can begin the effort of remediating one particular element of that arborescent model, that of the tree-ring. In the tree image, each ring suggests a discrete entity that signals a new totality both swallowing and superseding the preceding, an ever-outward-expanding piling of *epoch* upon *epoch*.

Let me be clear, I am not suggesting that within a rhizomatic reading, temporality must be neglected altogether, only that it must be interrogated and not assumed. Svetlana Boym's diagnosis of nostalgia contains a reframing of modern temporality that is helpful in conceptulizing the role of time within the rhizomatic reading Matthew that I am here proposing. In her work, Boym doesn't abandon temporality, but reframes it in such a way as to explicitly negate the linear Hegelian substructure of most modern Western temporalities. She describes this reframing as, "an alternative understanding of temporality, not as a teleology of progress or transcendence but as a

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[124] Here I intentionally say "propose to adopt" as it is unclear whether or not the reading which I offer is in fact rhizomatic.

[125] Deleuze and Guattari, 10-12.

[126] Ibid., 25.

[127] Ibid., 7. We should note that this same song and dance was being performed in the third and fourth centuries by both the Church Fathers and the Rabbis in their efforts to divvy up the remnants of ancient Israelite beliefs and practices into separate but equal factions.

superimposition and coexistence of heterogeneous times."[128] She goes on to term this alternative temporality as the "off-modern."

Her explanation for the new term, *apropos* for our present discussion, is well worth noting. She writes, "The off-modernists mediate between modernists and postmodernists, frustrating the scholars. The eccentric adverb *off* relieves the pressure of being fashionable and the burden of defining oneself as either pre- or postmodern."[129] Poaching Boym's *off-modern*, I would suggest that an analogous eccentric adverb for Matthaean studies would be "off-epochal." Thus, as the title for this present chapter suggests, this present work can be rightly described as an attempt at an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew. In other words, we need not do away with time, only to disrupt its totalizing influence on how we read the New Testament.

1.3.2 Contours

Having now outlined the *status quaestionis,* let me briefly speak to the remaining contours of my *off-epochal* readings of Matthew. Given the virtually endless possible lines of inquiry, let me delimit the scope of the present work by noting what this inquiry is not. First of all, my inquiry is not an attempt at answering *the question of whether or not Matthew was or was not a Jew.* I take as my starting point the now well-grounded majority opinion among New Testament scholars that both Matthew and his primary audience were Jewish.[130] I say this fully cognizant that Matthew's relationship to, and place within, Jewish life in the Second Temple period continues to be an important subject of inquiry within contemporary Matthaean scholarship. That being said, the burden of proof now rests squarely with those who wish to see the Gospel of Matthew as being anything other than Second Temple Jewish literature. To assume otherwise is simply untenable in light of the last several decades of Matthaean scholarship. [131]

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[128] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 30.

[129] Ibid., 31.

[130] For a concise discussion of the movement within scholarship of the last 50 years towards an understanding of Matthew as having been authored by a Jew see Craig A. Evans, "The Jewish Christian Gospel Tradition," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 245. See also Gurtner, 26; Graham N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 113-45. The terminology within the scholarly literature is far from unified or clear as examples from two of the most influential and widely-respected scholarly commentaries readily show. Note the following comment by Davies and Allison, "The first evangelist was a Jew whose mind was first of all steeped in the OT and Jewish tradition." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 6. The designation of OT here is somewhat problematic as Matthew would have not conceived of the scriptures of Israel in such a fashion. In his magisterial commentary Ulrich Luz describes the Gospel of Matthew as reflecting the experiences of a "Jewish Christian church." Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 11. This is again reflecting a certain slippage in language. It should also be noted that there is a minority position that maintains that Matthew was not Jewish. See Michael J. Cook, "Interpreting 'Pro-Jewish' Passages in Matthew," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 54 (1983).

[131] For a recent survey of trends and subjects in Matthaean scholarship see Gurtner, (2011). Luz also includes a thorough discussion of Matthew's relationship to Judaism, including an important survey of scholarship on the subject. Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 47-55. Another important recent work is a collection of essays, "Jewish Believers in Jesus" edited by Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik. Skarsaune and Hvalvik. The work of Douglas R. A. Hare should also be noted as an important

Secondly, this work does not attempt to offer a new theory regarding the composition of Matthew's gospel, in the sense of an exhaustive reappraisal of the *Redaktionsgeschichte* of the gospel. This is not to say that questions of genre[132] and literary structure[133] are unimportant. They are not, however, my primary focus. My reading begins with the assumption that Matthew has a certain a unity, in the sense described by Northrop Frye, who writes,

> The primary understanding of any work of literature has to be based on an assumption of its unity. However mistaken such an assumption may eventually prove to be, nothing can be done unless we start with it as a heuristic principle. Further, every effort should be directed toward understanding the whole of what we read.[134]

This is to say, the assumption in my reading is that Matthew as it presently stands has some level of coherence. This is not to deny the presence of internal gaps or logical inconsistencies, only that they must be framed within a larger expectation of consistency. As I discuss in the next chapter, I am interested in the possible forms that may be given to an *off-epochal* reading of the Gospel of Matthew as a whole.

This also means that I will not engage ongoing debates involving alternatives to the two-source theory. I accept as compelling the majority position within current New Testament scholarship that understands that while imperfect, the standard two-source theory nonetheless remains the most persuasive explanation for the synoptic relationship between Matthew, Mark, and Luke. As such, I also accept as persuasive the magisterial work of John Kloppenborg in *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* regarding Q.[135]

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qualification to accounts which tend to portray Matthew as indistinguishable within a homogenous Second Temple Judaism. Douglas R. A. Hare, "How Jewish Is the Gospel of Matthew?," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2000).

[132] The genre for Matthew remains an unsettled question. Most persuasive is Luz's argument that while Matthew may indeed have reminded some of his later readers of the Hellenistic Βίος, it is, "biblical authors such as the authors of the Priestly documents or the Chronicler's History, Jewish authors such as the authors of the *Book of Jubilees* or the *Liber Antiquitatum*, or the authors of Qumran's parabiblical literature are Matthew's kindred." See Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 15, see also notes 81, 82. We will return to this subject in chapter three, *Torah-Transfigured.*

[133] For an extended discussion of the Jewish features of Matthew's gospel see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 26-27, 133-38; or Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 45-47.

[134] Northrop Frye, "Literary Criticism," in *The Aims and Methods of Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literature*, ed. J. Thorpe (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1963), 63. Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 24-27. See also the discussion in David D. Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel: Divine Presence and God's People in the First Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 10-11.

[135] John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); also, P. Foster et al., *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008 (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium)* (Peeters Publishers, 2011); C.M. Tuckett, "The Synoptic Problem," in *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, ed. P. Foster, et al., Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium (Oxford: Peeters, 2011). For a specific examination of Matthew and Q see Ulrich Luz, "Matthew and Q," in *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005).

Lastly, I should also be clear that the work of Albert Schweitzer[136] has inoculated me against any delusions that my inquiry should include an attempt at finding the historical Jesus. For the sake of this reading, Matthew's Jesus and the *real* Jesus are interchangeable. My inquiry is not a field dig; I am not excavating in some attempt to get beneath or behind the assemblage offered up by Matthew. There is no above, behind or beneath.

Now, regarding the structure for the remainder of this work. In chapter two, *A Torah-Formed Gospel,* I turn to the work of Michel Foucault and Bertolt Brecht for conceptual help in my experimental attempt to render visible an *off-epochal* Matthaean stance (free of arborescent metaphors) towards the scriptures of Israel. One result of the so-called 'new perspective on Paul' mentioned above was a deepening appreciation of Paul's location within Jewish practices and beliefs of the first century. [137] This present work endeavors to participate in the re-imagining that must now take place within Matthaean studies due to the recognition that Matthew *within* Second Temple Jewish literature is the most appropriate stance.

As I discuss in chapter two, as scholars, we can and should refuse the suggestion that we must continually answer the question of whether Matthew was for or against Jews or Judaism.[138] Such a stance presupposes a positioning that I reject as both a product of *epochal* framing that is itself alien to the gospel as well as reflecting a misunderstanding of what it would mean for a first century Jew to wrestle with the question of Jewishness. Matthew was a Jew, no more and no less.

As it turns out, once an *epochal* priming has been set aside, reading Matthew's gospel reveals a composition best described as *Torah-formed*. In writing his gospel, Matthew does not draw upon the scriptures of Israel so much as he inhabits them. The scriptures of Israel are not foundational for the life and teachings of Jesus, but they are the space which Matthew fills. This process of filling a Torah-form space with Jesus is what Matthew calls fulfillment.

In chapter three, *Jesus: Torah-Transfigured,* my conversation reaches back to the work of French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and the figure of the *bricoleur* in an attempt to problematize the Matthaean depiction of Jesus that results from the *Torah-form* structure of this gospel discussed in chapter two.[139] A close, *off-epochal* reading centering on three key *divine*

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[136] Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

[137] Fredriksen, "How Later Contexts Affect Pauline Content, Or: Retrospect Is the Mother of Anachronism," 51. Thus Fredriksen describes the shift in Pauline studies, "The paradigm shifted from Paul *against* Judaism to Paul *and* Judaism. That paradigm is shifting yet again, from Paul *and* Judaism to Paul *within* Judaism. A daunting task of re-imagining lies before us. The letters must all be retranslated. The word books must all be recast. The commentaries must all be redone."

[138] Here I am thinking of Foucault's discussion of what he calls the "blackmail of the enlightenment."

[139] Fearnley, Lyle. "Problematization in the Anthropology of the Contemporary." Anthropological Research on the Contemporary. July 20, 2016. Accessed October 26, 2016. http://anthropos-lab.net/bpc/2016/07/problematization-anthropology-contemporary. Fearnley offers a succinct description of what I mean by problematize when he writes:

> A "problematization," in the conceptual terms of Michel Foucault, is "an 'answer' to a concrete situation in the real." To analyze a historical situation as a problematization is to inquire into "how and why certain things (behavior, phenomena, processes) became a problem" (Michel Foucault and ed Joseph Pearson, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext (e), 2001), 171.). In Foucault's early work on madness, for instance, he does not aim to provide a history of "the language of psychiatry" (that would be the work of a historian of ideas or science), but rather

presence passages (Matthew 1:23; 18:20; 28:20) provides an alternative image of Jesus that many Christians, accustomed to reading Matthew through a Johannine incarnational lens, will no doubt find shocking. Functionally, Matthew's bricolage presents Jesus as the *Torah-transfigured*, that is to say incarnate.

My disparate and admittedly eclectic groups of conversation partners should not be taken as representatives of Matthaean scholarship in particular, or of New Testament and early Christianity scholarship in general. In fact, with the exception of Daniel Boyarin, none of my primary interlocutors would be considered scholars properly at home within the discipline of biblical studies. No doubt, some will find my choice of interlocutors baffling, or even inappropriate. So why choose them? In short, they are friends with whom I have found great pleasure thinking.

It is my hope that this work will contribute in some way to meeting what Max Weber called, "the demands of the day."[140] As I see it, these demands must include seeking an answer to the question of 'what is the remediation (the repair function) for the blockage that is an *epochal* orientation towards the Gospel according to Matthew?' This project is admittedly experimental, as I do not presume to know in advance the forms an *off-epochal* stance towards the Gospel of Matthew may take. For that matter, neither do I have any *a priori* reason to assume that my inquiry into Matthew will succeed in adopting an *off-epochal* stance, should such a stance even be possible. As Deleuze and Guattari have noted, "It's not easy to see things in the middle."[141]

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to identify the prior "decision that bound and separated reason and madness" (Michel Foucault and edited by Jean Khalfa, *History of Madness*, trans. Jonathan Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2006).). His historical inquiry unearthed the practices through which madness was constituted as an object, revealing the primary acts of separation that opened up a space in which the scientific discourses of psychiatry became possible. In this sense, working with problematizations "is an act of modal transformation from the constative to the subjunctive, from the necessary to the contingent" (Paul Rabinow and Nikolas S. Rose, "Foucault Today," in *The Essential Foucault : Selections from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (New York: New Press, 2003), 13.).

[140]Max Weber, "Science as Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 156.

[141] Deleuze and Guattari, 23.

Chapter Two: A Torah-formed Gospel[1]

'Jesus' is really an abbreviation for the person
who is the centre of an event
whose boundaries are not self-evident...
- Leander Keck[2]

2.1 Ghosts and Epochs

As the opening chapter of this work has demonstrated, *epoch* is undoubtedly the reigning paradigm within Matthaean studies. Even as scholars revisit and nuance questions of justification, Matthew and Judaism, salvation, christology, Christian origins, supersessionism, or the historical Jesus, Matthaean scholarship continues to be framed in terms of *epoch*, that is to say largely in the mode of origins narration. While scholars continue to debate whether Matthew should be understood as a transitional Jewish work formative to nascent Christianity or if it should be seen as an inaugural declaration for the new Christian era, few question the *epochal* framing upon which these debates are constructed. Expositions on the, "New Moses," "New Torah," "New Covenant," "New Isaac," and "New Israel" continue to haunt the halls of Matthaean scholarship.[3]

Given the pervasive manifestations of these apparitions in contemporary Matthaean scholarship, a reader unfamiliar with the actual text of Matthew might be surprised to learn that the word *new* (καινός and/or νέος) only occurs in the gospel in a very limited sense and never describing Torah or covenant.[4] For example, in describing the Last Supper, Luke expands the Markan, "τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης" (this is my blood of the covenant) to "ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου"(the new covenant in my blood),[5] but Matthew does not. Instead, Matthew transforms the Markan account of Jesus' statement to read,

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[1] Here I am consciously playing off *terraform*, a word first appearing in science fiction to describe to process of transforming a planet into one sufficiently similar to the earth such that is can support terrestrial life. The term first occurs in Jack Williamson, "Collision Orbit " *Astounding Science Fiction* Feb 1949. The concept soon made its way from science fiction into mainstream scientific discourse, for example an early instance can be found in Carl Sagan, "The Planet Venus," *Science* 133, no. 3456 (1961), where Sagan discussed the possibility of terraforming the planet Venus to make it habitable for human colonization.

[2] Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," 363.

[3] My thanks to James Millard Gibbs, "The Son of God as the Torah Incarnate in Matthew," in *Studia Evangelica*, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 38, for introducing this splendid image of ghosts in Matthaean scholarship. While Gibbs' call, now nearly fifty-years distant, to lay these ghosts to rest seem to have been largely ignored I hope here in this present work to renew that call and hopefully in some small way to finally begin the long overdue rite of exorcism.

[4] Matthew contains a mere four instances of καινός (9:17; 13:52; 26:29; 27:60), while νέος appears only once, in 9:17. This limited use of *new* (καινός and/or νέος) in Matthew has been cogently treated in ibid., 40.

[5] Cf. Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20

> τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ πίω ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρός μου. (Matthew 26:28-29)[6]

So while the Matthaean account of the last supper does include καινός, rather than functioning to establish a new covenant, as in the Lukan account, Matthew's expansion suggests that Jesus' death somehow renews the existing covenant. [7]

Matthew also omits the Markan account of Jesus's visit to Capernaum where Mark describes Jesus exorcising an evil spirit while teaching in the synagogue.[8] The reason for ommitting the Markan is apparently due to Mark's description of the crowd's amazment due to Jesus' διδαχὴ καινὴ (a new teaching).[9] Had Matthew intended to portray Jesus as bringing a new teaching (Torah), then surely he would not have ommitted this Markan pericope. Even a brief examination, is sufficient to demonstrate that Matthew's limited use of καινός is not *epochal*. Matthew not only develops Markan source material in a way that explicitly negates their development into *epochal* terms, but he omits Markan passages that may lend themselves to *epochal* readings.

Given that it does seem rather self-evident, that in the advent of Jesus, *something* did happen–a happening that seems to stand at the very center of the gospel according to Matthew–the task taken up in this chapter is that of articulating an *off-epochal* problematization of Matthew, in which rhizome takes the place of arborescent tree as the preferred metaphor. It was Foucault who introduced the concept of problematization, which he defined as follows, "The development of a given into a question, the transformation of a group of obstacles and difficulties into problems to which diverse solutions will attempt to produce a response, this is what constitutes the specific point of problematization and the specific work of thought."[10] This chapter then, is a response, not a solution, to arborescent readings of Matthew. It is not an attempt to refute, destroy or replace current *epochal* readings of Matthew, so much as it is to render them problematic by demonstrating the possibility of an alternative priming.

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[6] "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it *anew* with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:28-29, translation and italics mine)

[7] Gibbs, 40.

[8] cf. Mark 1:21-28, esp v. 27

[9] So argues Gibbs, 40. Luke does include the pericope (Luke 4:36), but he drops the phrase διδαχὴ καινὴ so as to highlight the crowds amazement at the authority and power of Jesus' words not the newness of his teaching. Cf. τίς ὁ λόγος οὗτος ὅτι ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ καὶ δυνάμει ἐπιτάσσει… (Luke 4:36)

[10] Michel Foucault, "Polemics, Politics and Problematization," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 388.

2.1.1 Ethos

To begin, we turn once more to Foucault, who took up the concept of *epoch* relative to modernity in his short essay, "What is Enlightenment?" written near the end of his life in 1984.[11] In his essay, Foucault asked the following,

> I wonder whether we may not envisage modernity rather as an attitude than as a period of history. And by "attitude," I mean a mode of relating [*un mode de relation*] to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an ethos. And consequently, rather than seeking to distinguish the "modern era" from the "premodern" or "postmodern," I think it would be more useful to try to find out how the attitude of modernity, ever since its formation, has found itself struggling with attitudes of "counter-modernity.[12]

Foucault's important move was to reframe discussions of modernity by challenging the near universal assumption that modernity must be, or even could be, defined in terms of a unified historical epoch.

Instead, Foucault suggested that we approach modernity in terms of an attitude or *ethos*. The Greek word *ethos,* as Foucault uses it has a double meaning. First, it means something like what has commonly been called culture (at least in 20th century American anthropology). Secondly, *ethos* is also a matter of ethics, that is to say an attitude and practice of a mode of subjectivity. *Ethos* in this double sense then is ethics and culture blurred together.[13]

The innovation on Foucault's part, is effectively a proposal to think in a non-totalizing mode that allows for a multiplicity of attitudes. It is a call to free ourselves from the belief in totalizing systems (be it historical periods or cultures) without going so far as

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[11] My thanks to Paul Rabinow for his indispensable help in thinking through this essay. My discussion here of Foucault's "What Is Enlightenment" follows from multiple conversations between Rabinow and myself while co-teaching the essay in an upper-division undergraduate anthropology course. All mistakes remain my responsibility.

[12] Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," 309. The French original reads, "…je me demande si on ne peut pas envisager la modernité plutôt comme une attitude que comme une période de l'histoire. Par attitude, je veux dire un mode de relation à l'égard de l'actualité; un choix volontaire qui est fait par certains; enfin, une manière de penser et de sentir, une manière aussi d'agir et de se conduire qui, tout à la fois, marque une appartenance et se présente comme une tâche. Un peu, sans doute, comme ce que les Grecs appelaient un *êthos*. Par conséquent, plutôt que de vouloir distinguer la « période moderne » des époques « pré » ou « postmoderne », je crois qu'il vaudrait mieux chercher comment l'attitude de modernité, depuis qu'elle s'est formée, s'est trouvée en lutte avec des attitudes de « contre-modernité »."

[13] This definition of *Ethos* is adapted from the work of Paul Rabinow. For a more complete discussion see Rabinow and Stavrianakis, *Designs on the Contemporary Anthropological Tests*, 144.

to say that there are no connections whatsoever.[14] This is not deconstruction. Following Foucault, *ethos* suggests a mode of creating space in which a multiplicity of attitudes can coexist, neither preceding nor following one another.

At the time Foucault wrote, "What is Enlightenment," as well as much of subsequent scholarship, the default had been to oppose modernity with either the premodern or something called the postmodern. Foucault, however, points out that by recognizing modernity as an *ethos*, we no longer need to assume that postmodern or premodern are the only possible responses to modernity. In fact, Foucault seems to suggest that postmodern and premodern are both designations that fail to grasp modernity as it is.

As I have already noted, Christianity itself is most often described as an *epoch,* or at least as a set of features characteristic of an *epoch.* Scholars routinely speak of *early* Christianity, *patristic* Christianity, *primitive* Christianity, *Jewish* Christianity and the list continues *ad nauseam, et absurdum.*[15] While the dates continue to be contested, most scholars of New Testament and Early Christianity remain comfortable situating a historical entity called Christianity on a calendar, where it can be preceded by a more or less archaic Judaism, and eventually followed by an enigmatic Age of Enlightenment (*le Siècle des Lumières* or *Aufklärung*). In more recent discourse the claim that we are now in a *post-*Christian *epoch* has become rather commonplace. Within these *epochal* framing, scholars remain divided as to whether Christianity properly constitutes a sequel to Judaism, or if it was more of a rupture, or most recently, a mutation relative to the basic principles of Second Temple Jewish thought and practice.[16] Most scholars however remain confident that Christianity is not Judaism.

Scholars, particularly those specializing in New Testament and/or Early Christianity[17], continue to operate under the assumption that their field of inquiry is populated by discrete and known entities (even unified historical epochs). Depending on the particular scholar, these entities may have fuzzy boundaries, contested dates, and debatable content, but one gets the sense when reading the vast majority of the literature (both scholarly and popular) that it remains a given that these entities can nonetheless be placed on some variant of a family tree where one primary axis is always time. For example, the various arborescent and kinship metaphors within New Testament and Early Christianity studies are all dependent upon movement through time. But what is the relation of mother and daughter absent linear movement through time?

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[14] As I noted in the previous chapter, my initial assumption (following Frye) is that Matthew has some sort of unity. The assumed unity however is neither *arborescent* descent nor *epochal*, but *rhizomatic*.

[15] A somewhat analogous dynamic can be seen in the continuing attempts to navigate the nomenclature for Judaism. Is it Late Judaism or Early Judaism or Judaism of Late Antiquity?

[16] Here I have shamelessly poached Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," 39.

[17] As a point of clarification regarding the nomenclature used through this work. I am using the designations "New Testament" and "Early Christianity" to reference scholars and scholarly work that commonly self-identify as such. I do not find such designations to be helpful when referring to the literature of the Second Temple period (e.g. the Gospel of Matthew) and as such I will attempt to refrain from using them in reference to literature, beliefs, practices or people of the Second Temple period. Thus, these two phrases should be read only as references to modern and contemporary scholars and scholarship.

Taking my lead from Foucault's problematization of modernity, I propose that we begin crafting an *off-epochal* approach by envisaging Matthew's gospel as an attitude or *ethos,* rather than seeing it in terms of the opening of a new historical period. As we have seen in the opening chapter, regardless of motive, *epochal* framings of Matthew's gospel have continued to shackle it to an origins narrative that obscures more than it illuminates. So rather than *epoch*, I am curious as to what form a reading of Matthew might take were Matthew to be viewed as one Jewish *mode de relation* (mode of relation) among a multiplicity existing in the Second Temple period. As *un mode de relation* within, Matthew would be understood to be neither distinct from nor synonymous with the Second Temple period. Instead of deviation, breach, mutation, or departure, Matthew is a rhizomatic node *within* the Second Temple period.

In a reading, such as I am proposing, Matthew likewise cannot be said to have a Jewish background, which is effectively a transcendent axis protruding out from the plane. It is by removing the *epochal* framing that we collapse the transcendent back into a plane of immanence, thus rendering terms like emergence, Jewish soils, and Jewish matrixes nonsensical metaphors. Plainly speaking, the Gospel according to Matthew is Second Temple Jewish literature. No more and no less. The Second Temple period as a complex set of political, social, economic, national, and cultural events does constitute a necessary and privileged domain for any reading of Matthew, this however does not mean that Matthew must be either *for* or *against* Judaism or Jews.[18]

Again, as I discussed in my opening chapter, I am not suggesting that an *off-epochal* reading means that all notions of temporality need be abandoned. In saying that there is no unified historical *epoch* which may be labeled Christianity, early or otherwise, I am only rejecting a totalizing and homogeneous concept of time presupposed by such a framing.

2.1.2 *Haltung*

To continue fleshing out the mode of reading that I am here proposing, let me add one more term, this time borrowed from the work of Bertolt Brecht. In his short piece, "A Short Organum for the Theatre" (German original, "*Kleines Organon für das Theater*"), Brecht departs from traditional understandings of theatre to explore the possible forms a transformative theatre might take.[19] Brecht writes,

> We need a type of theatre which not only releases the feelings, insights and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which

[18] Here I am not suggesting that anti-Semitic readings of Matthew are of no consequence. Scholarship focusing on both the *Rezeptionsgeschichte* and *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Matthew offers many worthy cautions. These discussions however are outside the scope of my present reading and should be distinguished from the attitude that I am trying to render visible in my reading.

[19] Bertolt Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre," in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. John Willett (London: Methuen, 1964) ; German original "Kleines Organon Für Das Theater," in *Schriften Zum Theater: Über Eine Nicht-Aristotelische Dramatik* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1964). My thanks to one of my undergraduate students, Daniel G. Tutt for conversations on this piece.

> the action takes place, but employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help transform the field itself.[20]

Note here the double move in Brecht's comment. The transformative theater is both a release from within and a transformation of the field itself. Crucial to Brecht's concept of a transformative theatre is something he calls *die Haltung* (variously translated as stance, posture, style, or attitude). He asks,

> What is that productive attitude [*die produktive Haltung*] in face of nature and of society which we children of a scientific age would like to take up pleasurably in our theatre?[21]

Brecht's *Haltung* then, like Foucault's *un mode de relation,* is something that one chooses to take up. In the next section Brecht continues,

> The attitude [*Haltung*] is a critical one. Faced with a river, it consists in regulating the river; faced with a fruit tree, in spraying the fruit tree; faced with movement, in constructing vehicles and aeroplanes; faced with society, in turning society upside down.[22]

For Brecht, *Haltung* is both a critical response *to* and a generative action *for* on the part of the actor; simultaneously a release and transformation function that crucially operates from within the field. *Haltung* is not an external overlay or grid that one can apply to a field. Let us be clear, this is not a new hermeneutics.

It is the *Haltung* adopted, or taken up, by the actor that, for Brecht, marks a relation of belonging for the actor, while also presenting itself as the task proper to the actor.[23] The content and nature of both of these elements are contingent. *Haltung* is not a covert attempt to reintroduce essentialist categories into my inquiry via the stage. It is not the reintroduction of structure. *Haltung* involves position, but not in the sense of a point on a grid. It is position understood as attitude.

Haltung also involves time, but not the linear time of *epoch*. Scholars of religion have long noted that while history in mythology is understood to be sequential, the sequence refers not to unique events, but to the repetition of "model or pattern situations."[24] *Haltung* functions within a non-linear framing of temporality insofar as it renders visible the significance of a specific occasion, a *kairos* or turning point.[25] Via Brecht, the theatre gives us an embodied and spatial conceptualization of Foucault's *ethos.*

Thus building on both Foucault and Brecht, in the remainder of this chapter I will argue that *Haltung* offers one possibility for how we might undertake an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew. A Matthaean *Haltung* not only renders visible the significance of the *kairos* that was the advent of Jesus, but it also actively orients Matthew within a *movement-*

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[20] "A Short Organum for the Theatre," §35.

[21] Ibid., §21.

[22] Ibid., §22.

[23] This from Foucault's definition of an attitude. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," 39.

[24] Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature*, 56. See also *Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return, or, Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

[25] Rabinow and Stavrianakis, *Designs on the Contemporary Anthropological Tests*, 145. Rabinow and Stavrianakis cite Fredric Jameson, *Brecht on Method* (New York: Verso, 1998), 21-36.

space we are calling the Second Temple period in such a way as to be both productive and transformative. This *movement-space* is one in which not only is the inquiring subject, in our case Matthew, in motion, but the field of inquiry itself, the Second Temple period, being fluid or even gaseous is likewise in motion.[26] What this reading will show, is that for Matthew, the advent of Jesus indeed marks a *kairos,* or turning point, but it need not signify the opening of a new *epoch*. Rather than subsequent to, the *kairos* marked by Jesus signals the coexistence of another time (perhaps even the fragmentation of one existing temporality into temporalities plural) within the existing heterogenous assemblage of times we commonly call the Second Temple period.

2.2 The Second Temple Period

2.2.1 Essentialism

If, as I have discussed in the preceding chapter, in the first century of the common era there was no religion which might be properly called Judaism, how might we then describe the topological field into which Matthew might be situated for the purposes of this inquiry? In place of *Second Temple Judaism*, I have adopted two key phrases, *the Second Temple period* and *Second Temple Jewish literature* as a shorthand way of describing the heterogeneous assemblage in which the Gospel of Matthew may be rightly situated. [27] In adopting these phrases I do not mean to suggest that either describe discrete entities or unified historical epochs whose parameters, with sufficient scholarly diligence, may be clearly plotted and mapped.

On the contrary, essentialist debates over orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and normativity have repeatedly proven to be unfruitful due to the inability of such totalizing schemes to fully encompass the contextual and contingent nature of Second Temple Jewish identity and practice.[28] For example, common conceptions regarding the central importance of the Temple and its associated cult in Jerusalem during the Second Temple Period are in large part exaggerations. While having no physical temple of their own, the Qumran community seems to have nonetheless replaced the Temple with the community; calling itself the

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[26] Here following the discussion of Rabinow and Stavrianakis, Rabinow and Stavrianakis, "Movement Space: Putting Anthropological Theory, Concepts, and Cases to the Test," 404. I should note here that my position as an inquiring subject, here as a second-order observer, is likewise in motion.

[27] The Second Temple period may be thought of as beginning circa 516 BCE with the completion of a rebuilt temple following the destruction of the Jerusalem in 587/6BCE. Proposed dates for a terminus point vary from 70CE and the destruction of Herod's temple (itself a major upgrade to the earlier structure) by the Romans to 135CE and the complete expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem, which was renamed Aelia Capitolina, following the failed Bar-Kokhba uprising. I am inclined to adopt the later date of 135CE.

[28] Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 18, especially fn 48. For an important discussion of the scholarly topography relative to the study and definition of Second Temple Judaism since the 1970s see Boccaccini, esp 8-14.

'holies of holies' and 'the holy place'.[29] The authors of texts such as the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, 11*QTorah*, and the *Damascus Document* (CD) likewise rejected the legitimacy of the Second Temple.[30] In his first letter to the Corinthians, written more than a decade before the destruction of the Temple in 70CE, Paul emphatically reminds the Corinthian believers that they, not the physical structure in Jerusalem are "God's temple" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

As Fredriksen notes, "the vast majority of Jews in the Second Temple period had never gone on pilgrimage; thus – again, well before the year 70 – the vast majority of Jews had never sacrificed at all." We should also note that there were at least two other functioning Jewish temples (a third if the Samaritans are to be counted) in existence during the Second Temple period.[31] Multiple forms of Jewish practice existing and functioning in varied relationships to the Jerusalem temple and its cult were well-established long before Roman Legions set fire to Herod's temple in 70CE.

Furthermore, my use of the Second Temple period or Second Temple Jewish literature should not be taken as a claim to radical otherness or well-defined lines between Jewish practices and those of other groups in the Graeco-Roman world of the eastern Mediteranean during the first and second centuries on either side of the advent of Jesus. Such claims are simply unsustainable. Jewish self-definition in the late Second Temple period was modulated within a larger Graeco-Roman context. Jews of the Second Temple period not only shared an awareness of group identity with other peoples of the ancient Near East, but they also shared their strategies of establishing identity.[32] As Fredriksen notes, "In many ways, *except for their general demurral regarding public pagan cult* – Jews were *not* all that separate."[33] Jewish identity in the Second Temple period should not be treated as a discrete *sui generis* entitiy, but rather as a heterogenous assemblage of nuanced interactions within the larger Graeco-Roman world of antiquity.[34]

However limited and problematic the designation, that which I am calling the Second Temple period and/or Second Temple Jewish literature does seem to refer to a

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[29] Segal, 130.

[30] B.Z. Wacholder, "Ezekiel and Ezekielianism of Progenitors of Essenianism," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 191.

[31] There was a temple to YHWH located in Elephantine (upper Egypt) in the sixth century BCE. A Samaritan temple was built on Mount Gerizim circa 331 BCE, before being destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 129 BCE. Lastly, a temple was built in Leontopolis (district of Heliopolis), Egypt perhaps by Onias, who had fled Jerusalem during the Antiochian persecution (circa 167 BCE). See also See A.T. Kraabel, "The Roman Disapora: Six Questionable Assumptions," *JJS* 33 (1982); Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 119-29.

[32] See Erich S Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). See also Lieu, 17.

[33] Fredriksen, "How Later Contexts Affect Pauline Content, Or: Retrospect Is the Mother of Anachronism," 23. See also Lieu, 19; Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5-8, 109-39.

[34] Lieu, 19.

heterogeneous assemblage within the larger Greco-Roman world of antiquity that marked itself as other/different.[35] Group identity did exist in the ancient world. Greek and Jew were both designations that would have signaled difference in the Second Temple period, but that difference would have been more fluid and porous than static notions of identity pervasive in earlier scholarship would allow. So even as I frame the Second Temple period as a heterogeneous assemblage of over-lapping and intersecting problem-spaces bounded within time and space, we must keep in mind that any suggestion that the various political institutions, forms of knowledge, languages, text types, etc., that compose this assemblage might be summed up in a nice tidy package should be rejected.[36]

2.2.2 Torah as Shared Movement-space within the Second Temple period

In light of the above, one might be tempted to dispense with any attempt to speak of commonality, including the terms the Second Temple period and Second Temple Jewish literature. This however need not be the case unless one insists that such terms are taken as totalizing schema. In this present work, rather than attempting to speak of the Second Temple period as a unified or stable *arborescent* entity, I have instead chosen to adopt a Deleuzian rhizomatic paradigm in order to pursue an *off-epochal* reading of the Gospel. So rather than attempting to grasp the Second Temple period as some kind of totality, here I would like to focus on one shared movement-space within that assemblage, Torah. Such a distinction will hopefully provide me with enough traction for a critical inquiry without implying that my inquiry is the final word or even a final word.

This particular entry point (again one of multiple) into the Second Temple period that I have chosen to explore can be described in terms of textual phenomenon. As Judith Lieu has rightly noted, one key tactic by which Jewish identity and practice (re)produced itself was through text-making.[37] Having already disabused ourselves of essentialist tendencies, I do not now wish to suggest that Torah is an essential characteristic of well-mapped and discrete entity called the Second Temple period or Second Temple Jewish literature. I do maintain, however, that Torah did occupy a privileged position within this heterogeneous assemblage I am calling the Second Temple period.

In designating Torah as a shared-movement space I am not suggesting that all Jews of the Second Temple period had the same relation to it. On the contrary, Gabriele Boccaccini has argued that pre-Maccabean texts found at Qumran should be grouped as either "Zadokite" or "Enochic".[38] The former group containing the so-called biblical and apocryphal texts generally associated with the Temple cult in Jerusalem, while the latter reflects a collection of texts from what Boccaccini calls a non-conformist Enochic

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[35] Sandt, 82.

[36] Here again I rely upon Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," 43-44, for inspiration.

[37] Lieu, 27. See also Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*, vol. 45, Sather Classical Lectures (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 21, 32.

[38] Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 68. Boccaccini argues that this grouping would replace the traditional but more anachronistic designations of biblical, apocryphal, and pseudepigraphal.

tradition.[39] According to Boccaccini, the Enochic material ignored both the Mosaic Torah and the Jerusalem temple, preferring an alternative oral and literary tradition that goes back to the same ancient mythological milieu in which the traditions of the Zadokite literature find their own origins.[40]

The presence of both groups of literature at Qurman has led Boccaccini to conclude that the conflict between Zadokite and Enochic traditions, which reflect differing relationships *vis-à-vis* Torah, was still active at the beginning of the second century BCE and perhaps even later into the Second Temple period.[41] More about this will follow, but this example should prime our thinking in such a way as to more readily recognize the possibility for multiple forms of relation *vis-à-vis* Torah within the Second Temple period.

We should also be clear that this inquiry into Torah as a shared movement-space is not an origins question. As Foucault has rightly noted, the pursuit of the origin is "an attempt to capture the exact essence of things...directed to that which was already there.'"[42] Conkey similairly writes, "origins research is essentialism, promoting the definition of phenomena in terms of their putative essential features."[43] Our present inquiry is not an attempt to located its essence or its origin. The fact that in the Second Temple period, the Torah was already conceived of as being old suggests that our inquiry, like Matthew's own relation, is an attempt to grasp in the middle.[44]

In designating Torah as a shared movement-space I am referring to the multiple and various Jewish appeals within the Second Temple period to the scriptures of Israel as revelation that is also somehow authoritative.[45] Neusner's earlier attempt to define Judaism comes close to what I am here suggesting. He writes, "When, finally, a religious system appeals as an important part of its authoritative literature or canon to the Hebrew Scriptures of ancient Israel, or 'Old Testament,' we have a Judaism."[46] I differ from Neusner in that my designation, the repeated privileging of the scriptures of Israel as something that Second Temple Jews do, instead of an essentialist characteristic of Judaism. Furthermore,

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[39] Ibid., 71.

[40] Ibid., 75. See also the work of James C. VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for All Generations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); H.S. Kranvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988); Wacholder.

[41] Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism*, 78.

[42] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 78. Foucault essay offers an important discussion on the differences between genealogy and history. It is the latter, which dominates New Testament scholarship, that I hope to avoid in this present work.

[43] Ibid., Conkey, 113. Here is another point where my work can righty be seen as both taking up and extending the discussions found in Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*.

[44] Samuel Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 4.

[45] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, 21.

[46] Jacob Neusner, *Studying Classical Judaism: A Primer* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 59.

a shared movement-space does not mean an appeal by a religious system, but an engagement by all that is Jewish life in the Second Temple period. Within the Second Temple period, Torah as a shared movement-space is an expansive term that included what we would now call politics, religion, law, and ethics, albeit without making those anachronistic distinctions.

2.2.2.1 A Heritage for All Israel

תּוֹרָה צִוָּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב
(Deuteronomy 33:4)

Written mostly likely in the 5th or 6th century BCE, Deuteronomy recounts Moses' final blessing on Israel in the following fashion, "Moses charged us with the Torah, a heritage [for us], the congregation of Jacob" (Deut. 33:4)[47] As Moshe Greenberg has noted, מוֹרָשָׁה (heritage/possession) in Deuteronomy 33:4 is typically associated with territorial possession promised to the people of Israel (e.g. Exodus 6:8; Ezekiel 11:15; 25:4).[48] Deuteronomy 33:4 then, is an example from within the Torah itself that seems to imply that the Torah belongs to the whole people of Israel.

It is this very sense of Torah as a prized inheritance that the Psalmist revels in, when he declares,

(Psalm 119:111[49]) נָחַלְתִּי עֵדְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם כִּי־שְׂשׂוֹן לִבִּי הֵמָּה

This conceptualization of Torah as the heritage of all Israel is taken up again and again throughout the Second Temple period and beyond. In the *Bavli* we find the following,

> Rabbi Judah said in the name of Rav: Whoever withholds a teaching from a student is as if he robbed him of his heritage נחלה, as it is said "Moses commanded us a *torah*, an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob'; a heritage for all Israel from the time of creation. (*Sanh*. 91b.)[50]

Torah is not central to Judaism, but to a people, all Israel.

Unlike land, which is neither portable nor reproducible, or the Temple, which had its own set of accessibility issues, the Torah provided Jews of the Second Temple period, both those in Judea and in diaspora, a shared movement-space within which various stances, what I am calling *Haltungen,* could be taken up in a multiplicity of forms.

It's important here to make clear that Torah in this framing is not so much a thing as a space. Alan Segal has argued that Torah was, "the adhesive that held the Jews together, that fed and nurtured their loyalty to the notion of being Jewish, and provided them with the basis from which they inferred their own understandings of what God and man and events mean."[51] Segal's adhesive however is not the right word, as it implies too much

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[47] Translation that of Moshe Greenberg, "Three Conceptions of the Torah in Hebrew Scriptures," in *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 11, n. 1.

[48] Ibid., 11.

[49] "Your decrees are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart."

[50] Quoted in Greenberg, 11.

[51] Sandmel, 17.

thingness, but he is correct in identifying Torah as central to the positioning required of Jews in the Second Temple period.

For the Jews of the Second Temple period, Torah was not a passing fancy, but an eternal heritage, "the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures forever" (Baruch 4:1). Baruch is not alone in stressing the abiding importance of Torah. As Bruce Chilton aptly notes, the Torah according to the Isaiah Targum is, "the central means of Israel's approach to God and the secret of her communal identity."[52] Here I would clarify Chilton's observation by pointing out that the, "means" here should be understood as a pathway (a spatial image) not a set of rules or beliefs.

Even depictions of the messiah from Second Temple period are impacted by the privelaged position occupied by the Torah. Note the addition of Torah references in Targum Isaiah 9:5-6, when compared to the Masoretic version:

Targum Isaiah 9:5-6	*MT Isaiah 9:5-6*
The prophet said to the house of David	
that a boy has been born to us, a son has been given to us,	For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
and **he has received the Torah** upon himself **to keep it**.	authority rests upon his shoulders;
And his name has been called from before the One Who Causes Wonderful Counsel, God the Warrior, the Eternally Existing One, "The Messiah who will increase peace upon us in his days."	and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Much is the greatness **for the doers of the Torah**, and to those who keep peace, there is no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom,	His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.
to establish it and to build it in justice and in merit from now and forever.	He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.
This will be done **by the Memra** of the Lord of Hosts.	The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

A key qualification for the Davidic messiah in the Targum is his relationship to Torah.[53] The authority that rests upon the son of David in the MT has become the receiving, keeping, and doing of Torah in the Targum.

This importance of one's relationship *vis-à-vis* the Torah was not limited to Jews living in Palestine, but included Diaspora Jews as well.[54] For Philo (living in Alexandria, Egypt), the Patriarchs are true Jews because they had access to the true Torah, of which the

[52] Bruce D. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 99.

[53] Ibid., 88.

[54] E.g. see the discussion of Philo in Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), 72-73.

Mosaic version was merely a copy.[55] Thus, before the Torah existed as thing, it existed as a mode of relation whereby the Patriarchs could be deemed true Jews.

In the *Letter of Aristeas* (most likely originating in second-century BCE Alexandria), great effort is taken to show that the Jewish scriptures belong in any worthwhile library. According to the letter, the keeper of Egyptian King Ptolemy II's library, Demetrius of Phalerum, having already amassed over two hundred thousand books in the library, nonetheless informs the king that, "Information has reached me that the lawbooks of the Jews (τῶν Ἰουδαίων νόμιμα) are worth translation and inclusion in your royal library" (*Letter of Aristeas* 10).[56] The *Letter of Aristeas* is boasting not about the Jerusalem temple, but about the Torah. The king of Egypt is not encouraged to travel to Jerusalem in order to marvel at the temple, he is instead asked to fund an enterpreise whereby the Torah may be brought to him in order that a deficit in his library would be rectified.

According to the letter, the Egyptian king orders that a translation be made. Notice the account of the occasion of the reading of the translated version of the Torah for the king,

> All of the version was read by him, and he marveled profoundly at the genius of the lawgiver. He said to Demetrius, "How is it that after such great works were (originally) completed, none of the historians or poets took it upon himself to refer to them?" He said, "Because the legislation was holy and had come from God, and indeed, some of those who made the attempt were smitten by God, and refrained from their design." Moreover, he said that he had heard Theopompus declare that, just when he was about to quote in a misleading way some of the previously translated passages from the Law, he had a mental upset for more than thirty days; at its abatement, he besought God to make clear to him the cause of this occurrence. It was revealed to him in a dream that it was due to his meddlesome desire to disclose the things of God to common man, and then—he said—he ceased and so recovered. I have also received from Theodectus the tragic poet (the report) that when he was about to include in a play a passage from what is written in the Bible," he was afflicted with cataract of the eyes. He suspected that this was why the affliction had befallen him, so he besought God
> for many days and recovered. When the king had received, as I previously mentioned, Demetrius' account on these matters, he bowed and gave orders for

[55] Thus argues ibid., 8. who writes, "One could be a Jew, in a sense, by obeying the copy-law." While Goodenough sees this move as relegating the Mosaic Torah to something of a secondary status, "copy-law", I think the opposite may actually be revealed. The importance of keeping the Mosaic Torah has now become so central to the question of Jewishness in the Second Temple Period that some analog must be found if the Patriarchs are to be Jews in the same sense as Jews of the Second Temple period.

[56] "Letter of Aristeas," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 2: Expansions of the Old Testament and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Anchor Bible, 1985), 12.

great care to be taken of the books and for their hallowed preservation. (*Letter of Aristeas* 312-318)[57]

The Egyptian king is so impressed with the genius of the Jewish lawgiver that he marvels that none of the ancient poets have cited the Torah.[58] Even as it justifies the translation and dissimination of Torah throughout the diaspora, the *Letter of Aristeas* makes it clear that the translation of Torah is not a matter of entertainment or sport. The Torah must be accorded respect, even in translation.

What does Israel bring to the world? For Philo and the author of the *Letter of Aristeas,* the gift is the Torah, not the temple. This recentering of the world is no small thing. In many ways the Temple space has been replace by a Torah space. Throughout Second Temple Jewish literature, the repeated call is one of recalibration v*is-à-vis* Torah. This repositioning *vis-à-vis* the Torah is often linked with restoration and reconciliation with God. For example, the passage in Baruch (partially quoted above) describing the enduring nature of the law continues,

All who hold her fast will live,
and those who forsake her will die.
Turn, O Jacob, and take her;
walk toward the shining of her light. (Baruch 4:2),

Having identified wisdom with the book of the commandments of God, the writer then calls upon Jacob to turn (ἐπιστρέφω), and to take or grasp (ἐπιλαμβάνω) her, and to walk (διοδεύω) toward the shining of her light. The images here all imply movement in space.

The spatial conception of Torah in the Second Temple period is anticipated in the biblical texts themselves. Both 2 Chronicles 6 and 1 Kings 8 record accounts of Solomon's prayer dedicating the newly completed Temple. Notice the way that each account describes God's promise to David regarding his descendants:

2 Chronicles 6:16	1 Kings 8:25
רַק אִם יִשְׁמְרוּ	רַק אִם יִשְׁמְרוּ
בָּנֶיךָ אֶת דַּרְכָּם	בָּנֶיךָ אֶת דַּרְכָּם
לָלֶכֶת **בְּתוֹרָתִי**	לָלֶכֶת לְפָנַי
כַּאֲשֶׁר הָלַכְתָּ לְפָנָי	כַּאֲשֶׁר הָלַכְתָּ לְפָנָי

[57] Ibid., 33-43.

[58] It seems that the only reference in classical Greco-Roman literature to the Torah is that of Psuedo-Longinus who in his work *De Sublimitate,* refers to the Jewish lawgiver and then quotes some version Genesis 1:4, καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεσμοθέτης, οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνήρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τοῦ θείου δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐχώρησε κἀξέφηνεν, εὐθὺς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γράψας τῶν νόμων "εἶπεν ὁ θεός," φησί· τί; "γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο· γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγένετο." [So, too, the lawgiver of the Jews , no ordinary man, having formed a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, writes at the very beginning of his Laws: "God said"—what? 'let there be light,' and there was light, 'Let there be earth,' and there was earth."] Greek text and translation from Longinus, *On the Sublime*, trans. Donald A. Russell, vol. 199, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

if only your sons pay close attention to their way, **to walk in my Torah** as you have walked before me	if only your sons pay close attention to their way, **to walk before me** as you have walked before me

The image of walking before God in 1 Kings 8, has been transformed by the Chronicler into an image of walking *in* Torah. Both are spatial images, but the latter connotes not an adjacency (*before*), but a form of spatial interiority (*in*) with respect to the Torah.

This spatial sense of the Torah, in 2 Chronicles and seen throughout Second Temple Jewish literature, is easily obscured by *epochal* language. Gifted scholars, like Sandmel, are more apt to describe the Torah in the Second Temple period as a resource that for many had become, "the book to look things up in for answers to specific questions."[59] Here I think it's important to continue with our spatial metaphor. Sandmel's description of looking up things in the Torah (e.g. like an encyclopedia or dictionary) conveys a mode of relation that is too analytical and exterior. For Second Temple Jews, Torah offered more than answers as facts; instead, Torah functioned as orienting space.

Similarly, Segal writes, "all the sects of Judaism would have automatically searched for a scriptural grounding for any important event in the life of their community… In short, the reinterpretation of Scripture was normal for any group of the first century."[60] What this *epochally* framed image seems to miss is the way in which Second Temple Jewish literature doesn't just rest upon, but inhabits Torah as space. Conceptualizing Torah as a resource, as opposed to a space, effectively reduces Torah to an external object that can more easily be placed in a temporal sequence or even transcended.

These reductionist images are the very same images that New Testament scholars will deploy in an effort to distance Christian texts from their Jewish soil. An *epochal* framing can lead the most sensitve reader astray into transcendent readings of the Matthew that miss the deeply Jewish Torah-forming work unfolding right before them. Jews of the Second Temple period (including Christians) did not view the Torah as a resouce to be mined, depleted, and then abandoned. Torah as a shared heritage of all Israel is not a foundation upon which to stand and build, but a space in which to dwell. Dwelling in this space rightly necessitates an orientation to and reconfiguration of that space. This orientation is what I am calling a *Haltung.*

Returning briefly to Deuteronomy 33:4, the resonance between Deuteronomy's designation of Torah as מוֹרָשָׁה (heritage/possession) and the territorial associations of Exodus and Ezekiel reinforce the reading that I am here advocating. Torah is not a thing shared by Jews, but a shared space. And as the larger corpus of Second Temple Jewish literature makes clear, this Torah space is not a geographical location, but a movement-space that can be translated, reformed, and reconfigured. To be a Jew is not to own a thing called the Torah, but to inhabit/possess a space called Torah. This task of turning and reorienting oneself through an engagement with Torah (what I am calling a *Haltung*) is

[59] Sandmel, 10.

[60] Segal, 89.

found throughout the writings of the biblical prophets and in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period.[61]

Torah as shared movement-space in the Second Temple period is already in motion. Our entry requires the recognition of at least two dynamic interactions, mode and form already in play. While not dialectical–the interaction is not that of *thesis* and *anti-thesis* and there are no doubt other parameters in play–these two dynamics are nonetheless bound up together. Mode pushes on form and form forces recalibration in mode. Together, various moving ratios of these two dynamics result in a variety of fluid *Haltung*.

2.2.2.2 Multiplicity of Mode

First, as I have mentioned above, it's important to recognize there was no singular mode of relation *vis-à-vis* Torah that held universal status in the Second Temple period. Recognizing Torah as a shared *movement-space* within the Second Temple period should in no way be taken to mean that there would be a common mode of relation. In fact, we should expect, and do see, quite the contrary.[62] Torah was the heritage of all Israel, but the mode of relation that a Jew might assume with respect that heritage was both varied and contested. While the Torah may have been widely respected, it was not uniformly central to the various *Haltungen* taken up by Jews in the Second Temple period.[63]

This multiplicty of modes within the Second Temple period can be seen in the contrast between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. As Josephus writes,

> The Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the law of Moses, for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducean group, who hold that only those regulations should be considered valid which were written down, and that those which had been handed down by former generations need not be observed. (Antiquities 13.297)[64]

Borrowing an analogy from American jurisprudence, the Pharisees have been described as being "loose constructionists" of the Torah in constrast to the Sadducees were describes as having been "strict constructionists."[65] This description captures the significance of mode by rightly calling attention to the fact that the Pharisees and the Sadducees differ primarly

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[61] Fredriksen notes that this prophetic image of turning (in the LXX and NT: ἐπιστρέφω, *epistrepho*) is a well-established image in Second Temple Jewish literature (including both Paul and Acts 15) Fredriksen, "How Later Contexts Affect Pauline Content, Or: Retrospect Is the Mother of Anachronism," 37-38.

[62] Sandmel, 11.

[63] John J. Collins, "How Distinctive Was Enochic Judaism?," in *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls V-Vi*, ed. M. Bar-Asher and E. Tov (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2007), 32-33. See also Helge S. Kvanvig, "Enochic Judaism – a Judaism without the Torah and the Temple?," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009).

[64] All translations from Josephus, *Josephus in Nine Volumes*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927).

[65] Segal, 53.

in their orientation with respect to Torah, not because of what they believe or even how they use Torah.[66]

This important distinction provides an alternative way of thinking about the opposing opinions held by the Pharisees and Sadducees regarding various subjects. For example, one famous disagreement involves the immortality of the soul (the Pharisees affirming and the Sadducees denying). Explicitly recognizing that this conflict arises from differing stances relative to Torah forecloses any attempt to label either opinion as an essential characteristic of Judaism or of a particular Jewish sect.[67] It is a multiplicity of *Haltungen* that results in competing theological claims, not various competing theological claims which then produce sectarian groups.[68]

The Pharisiac claim to exclusive interpretation is part and parcel of their *Haltung*, a stance that included a claim that, "they were vested with the authority to decide the meaning of legislation." [69] This Pharisiac claim to authority is derived from their occupation of the Torah space. The significance of this particular mode of relation is demonstrated by Ellis Rivkin who persuasivley argues that the Pharisees are able to create

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[66] The scholarly default unfortunately seems to focus on usage not orientation. Thus, Sandmel contrasts *Josephus*, *IV Ezra*, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and Rabbinic writings as four examples of the varied uses of the scriptures by Jews. He remarks,

> The Antiquities of the Jews by Josephus uses the Bible in a historical bent, giving only relatively little attention to what we might call religion or theology. IV Ezra is preoccupied with the problem of God's justice, and of what is to happen at the end of time, this latter being revealed in a series of visions which utilize the language and content of Scripture in the exposition of what the future was to bring; neither past history nor the Laws of Moses enter directly into the purview of the book. The Wisdom of Solomon is a plea for the recognition of wisdom-revelation as a sure guide in avoiding the horrible trespass of idolatry and in the attainment of the rewards of well-being and immortality by their righteousness; it provides a review of history to illustrate the part that wisdom had played in the Israelite past. The Wisdom of Solomon lacks the concern for the future found in IV Ezra, and expresses little direct attention to the Laws of Moses. The Rabbinic literature focuses almost entirely on the Laws of Moses, and exhibits little or no concern for the future and very little direct attention to "wisdom" as this is found in the Wisdom of Solomon. (Ibid., 11.)

What Sandmel describes as varies "uses" of scripture, may be more properly conceptualized as various modes of relation. Josephus does not use the Bible in a historical bent, but his mode of relation to the scriptures is such that his inhabiting of the shared Torah space might be deemed historical. This distinction that I am making is not merely a semantic one, but as we shall see in my treatment of Matthew, the use of scripture is fundamentally a different practice than that of inhabiting scripture.

[67] Ibid., 53, 119.

[68] As I will discuss near the end of this chapter, it has become quite fashionable to organize Jews of the Second Temple period into sectarian groups. This impulse however is less than helpful in that it only reifies the later epochal and Christian categories. In some sense it is possible to identify different groupings of Jews in the Second Temple period, but the groups are not sortable by how they rank as set of shared essentialist concepts.

[69] Segal, 122.

a dynamic in which the text of Scripture is not authoritative in and of itself, but is dependent upon the authorative interpretation and application of the Pharisees.[70] By including every area of life within a Torah-form space, the Pharisees were able to fashion a form of life that while not explicity found in the Torah, neither did it "appear to differ from or contravene the Torah.[71]

Before moving on to the next section, it is important to note that the various modes taken up by Jews in the Second Temple period are themselve fluid. That is to say we should not take any of modes adopted at any particular time, or by a particular Jew or group of Jews, to be stable or enduring configurations. One example will demonstrate the point I am here making.

The *Books of Enoch* are a collection of works in the corpus of Second Temple Jewish literature that seem to have no use for or loyalty to the Mosiac Torah.[72] This indifferent *Haltung*, however seems to be difficult to maintain, especially following the Maccabean revolt. A compelling case can be made for seeing the same group of Jews producing both the earlier *Books of Enoch* and the later *Book of Jubilees*.[73] This is significant for our discussion, because even as *Jubilees* distances itself from the Jerusalem cult and the Mosaic Torah, it reflects a shift or transformation in orientation *vis-à-vis* Torah when compared to the earlier *Books of Enoch*. Boccaccini writes,

> [Jubilees] presents itself as a book given to Moses, the chief revealer of the Zadokite tradition. The book of Jubilees gives us evidence that after the Maccabean crisis, the Enochians, or at least some Enochians, now considered the Mosaic revelation as no longer a competitive revelation to pass over in silence, as Dream Visions did, but as a common heritage that could neither be ignored nor dismissed.[74]

A shift in mode then, does not necessitate a shift in identity. In other words, shifts and transformations within a rhizome result not in breaches or departures, but in reconfigurations and reoccupations. The various modes of relation *vis-à-vis* Torah in the Second Temple period were never a given but reflect contingent historical and cultural circumstances particular to differing locations within the rhizome.

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[70] Ellis Rivkin, *A Hidden Revolution* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978). Originally cited in Segal, 123.

[71] Ibid., 123.

[72] Boccaccini Gabriele, "From a Movement of Dissent to a Distinct Form of Judaism," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Boccaccini Gabriele and Ibba Giovanni (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 209.

[73] Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism*, 87, writes, "The book of Jubilees stems from the same priestly party that produced the books of Enoch." See also James C VanderKam, "Enoch Traditions in Jubilees and Other Second-Century Sources" (paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers, 1978), 1.229-51.

[74] Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism*, 88.

2.2.2.3 Multiplicity of Form

The second important thing to note concerning the designation of Torah as a shared *movement-space* within the Second Temple period, is the recognition that not only is there a multiplicty of shifting modes *vis-à-vis* Torah, but Torah as a space is itself continually being formed and reformed. While commonly ascribed to Moses, the Torah is constantly being produced and reproduced through the various *Haltungen* taken up by Jews in the Second Temple period. The multiplicty of mode discussed in the previous section is facilitated, and in some sense is only possible, because of the multiplity of form with respect to the Torah.

Torah as a shared *movement-space* does not imply the production or adoption of a stable, fixed, standard, or universal text form within the Second Temple period. At the risk of sounding hyper-vigilant, this is not an attempt at tracing the origins of the Torah. There is no original Torah for us to recover.[75] Our present inquiry is one which attempts to grasp Torah in the middle, as it were, as an already formed and still being formed series of flows. The Torah never was a static entity that could be fully enclosed within or contained, it was always a space that could only be inhabited. Throughout the Second Temple Period, both the mode of relation to, and the form of the Torah are in motion. It is this double-motion that precludes any essentialist attempts at origins narration, rendering them doomed from the start.

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[75] The question of an original Torah continues to be an ongoing scholarly debate with significant ramifications for the academy. For example, at present the Society for Biblical Literature is sponsoring the publication of *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition* (HBCE), a new eclectic version of the Hebrew Bible (the project was formerly known as the *Oxford Hebrew Bible*). According to editor in chief, Ronald Hendel, "The HBCE text will not reproduce a single manuscript (as is the case with the other critical editions, BHQ and HUBP), but will approximate the manuscript that was the latest common ancestor of all the extant manuscripts. This 'earliest inferable text' is called the archetype. This is not identical to the original text (however one defines this elusive term), but is the earliest recoverable text of a particular book."(Ronald Hendel, "A New Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible," in *Religion Today*, ed. Paul Flesher (2014).) The problem, as noted by Emmanuel Tov, is the belief in *an original text* by the editors of the HBCE project. Thus Emmanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Third (Revised and Expanded) ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 364, writes, "the editors of the *OHB* believe that there *was* an original text (or in some cases two), since otherwise they would not have reconstructed such an entity. I should therefore counter that now more than ever it seems to me that there never was an "archetype" or "original text" of most Scripture books." For a more detailed discussion of Tov's analysis of the HBCE see Emmanuel Tov, "Eclectic Text Editions of Hebrew Scripture," in *'Go out and Study the Land' (Judges 18:2): Archaeological, Historical and Textual Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel* ed. Aren Maeir, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Emmanuel Tov, "New Editions of the Hebrew Scriptures: A Response," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 3, no. 4 (2014); also H.G.M. Williamson, "Do We Need a New Bible? Reflections on the Proposed Oxford Hebrew Bible," *Biblica* 90 (2009). For a detailed introduction, including responses to criticism of the project, see Ronald Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Michael Holmes, vol. 10, Text-Critical Studies (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016).

The common *epochal* narration regarding the formation of what will become the versions of the Torah found in the Second Temple period goes something like this. The most active of all biblical periods with respect to the composition of the Torah are the 6th-5th centuries before the advent of Jesus. During this time, the Torah, itself a composite work, the mashup of multiple sources and traditions is in process of being compiled/composed.[76] In addition to the Pentatuech, the prophets and writings are collected and edited. The first stage of the process culminates with the Chronicler, who reworks earlier material found the books of Samuel and Kings (also including material from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah) in order to present a more favorable picture of the Davidic dynasty and the temple cult in Jerusalem.

Soon after the formation of the Torah, various versions emerge and the text begins changing over time. These changes are grouped into text types and families so that their shared ancestry and common descent may be mapped accordingly. Along the way, some works are added and others are dropped, creating multiple collections of scripture. Different groupings are "accepted" by different groups of Jews such that eventually as person can be identified and categorized according to their canon of scripture.

While popular for some time, in recent decades it has become undeniably clear that the story is much more complicated that this summary suggests. Rather than the scriptures ever being a product with a beginning and final (sometimes called the original) form, the composition process seems to be unbounded.[77] The scriptures of Israel it seems, were far more rhizomatic than arborescent. As Deleuze and Guattari note,

> Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology. There is no ideology and never has been. All we talk about are multiplicities, lines, strata and segmentarities, lines of flight and intensities, machinic assemblages and their various types, bodies without organs and their construction and selection, the plane of consistency, and in each case the units of measure.[78]

What were once viewed as translations in time, must now be viewed in terms of multiplicity of form in space.[79] The scriptures of Israel, including the Law of Moses, were in constantly motion, folded and re-folded, into a multiplicity of hetergeneous assemblages by Jews of the Second Temple period. This rewriting, remembering and forgetting of scripture was a common practice in the Second Temple period.[80]

This is not a matter of semantic preference. To call these various forms translations, both obsures the heterogenous nature of the Second Temple period and reifies traditional *epochal* framings. It's too easy to read translation, as implying a 1:1 linear movement through time. The differences between the Hebrew Daniel and the Greek Daniel are more than linguistic, but include content and form. The Targumim are not just translations, but Aramaic forms of the Torah that likewise reflect the bending and reconfiguration of space

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[76] For a concise discussion about the formation of the Hebrew Bible, especially the Pentateuch, see Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: HarperOne, 1997).

[77] See the already noted work of Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. and "New Editions of the Hebrew Scriptures: A Response."

[78] Deleuze and Guattari, 4.

[79] For an introduction to the Septuagint see Silva Moisés and H. Jobes Karen, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

[80] Lieu, 75.

and time. [81] The fact that the earliest followers of Jesus adopt the LXX as their primary form of their scriptures has manifold conseqences for the mode of relation that is also adopted and ultimately on the form of the various *Haltungen* reflected in the texts of the New Testament.[82]

It is a misake of epic proportions to assume that mapping the dates of ink meeting parchment coresponds to a progression through time. As Daniel Boyarin has rightly, even if controversially noted, the New Testament texts sometimes contain, "the most ancient of all Israelite-Jewish ideas."[83] Creating arborescent lines of descent for various concepts by the noting the dates of their appearances in the textual record can be misleading in that unpalatable concepts are routinely forced beneath the surface, only to remerge at much later dates when conditions are more amendable.[84] Torah-forming processes, including those of folding and refolding, uplifting and subduction, require a certain geological sensibility on the part of textual scholars.

Tension between the various forms of Torah is evident in Second Temple literature. Jewish authors such as those composing the already mentioned *Letter of Aristeas* actively promoted the Septuagint form of the Torah as being no less authoritative than as the Hebrew original.[85] Such a case need not be made if Torah-forming was an uncontested process. In an excellent work, *Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation,* Naomi Seidman traces the shifting battles that take place within the space created by the various forms of the Septuagint as its fortunes waxed and waned.[86]

My designation of Torah as a privileged *movement-space*, does not imply that Torah can be treated as an independent or sealed entity, easily excised from the larger assemblage I am calling the Second Temple period. The multiplicity of form given to the Torah within the Second Temple period is a pointed reminder that even as this inquiry attempts to explore the possible forms of *Haltung* that were taken up in response to Torah, the *that* to which the *Haltungen* are oriented, is itself unstable.

Further evidence of instability in the form of Torah, including its porous boundaries, can be seen in the conceptual slippage between Torah and *brith* (covenant) that

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[81] For an introduction to the *Targumim* see Paul V. M. Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011); also Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher, *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin Mcnamara*, vol. 230 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996);D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context*, vol. 166 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

[82] See Müller Mogens, *The First Bible of the Church : A Plea for the Septuagint*, vol. 206, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

[83] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, 7. Boyarin further writes, "The theology of the Gospels, far from being a radical innovation within Israelite religious tradition, is a highly conservative return to the vey most ancient moments within that tradition, moments that had been largely suppressed in the meantime–but not entirely." Ibid., 47.

[84] An observation often made by Yair Zakovitch.

[85] Lieu, 39.

[86] Seidman Naomi, *Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation*, $25.00 ed., vol. (0) (University Of Chicago Press, 2006).

regularly occurs in the Second Temple period. Alan Segal identified *covenant* as the conceptual archetype for the ancient Israelites.[87] He writes that, "The various Israelite groups and classes from the period of the Babylonian exile to the time of Jesus interpreted the events of their history in terms of the covenantal root metaphor... Israelite history is mythical in the further sense that it sees the past as a paradigm for the present. Past events are consciously used as liturgical models for the covenantal meaning of human destiny."[88] While Segal was writing from within an *epochal* framework I don't think his comments necessarily require such a framing. The modern perception of time as a homogenous, linear, and unrepeatable medium would have been foreign within Second Temple Judaism.[89]

The manner in which I am taking up Segal's concept of covenant as conceptual archetype differs from other totalizing or essentializing tendencies in Second Temple scholarship insofar as it must be understood as a positioning device that is constantly in motion.[90] Covenant as conceptual archetype is not a stable or fixed category, but a semiotic place-holder for the continued negotiation and re-negotiation of the multiplicity of stances we find in Second Temple Judaism.

It is the particular contours and form of *brith* as conceptual archetype that the various *Haltungen* seek to both delimit and shape. While they are by no means synonomous, in some sense it can be said that *brith* names an aspect of this process of inhabiting a Torah-formed space. Hence the fuzzy boundaries between *brith* and Torah. In fact, within the Second Temple period proper, Torah and *brith* seem to be virtually inseperable on some level. For example, not only is preeminence of the Mosaic Torah cemented during the Maccabean revolt, but law and covenant as depicted as going hand in hand,[91]

> Thus he burned with zeal for the law, just as Phinehas did against Zimri son of Salu. Then Mattathias cried out in the town with a loud voice, saying: "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!" (1 Maccabees 2:26-27)

Again, the point here is not to map out all the points of convergence between *brith* and Torah, such a task is beyond the scope of this work. I only wish to highlight the fact that even as we engage Torah as one particular movement-space in the Second Temple period we must keep in mind that the conceptual boundaries are porous and that there are other movement-spaces which are not only adjacent but overlapping.

It is also important that conceptual archetypes and *Haltungen* not be allowed to become totalizing, lest, in the words of Nietzsche, they be "drained of [their] sensuous force" resulting in "the construction of a pyramidal order according to castes and degrees, the creation of a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, and clearly marked

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[87] Segal, 3-4.

[88] Ibid., 12.

[89] E.g. see the work Eliade, especially chapter 4.

[90] It is important here to draw a distinction between Segal's use of root metaphor, which reflects an epochal mode of reading and my poaching of his conceptual archetype as an off-epochal framing device.

[91] Segal, 38. Also Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism*, 91.

boundaries."[92] This new world of laws is precisely what we wish to avoid and so our inquiry must proceed with great care to avoid re-inscribing the pyramidal order we wish to sidestep. Torah is not an essential category or pillar of Second Temple Judaism. Instead, Torah as shared *movement-space* offers us an *off-epochal* conceptualization of Torah. The double-motion of both inquiry and field being in flux, is reminsicent of contemporary descriptions of biological evolution, in which the continuosly shifting modes of relation seem to preclude any notion of straightforward linear development within the system.

2.3 Matthew as *Haltung*

Having thus sketched the general contours of a rhizomatic *off-epochal* approach to the Second Temple period in general, I shall now move to a closer examination of one work in particular work within that assemblege. Standing at the head of the canonical Christian New Testament, Matthew has always held a signature role in conceptualizations of the new Christian *epoch*. In the third century, the early church father Origen not only declared Matthew to be the first Gospel written, but also a text published, "for the converts from Judaism."[93] This present attempt at an *off-epochal* primed reading of Matthew most assuredly cuts against the grain.

This task of rendering visible an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew hinges on two questions, what is the relation of belonging proper to Matthew and as what task does it present itself?[94] These two questions reflect the doubt-movement that comprises the Matthaean *Haltung*. There is, admittedly, a certain slippage in the term due to an uncertainty as to whether a Matthaean *Haltung* indicates that Matthew *is* a *Haltung,* or that Matthew *has* a *Haltung.* As the following analysis will show, it's actually both.

2.3.1 Torah-Form Space

Taking up the first of our two questions, if Matthew is one Second Temple Jewish *Haltung* among many, what is the particular form given to Matthew's relation of belonging within this shared movement-space? The answer to this question is suggested in an observation made by Richard Hays, who writes, "Matthew's language and imagery are from start to finish soaked in Scripture; he constantly presupposes the social and symbolic world rendered by the stories, songs, prophecies, laws, and wisdom teachings of Israel's

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[92] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* (CreateSpace Publishing, 2012), 19-20.

[93] Origen, "The First Book of the Commentary on Matthew," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Volume 9*, ed. A. Cleveland Coxe, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1896), 412. While most scholars would agree that the former assertion is incorrect, the latter remains something of an unsettled question for many. Origen also famously claimed that Matthew had been originally written in Hebrew. This claim, while a perennial internet favorite, has failed to gain any real traction among scholars.

[94] Here recalling of course, the *mode of relation* articulated by Foucault and discussed at length in the opening of this chapter. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," 309.

sacred texts."[95] Hays' description of Matthew's gospel as being "soaked in Scripture" captures an image necessary to properly orienting this inquiry.

For Matthew's composition, Torah is not just a matter of content or a resource to be mined, but the gospel itself is Torah-formed. By this I mean to flip the default image, in which Matthew is envisioned as incorporating Torah into his work, such that we now envision Matthew's composition to be taking form *within* a Torah-formed space. It is through this Torah-form process that Matthew marks its relation of belonging within the Jewis literature of the Second Temple period.

This recognition necessitates a reframing in how we understand Matthew's use of the scriptures of Israel. For example, in spite of continued claims of atomized proof-texting by New Testament authors, as early as the 1950s, C.H. Dodd noted that the New Testament authors drew upon "whole contexts" from the Hebrew scriptures.[96] Not long after, Robert Gundry convincingly demonstrated that Dodd's analysis also held true for Matthew's references to the scriptures of Israel.[97] These two observations are important in jumpstarting the process of disabusing readers of the notion that Matthew's citation of the Torah may be reduced to a buffet like process, but they do not take us far enough.

What these two scholars, and most subsequent analysis, seem to miss is the directionality of the citations and allusions. The movement is not outward (*epochal*), but within (*Haltung*). Matthew doesn't draw upon the scriptures of Israel in some foundational sense that then facilitates a forward movement (*epochal*), but the citations and allusions are landmarks within the scriptures of Israel that function to define the space within which Matthew's gospel can exist. A Matthaean *Haltung* is not a hermenutical method that produces a new reading of scripture, but a dynamic stance within a fluid topological field.

Explanations "find things" in texts, interpretations are entries into texts. Matthew does not offer us an explanation of Torah, his *Haltung* is an interpretation.[98] As Lieu points out, "There is little to suggest that the Jesus movement was, in the person and circumstances of its founder, predicated upon the precise interpretation of the Jewish sacred literary texts."[99] The Matthaean *Haltung* renders visible the significance of an event, here the advent of Jesus, as it is experienced within a Torah-formed space. Or to formulate this in a slightly different fashion, the Matthaean *Haltung* renders visible an experience of Jesus within Torah.

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[95] Richard B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 109.

[96] C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Fontana Books, 1952), 132.

[97] Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden,: E. J. Brill, 1967), 208.

[98] Here I can't help but think of the modes in which interpretative dances are performed. It is a category confusion to ask what an interpretative dance is explaining. The dancer is entering into, not exegeting.

[99] Lieu, 36. following Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era : An Interpretation* (New York: Brill, 1997), 127 n. 40. See also Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 49-75.

As I have already noted above, we must keep in mind that even as the Matthaean *Haltung* (as well as those of other Second Temple Jewish compositions) takes form within a Torah-form space, that space is itself in motion. *Haltung* is not foundational in the sense that there must be a ground, but it is relational. Thus, the Torah-forming processes evident in Matthew's use of the scriptures of Israel, not only facilitate Matthew's positioning within a Torah-form space (*Haltung*), but they simultaneously form and reform that space.

A Matthaean *Haltung* is not an essentialist element; it is a participation in a shared process. By participating in this Torah-form process, Matthew marks its relation of belonging within the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. In the next two sections I will endeavor to more fully unpack the way in which this Torah-forming process of Matthew's *Haltung* functions in the composition of the gospel.

2.3.1.1 genesis

I begin at the beginning. The Torah-forming aspect of the Matthaean *Haltung* is visible in the opening words of Matthew's gospel, Βίβλος γενέσεως. . . (1:1). This careful word choice immediately evokes the Torah.[100] The word *genesis* (γένεσις) is used no less than ten times in the LXX version of Genesis and it is quite probable that by the time of Matthew's writing "Genesis" had been adopted within Greek-speaking Jewish communities as the formal title of the book.[101] The echo to Genesis is made all the more evident when we recall that the specific phrase Βίβλος γενέσεως in Matthew's opening line, Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Matthew 1:1), occurs in precisely two places in the entirety of the LXX. The first occurrence comes in Genesis 2:4 where we are given an account of the generations/origins of the heavens and the earth (ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς). The second occurence comes in Genesis 5:1, where we get an account of the generations/descendants of *anthropoi* (ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων).

A close look at these two instances of Βίβλος γενέσεως in the LXX reveals that the latter is a recapitulation of the first, not the second ocurrence in an *epochal* sequence. Genesis 2:4 is the introduction to an account of the creation of humans, Genesis 5:1-2 is an introduction to an account of the creation of humans. To these we now add a third iteration, Matthew's account of the creation of humans. Matthew's composition from its opening line, enters into the rhythms of Torah as it begins the process of Torah-forming a space within which Jesus can be properly positioned. If we note an *epochal* priming sensitizes one to time, then it may be said that an *off-epochal* priming sensitizes one to position and space.

Matthew's Torah-form process is further evidenced when in this same opening chapter we are told a second time of the *genesis* (γένεσις) of Jesus. [102] In Matthew 1:18, we

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[100] Hays, 110.

[101] Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 66, esp fn. 7.

[102] For support in translating γένεσις as genesis see ibid., 58. For an alternative see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 155, 98. France opts for *origin,* R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 26, 46.

read, Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν.[103] Not only do these two occurences suggest thematic echoes to Genesis, something commentators have long noted, but more subtly, the double-occurrence in Matthew seems to structurally mirror the double occurrence in Genesis. Recall that the second γένεσις account in Genesis recapitulates the first. The same can also be said for the two occurences in Matthew, but in a mirrored fashion. The first Matthaean occurrence in 1:1 introduces us to a genealogy of Jesus, the second Genesis occurrence in 5:4 introduces us to a genealogy of the *adam*. The second Mattaean occurrence in 1:18 introduces us to a narrative account of the genesis of Jesus, whereas the first Genesis occurrence in 2:4 introduces us to a narrative account of the genesis of the *adam*. This mirror arrangement suggests a spatial relation between Genesis and Matthew in a way that a prior model (*epochal*) does not.[104]

Further heightening the sense of familiarity between the opening chapter of Matthew and the opening book of the Torah, is the way that the two Matthaean references to *genesis* (γένεσις) bookend a highly symbolic genealogy. Immediately preceeding the second occurance of γένεσις in Matthew we find the following genealogical summary,

> So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations. (Matthew 1:17)

Contrary to the way that many modern folk read them, ancient genealogies rarely have anything to do with actual movement through time. Genealogies serve to establish an individual's identity, status, or even one's relation to a collective personality.[105]

Matthew's repeated use of fourteen to stucture the genealogy is another signal that temporality is not the driving factor in the genealogy. Matthew's use of fourteen more likely serves to link Jesus to David through the use of gematria (the numerical value of David's name according ancient Hebrew orthography was fourteen) than to create a historical timeline with Jesus as the terminus.[106] This repetition serves to open space as

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[103] Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way.

[104] One could argue that the sequential arrangement here in Matthew is merely a function of Matthew's narrative order. In describing Matthew's composition as a mirror image of the Genesis account I am merely noting an aspect of Matthew's composition that would create a sense of familiarity with readers of the scriptures of Israel. Taken by itself this observation cannot sustain much weight, but I would suggest that as one piece of a larger constellation we would do well to note it, as I have so done above. Yair Zakovitch has discussed the use of the mirror-image in Hebrew poetics at great length. See, Yair Zakovitch, "Mirror-Image Story — an Additional Criterion for the Evaluation of Characters in Biblical Narrative," *Tarbiz* 54, no. 2 (1985).

[105] For a discussion of the various purposes served by ancient genealogies see Brown, 65-66.

[106] Brown (ibid., 80, fn 38.) provides a good discussion of the case for seeing gematria as the catalyst for Matthew's repeated use of fourteen. Drawing on what he takes to be a rabbinic parallel (*Exod. Rab. 15:26)*, C. Kaplan, "Some NT Problems in the Light of the Rabbinics and the Pseudepigrapha, the Generation Schemes in Mt. 1:1-17, Lk. 3:24 Ff," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 87 (1930): 466-67, offers the interesting proposal that the number fourteen is half the cycle of the moon. Thus the Jesus is inserted into the waxing and waning cycles of the moon which reflect the rising and falling fortunes of the Israelites. In this scheme, Jesus like David, is seen as a

much or more so than it drives history. Matthew's genealogy does not serve as a launching pad into something new so much as it forms a space *within* which the γένεσις of Jesus the Christ takes place.[107]

The recapitulation function of the geneaology is made all the more evident when immediatly following the geneaology, we are again reminded of the γένεσις of Jesus the Christ, which returns us to the opening of the Torah.[108] The Matthaean genealogy functions to place Jesus within a people, a people who in the Second Temple period, are largely defined through their mode of relation to the shared movement-space of Torah. Bracketing the genealogy of Jesus within these two references to *genesis* (γένεσις) is a spatial Torah-forming strategy that makes room for Jesus.

Taken together, these various elements in Matthew's opening chapter reflect the *off-epochal* Torah-forming aspect of the Matthaean *Haltung*. In this process, temporal language is not deployed in a teleological mode, but in a mode of recapitulation and reorientation.[109] I want to be cautious about pushing my argument too far this early in the inquiry, but it seems clear to me that at minimum, my reading thus far already demonstrates that language and images typically taken up within an *epochal* framework to signal movement through time can also be read, and authentically so, in spatial terms, provided one begins with an *off-epochal* orientation to the text.

2.3.1.2 The Five-Fold

The same Torah-forming process evident in the opening chapter of Matthew is also visible on the larger landscape of the gospel as a whole. This Torah-forming process can be seen in a five-fold structural arrangement in Matthew that was first noted by J.C. Hawkins in 1889.[110] According to Hawkins's thesis, Matthew's gospel is structured around five discourses that all conclude with the nearly identical formula, Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. . . (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Hawkins's observation was most famoulsy adopted and then elaborated by the influential New Testament scholar B.W.

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full moon. Given that Jesus is not the first full moon there is likewise no indication within this scheme that he would be the last.

[107] Thus Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 82., "The genealogy puts the readers back into the world of the Bible."

[108] This pattern resembles the way in which the stories of Noah (Genesis 5-9) and Abraham (Genesis 11:10-32) are both preceded by genealogies. Brown, 66.

[109] Here I grant that the more common scholarly position is one, like that of Raymond Brown, ibid., 68-69., in which the genealogy functions to map out "the working out of God's plan of creation in a history of salvation." This conclusion however seems to me more the contingent result of an epochal approach and not one necessitated by the text itself. Another important work to consider is Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel: Use of Israel's History in Matthew 1: 1-4:11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). Kennedy's careful analysis of Matthew makes a very strong case for recapitulation as a dominant motif in Matthew.

[110] J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 163-64. It should be noted that Papias in the second century had already compared Matthew's five-fold structure to that of the Torah.

Bacon.[111] In Bacon's elaboration, each discourse was also prefaced with a narrative section to create a "book." The end result in Bacon's analysis was a Matthaean structure consisting of five books bracketed by an introduction and conclusion:

Introduction (chapters 1-2)
Book 1: narrative (chapters 3-7); discourse (chapters 5-7)
Book 2: narrative (chapters 8-9); discouse (chapter 10)
Book 3: narrative (chapters 11-2); discourse (chapter 13)
Book 4: narrative (chapters 14-17); discourse (chapter 18)
Book 5: narrative (chapters 19-23); discourse (chapters 24-25)
Conclusion (chapters 26-28)

This five-fold structure, both Hawkins' version and Bacon's elaboration, has not gone without challenge. Importantly, the chief criticisms involving this five-fold structure are critiques of the supposed unity of the narrative sections with the various discourses, or challenges to the significance accorded to the repeated formula at the end of each of the five major discourses.[112]

Critics of Bacon's position tend to focus on whether or not his highly developed articulation of the five-fold structure of Matthew can be sustained. For example, David Bauer writes, "If Matthew is to be seen as structured according to five books, it would seem necessary to discern clearly the elements that bind each of these sections together in terms both of form and content."[113] In other words, it is the significance and scope of the five-fold structure in Matthew that is contested, not the presence of a five-fold structure.[114]

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[111] B.W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930). Other scholars who have adopted some form of Hawkins' thesis include, W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 14-25; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (WB Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 10-11.; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), li. For a more recent discussion of this five-fold structure in Jewish literature see Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 30.

[112] Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 3.

[113] David Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 34.

[114] Evidence for this can be seen in a critique of B.W. Bacon (and those who have adopted his position) in ibid., 27-35. Interestingly, after his lengthy attempt at downplaying Bacon's claims regarding the significance of the five-fold structure to Matthew, Bauer concludes the section with the following,

> On a positive note, the alternating structural approach has indicated the phenomenon of large blocks of teaching material in Matthew and the existence of the repeated formula at 7.28; 11.1; 13.53; 19.1; 26.1. Even if these elements might not form the primary structural base of the Gospel, any investigation of Matthew's structure must deal with them.

Additionally, while Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 7-25. has noted a three-fold chronological division in Matthew, Craig Blomberg has noted that this is not incompatible with the five-fold thematic division proposed by Bacon. See Craig L Blomberg, *Matthew: The New American*

What is most important is Bacon's recognition that Torah was front and center in Matthew's composition. It is this stance that then influences Matthew's composition.[115] Matthew is not using Torah as an engineer would a blueprint, a mistake that perhaps Bacon himself was making, but one that does not necessarily follow from seeing the five-fold structure in Matthew as a product of Matthew's composition being Torah-formed.

We need not follow all of Bacon's claims, nor do we need to jettison the five-fold structural observation made by Hawkins and then developed by Bacon. What needs to be separated here is the well-established recognition of a five-fold structure in Matthew and subsequent *epochal* conclusions regarding the significance of said structure. Recognizing a five-fold structure in Matthew does not require that we also adopt Bacon's conclusion that through this five-fold structure Matthew was thus presenting Jesus as a new Moses bringing a new Torah. Bacon, as well as most of his critics, failed to consider any other purpose for this five-fold structure other than as replacement of the Torah. This lack of perception arguably due in no small part to their shared *epochal* priming.

This is unfortunate given that some of Bacon's work comes close to what I am suggesting. Bacon's continued emphasis on the continuity between the Torah of Moses and teachings of Jesus is not far from the recognition that this five-fold structure in Matthew could be signaling a Torah-forming process.[116] Bacon writes that Matthew had an, "unbounded reverence for the Law; consequently, he cannot conceive of any arrangement of "commandments to be observed" better than the Mosaic."[117] While this particular observation seems to have a nice ring to it, Bacon's *epochal* subtext ultimately prevails resulting in a work that must be described as supersessionist or even anti-Jewish (e.g. Bacon characterizes Matthew as, "the great apostolic refutation of the Jews").[118]

My thesis here is not to establish an exact 1:1 correspondence between a five-fold structure in Matthew and the Pentateuch, nor is it a new totalizing structure for Matthew. The Torah-forming aspect of the Matthaean *Haltung* is one that transforms the terrain of Matthew only insofar as to sufficiently sustain inhabitation. In this way, Matthew's five-fold discourse structure would have been sufficient to create a sense of familiarity among Matthew's readers. While this is undoubtedly a subjective criterion, it is also one that Matthew seems to have thought that he met.

It is in terms of familiarity that I second Hawkins' observation that Matthew's five-fold division resembles not only the five-fold division of the Pentateuch, but also the five-fold divisions in the *Psalms*, the *Megilloth*, *Ecclesiasticus*, the Maccabean history by Jason of Cyrene, the *Book of Enoch*, and the *Pirqe 'Aboth*.[119] Hawkins thus concludes, "it is hard to believe that it is by accident that we find in a writer with the Jewish affinities of Matthew

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Commentary (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1992), 24-25; and Donald Senior, *What Are They Saying About Matthew?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 26-27.

[115] Bacon, 82. points out that this five-fold structure is of Matthew's devising and not something he picks up from an earlier source, e.g. the *Logia* of Papias.

[116] This emphasis is noted by Bauer in Bauer, 29-30.

[117] Bacon, 81.

[118] Ibid., 65.

[119] Hawkins, 163-64.

the *five* times repeated formula about Jesus 'ending' His saying. "[120] Or, as Gibbs has rightly remarked, the five-fold structure of Matthew is, "too careful a construction to be other than a Pentateuchal allusion, even if nothing more."[121]

Matthew's initial audience would have most likely encountered the text as an oral performance within a soundscape populated by many five-fold Torah-formed compositions, and as such its five-fold structure could have evoked the Torah without requiring the necessary exactitude suggested by Bauer. Familiarity, not exact correspondence, is all that would be necessary for the success of a Torah-form process such as I am suggesting. As Joseph Conrad wrote, the task is, "above all to make you *see.*"[122] The task of rendering familiar is not synonomous with explanation. It seems to me that a significant limitation of many hermeneutical models is the implict desire or aim to explain. Thus, while I agree with Bacon's critics in that I do not think Matthew's composition is arranged *around* the five discourses, I do think that the five discourses function to create a Torah-form space *within* which Matthew can situate his gospel.

To summarize, conceptualizing Matthew's gospel as *Haltung* reintroduces space in the discussion. Reading with an *off-epochal* priming forces us to view Matthew in terms of space, not just time. For Matthew, space is Torah-formed space and it is this Torah-formed space that facilitates Matthew's relation of belonging within Second Temple Jewish literature.

2.3.2 Fulfillment

τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν
ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου
διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος[123]

Having mapped out the basic form given to Matthew's relation of belonging in the previous section, my analysis now pivots to take up the second question relative to the double-movement in the Matthaean *Haltung*. If the Matthaean *Haltung's* relation of belonging in the Second Temple period is marked by its Torah-forming processes, then the task as which it simultaneously presents itself, is one of inhabiting the Torah-formed space. Fulfillment has long been recognized to be a key Matthaean concept. While there is a consensus among commentators, that Matthew portrays Jesus as "fulfilling" the scriptures of Israel, there is no real agreement on what precisely fulfillment means in the gospel. The only element common to most explanations of Matthew's conception of πληρόω, is a persistent tendency to foreground temporality.

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[120] Ibid., 164. Also Keener, 30.

[121] Gibbs, 42, n. 3.

[122] In the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897), Joseph Conrad wrote: "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, above all, to make you see. That—and no more, and it is everything!" See Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, Norton Critical Edition ed. (New York: Norton, 1979), 145. Cited by Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature*, 70.

[123] "All this took place in order to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Thus, the repeated formulaic introduction to Matthew's famously so-called formula quotations.

It is my contention that the task of the Matthaean *Haltung*, the process of occupying the Torah-formed space, is what offers us not only a plausible, but a compelling description of Matthew's conception of *fulfillment* (πληρόω) in the first gospel.[124] It is this *off-epochal* priming–a priming that sets aside the near universal scholarly assumption that fulfillment necessitates the privileging of some form of temporality–that is key to answering the basic question of how Matthew might go about the task of filling his Torah-formed space.[125]

2.3.2.1 The Formula Quotations

I begin my discussion with one of the most distinctive features of Matthew's Gospel, his unique so-called "formula quotations."[126] These quotations are so named owing to the formulaic way in which Matthew introduces them into his narrative, usually some minor variant of the phrase, ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (in order to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet saying).

Scholarly debates surrounding these quotations are notoriously legion, in fact, scholars have yet to agree as to what exactly counts as a "formula quotation" or "fulfilment

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[124] This is the most common translation for the Greek verb πληρόω repeatedly appearing in Matthew. The verb occurs sixteen times in various forms in the first gospel: 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35, 48; 21:4; 23:32; 26:54, 56; 27:9. The primary meaning of the verb it should be noted is not fulfillment but "*to make full, to fill*" (see BDAG entry for πληρόω).

[125] It is my contention that it is precisely this assumption, an assumption that no doubt lies behind most if not all of the *Heilsgeschichte* schemes of the twentieth century, that needs to be interrogated. What I am here calling an off-epochal reading does not deny what Kirk calls a certain "diachronic, narrative dimension to Jesus' 'fulfilling' the law and prophets" but I am arguing that we resist the urge to allow this diachronic narrative dimension to dominate our reading. J.R. Daniel Kirk, "Conceptualising Fulfilment in Matthew," *Tyndale Bulletin* 59, no. 1 (2008): 91.

[126] Donald Senior, *The Lure of the Formula Quotations: Re-Assessing Matthew's Use of the Old Testament with the Passion Narrative as Test Case'*, ed. CM Tuckett, The Scriptures in the Gospels (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 89.

quotation" and thus how many there are remains a somewhat fluid number.[127] For the purposes of this present work, I have adopted the following list:[128]

- τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (1:22)
- ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (2:15)
- τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἰερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (2:17)
- ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν (2:23)
- ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἠσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (4:14)
- ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἠσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (8:17)
- ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἠσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (12:18)
- ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (13:35)
- τοῦτο δὲ γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (21:4)
- τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἰερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (27:9)

When placed next to each other, the formulaic structure binding these ten declarations together virtually leaps off the page.

In what remains a seminal work on Matthew's formula quotations, George M. Soares Prabhu observes that these quotations are,

> Introduced by striking fulfillment formulas, which expressly present the OT passages cited as prophecies that have been fulfilled in given events of the life of Jesus. These formulas are quite unlike anything found elsewhere in the New Testament, and introduce quotations which are also unusual… And where the other Gospel quotations are by and large Septuagintal in character, these fulfillment quotations of Mt have a characteristic 'mixed' text-type, which leans towards the Hebrew.[129]

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[127] For an in-depth examination of the text-forms, sources and structure of Matthew's formula quotations see Frans van Segbroeck, "Les Citations D'accomplissement Dans L'évangile Selon Saint Matthieu D'après Trois Ouvrages Récents," in *L'évangile Selon Matthieu: Rédaction Et Théologie*, ed. M. Didier, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1970), 107-30; George M. Soares Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew*, vol. 63, Analecta Biblica (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 18-26, 45-77; R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Downer Grove: InterVarsity, 1989), 166-81; Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew*, 23-37.;Senior, *What Are They Saying About Matthew?*, 51-61; *The Lure of the Formula Quotations: Re-Assessing Matthew's Use of the Old Testament with the Passion Narrative as Test Case'*, 89-103.; Richard Beaton, *Isaiah's Christ in Matthew's Gospel*, vol. 123, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14-3; Maarten J.J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 1-10; "Messianic Interpretation of Greek Old Testament Passages in Matthew's Fulfilment Quotations," in *The Septuagint and Messianism* ed. Michael A Knibb, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), 459-64.

[128] For a thorough discussion of the rationale for this particular list/grouping see Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 125-32.

[129] Prabhu, 63, 18-19.

Two elements of Prabhu's analysis above are particularly *apropos* for this present inquiry and will serve as a springboard for our discussion below. The first is Prabhu's claim that the formula quotations reflect the fulfillment of prophetic oracles from "the OT." While not explicit, the sense of Prabhu's claim is nonetheless one of temporal movement that originates in "the OT" and finds fulfillment in the life of Jesus.

The second, and arguably more fruitful claim, is Prabhu's recognition that the scriptural citations in Matthew's formula quotations do not follow the general practice of citing the LXX that is usually found in the synoptic gospels, rather they have, "a characteristic 'mixed' text type" that draws from both the Hebrew and Greek versions of the scriptures. As we shall shortly discuss, this conclusion provides further support for my claim in the previous section, that a key feature of the Torah-form nature of Matthew's composition is its malleability.

The basic problem with Prahbu's first claim is its *epochal* priming. This same priming is clearly evident in the lexical entry for πληρόω, from what is generally considered to be the authoritative lexicon for New Testament Greek (Bauer and Danker's, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, referred to hereafter as BDAG). In this lexical entry, an association is made between the formula quotations found in Matthew and a connotation of fulfillment as a predictive prophecy that has come to pass.[130] Consider the following from the fourth entry for πληρόω,

> 4. to bring to a designed end, *fulfill* a prophecy, an obligation, a promise, a law, a request, a purpose, a desire, a hope, a duty, a fate, a destiny, etc...
>
> a. of the fulfillment of divine predictions or promises. The word stands almost always in the passive *be fulfilled* . . . and refers mostly to the Tanach and its words: τοῦτο γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου (cp. 2 Ch 36:21) Mt 1:22; cp. 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9...(BDAG)[131]

Notice that the entry explicitly lists every one of the passages in our list of formula quotations as well as two additional passages that are not on our list.[132]

J.R. Daniel Kirk has succinctly summarized the problematic nature of the association made here in this entry as follows,

> The problem with the prophecy-or promise-fulfilment model is that a number of the OT texts cited by Matthew in these instances are neither prophecies nor promise; or, if they are, then they often had in view something quite different from a coming Messiah. For example, the following formula quotations, cited by BDAG, do not introduce messianic prophecy: 1:22 (virgin birth); 2:15 (son called out of

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[130] The problematic nature of this entry is discussed in Kirk, 79-80.

[131] The fourth entry in W.F. Bauer et al., eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 828-9. (BDAG).

[132] While the two passages listed in the BDAG entry do include the verb, πληρόω, they do not follow the formulaic structure of the other ten instances. Note, πῶς οὖν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ ὅτι οὕτως δεῖ γενέσθαι (26:54); τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν (26:56).

Egypt); 2:17 (Rachel weeping); 13:35 (opening mouth in parables); and 27:9 (thirty pieces of silver).[133]

Nonetheless, it is the linear-fulfilment paradigm evident in BDAG that continues to dominate most scholarly explanations of Matthew's concept of fulfilment. For example, according to Ulrich Luz, for Matthew, πληρόω begins with a historical Jesus event which is then interpreted, "as the fulfilment of predictions" made in the scripture.[134] For Luz, πληρόω is to be understood as a christological word, the means by which Matthew foregrounds Jesus' messianic fulfillment of scripture.[135] Similarly, R.T. France writes that in Matthew's gospel, πληρόω "denotes the coming into being of that to which the scripture pointed forward (whether by direct prediction or understood typologically)."[136] It can only be an inherent *epochal* priming that would prompt a sensitive reader like Hays to write, "Cumulatively, these [prooftext] passages appear to frame Israel's Scripture—particularly the prophetic material—as a *predictive* text pointing to events in the life of Jesus."[137]

Most scholars end up performing tortured philological acrobatic feats in order to explain away what is the obvious problem of an *epochal* priming with respect to Matthew's concept of fulfillment. Noting the forced nature of most efforts at reconciliation, some scholars have concluded that Matthew was either a fool or a knave – incapable of understanding or intentionally twisting – when it came to interpreting the scriptures of Israel.[138]

In response to the linear-predictive dominant view, Kirk points out that, "we find ourselves running aground on the notion that Jesus fulfills prophetic *predictions*" due to the simple fact that the passages references by Matthew often have nothing to do with prediction, messianic or otherwise. [139] As Kirk puts it, "Matthew's engagement with the OT does not trade on the currency of (messianic) prophecies coming to pass."[140] Kirk's recognition that the lexical entry found in BDAG does not line up with the sense of the texts being cited is not a claim that Matthew's use of scripture must be restricted to the authorial intent of either the authors of the Hebrew scriptures or the translators of the LXX. On the contrary, it is just the opposite.[141]

Here in my pushback against an *epochally* primed reading of Matthew, I want to be careful to avoid caricaturing New Testament scholarship. I am not suggesting that the

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[133] Kirk, 80.

[134] Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 126-27. Strecker argued that Matthew's use of the fulfillment quotations were an attempt to prove "the historical-biographical facticity" of the gospel's account of Jesus (cited by ibid., 130.).

[135] Ibid.

[136] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 182.

[137] Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 37.

[138] For example, see S. Vernon McCasland, "Matthew Twists the Scriptures," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80 (1961).

[139] Kirk, 86.

[140] Ibid., 87.

[141] So ibid., 84. who writes, "The intentions of the OT authors or the LXX translators cannot account for Matthew's vision of Jesus fulfilling the scriptures."

discipline at large has universally adopted a simplistic view of fulfillment in which there is a one-to-one linear correspondence between the prophets of Israel and the life of Jesus. Perhaps a bit optimistically, Raymond Brown wrote in 1993 that the "conception of prophecy as prediction of the distant future has disappeared from most serious scholarship today, and it is widely recognized that the NT 'fulfillment' of the OT involved much that the OT writers did not foresee at all."[142] Even earlier, C.H. Dodd had in the 1950s already observed that, "New Testament writers do not, in the main, treat the prophecies of the Old Testament as a kind of pious fortunetelling and seek to impress their readers with the exactness of correspondence between forecast and event."[143]

There is no uniform or universally agreed upon definition of fulfillment for Matthew's gospel (or that of the New Testament) within New Testament scholarship. That being said, even with the nuance and variation provided by Prabhu, Luz, Kirk, Brown, and Dodd, it remains the fact that most New Testament scholars, including all of the aforementioned scholars, continue to foreground temporality in their understandings of fulfillment in Matthew's gospel. The simplest explanation, that Matthew must not be conceptualizing fulfilment in a predictive way, seems to elude most. For most scholars, even sensitive and nuanced readers, Matthew's concept of fulfillment involves some form of prediction, either read *out of* or back *into* the past.

An approach to Matthew as *Haltung* primes my attempt at finding an *off-epochal* conceptualization of πληρόω such that temporality no longer dominates the reading. In such a reading of Matthew, πληρόω can now be seen as describing how Jesus' life/teaching 'fills' the Torah-form space shaped and created by Matthew's foregrounding of the law and the prophets. Kirk comes closest to what I am suggesting when he remarks, "The law and the prophets provide the true 'shape' of what it looks like to be Israel: they plot the past, present and future of the people of God."[144] While I concur with Kirk's description of the law and prophets providing shape, I must disagree with his second clause, which mistakenly insists on plotting his aforementioned spatial concept of πληρόω onto an epochal narrative timeline.

Let us return now to Prabhu's second, and more important observation, that *contra* the usual synoptic practice, the quotations in Matthew do not take the form found in the LXX but reflect a characteristic Matthaean mixed form. Thus, in a fractal-like way, the mixed text-type of Matthew's formula quotations, like the five-fold structure in the previous section, simultaneously participate in both a Torah-forming process as well as the inhabitation of that space. The double-movement of the Matthaean *Haltung* is present in Matthew's formula quotations.[145]

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[142] Brown, 146.

[143] Dodd, 127.

[144] Kirk, 91.

[145] Ulrich Luz has persuasively demonstrated that this unique formulaic structure is a construction of Matthew and not merely existing material taken over by Matthew (Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 157.) There is also widespread scholarly consensus that these references are purposely chosen and then applied to the life and teachings of Jesus by Matthew. See Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*; Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew, and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1968) ; Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies*

Perhaps the following observation by Raymond Brown in his introduction to the New Testament will help clarify this double-movement in the formula quotations. Brown writes,

> That Jesus is to be related to the Scriptures is a commonplace in early Christianity, but Matt has uniquely standardized the fulfillment of the prophetic word. In finding this fulfillment, Matt usually makes no attempt to interpret the larger contextual meaning of the cited OT passage; rather there is a concentration on the details where there is a resemblance to Jesus or the NT event.[146]

In his expected erudite fashion, Brown rightly identifies Matthew's task as one centering on resemblances between Jesus and the scriptures of Israel. Here is where an *off-epochal* reading with its emphasis on Torah-form space prompts an important twist on Brown's observation. Matthew is not merely focusing on resemblances, but also fashioning them through his creative mixed text-type citations.[147] Within an *epochal* framing, resemblances between Jesus and the scriptures of Israel function to create temporal trajectories (arborescent lines of descent plotting past, present and future). These trajectories result in a conceptualization of fulfillment within Matthew's gospel that is invariably understood to function in a linear-temporal, if not predictive, fashion. For example, even though he rejects an explicitly predictive interpretation, Brown nonetheless does insist that Matthew selects the formula citations in part because they, "fit the general theology of the unity of God's plan." This however is not our only possible reading option.

These resemblances between the scriptures of Israel and Jesus may also be thought of in *off-epochal* spatial terms (rhizomatic assemblages). As Deleuze and Guattari have discussed, movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization require neither teleological movement through time nor from one plane to another.[148] Adapting Prahbu's and Brown's observations, in creating/selecting the citations used in his formula quotations, Matthew not only creates a Torah-form space, but a series of resemblances between Jesus and the scriptures of Israel. Thus, in foregrounding the details of the cited passage (sometimes by modifying them), the resemblance functions to create a sense of Jesus being at home in the scriptures of Israel. To be at home in Torah is to fulfill Torah.

Contra most readings, of both the gospel at large, but more specifically the formula quotations in particular, in which Matthew is described as inserting scripture into his narrative in order to create as sense of temporal continuity/movement, fulfillment as the task of Matthew's *Haltung,* inverts this common perspective. That is to say, by means of these citations Matthew actually inserts Jesus into a Torah-formed space. This is no small difference, the former *epochal* reading foregrounds Jesus while relegating the scriptures of Israel to the role of supporting cast. The latter *off-epochal* reading, foregrounds Torah, and

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in Matthew.. Together then, both the form of the reference and the references themselves are the compositional creation of Matthew and not inherited from elsewhere.

[146] Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1 $49.95 ed., vol. (0) (Doubleday, 1997), 207-08.

[147] Here I readily acknowledge that I am taking resemblance in a direction likely neither intended nor anticipated by Brown.

[148] See their discussion in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "10,000 B.C.: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

thereby contextualizes Jesus not scripture. This is the unrealized insight within Brown's observation that Matthew is not seeking to contextualize the meaning of the larger scriptural passages that he cites in his formula quotations.

Matthew's formula quotations and their use of πληρόω are neither crude cut-and-paste compositions, nor are they some kind of *epochal* creating innovation. Let me again quote Kirk, who comes closest to what I am suggesting, when he writes,

> Matthew reads the verse from Isaiah as providing shape for the story of Jesus: not only the virgin birth but also the presence of God with his people ('Immanuel') come about again with Jesus. Only now, both elements are different. The meanings of both words are changed, literalized, Matthew would say fulfilled, as Jesus the substance fills up the scriptures of Israel in a substantially new and unexpected way, which yet retains the shape of the original plot.[149]

Kirk's implicit move towards spatial language is encouraging, albeit incomplete. The space in the scriptures that Kirk describes as being filled up by Jesus is not one that Matthew simply reads in Isaiah. The mixed text-type of the citations along with the transformation of words, do not function to retain the shape of some "original plot," but they both create resemblances (as Torah-form processes) and position Matthew's Jesus (fulfillment) in such a way as to be at home within the scriptures of Israel.

Here it is important to remind ourselves that fulfillment is not the filling of empty space that Matthew has somehow found in the scriptures of Israel. Without the Torah-forming aspect of Matthew's *Haltung,* there would be no fillable-space for the life of Jesus to inhabit, the other half of the *Haltung's* double-movement. The act of reading is what opens space that can then be filled. Reading *off-epochally,* is not a hunting for gaps, it is a predatory act of gapping.

Kirks description of fulfillment, while rightly abandoning the notion of prediction, is nonetheless structured in terms of a narrative moving though time. In suggesting that Matthew's composition retains the shape of some original plot are we not reintroducing the *epochal* notion of transcendence into our discussion?

A similar danger seems to be lurking in Richard Hays' recent work on figuration. Hays, following the insights of Erich Auerbach[150], has raised a number of interesting issues, but I am not sure that figural adequately describes a reading that fully inhabits the Torah such as we see in Matthew.[151] Matthew as I understand him, is not attempting to

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[149] Kirk, 91.

[150] See Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), and *Time, History, and Literature: Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach*, ed. James I. Porter, trans. Jane O. Newman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[151] Hays.; also his earlier works Hays. and Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Two other important works following the work of Auerbach and taking up the question of figural readings of the scriptures of Israel include Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) and John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

move beyond the Torah, a move that seems to me to be implicit in figural readings, but to fully embed Jesus in what I have termed a Torah-formed space.[152]

2.3.2.2 Matthew 5:17

In addition to the so-called formula quotations discussed above, Matthew uniquely records a striking declaration by Jesus in 5:17,

> Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι (5:17).

This is one of four Matthaean occurrences of πληρόω that appear in contexts other than citations of the scriptures of Israel relative to events in the life of Jesus.[153] Only in Matthew's gospel do we read that Jesus has come not to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them.[154] Notice the larger passage in which 5:17 is contextualized,

> Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill (πληρῶσαι). For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (5:17-19).

On its face, the most straightforward reading of this passage must be one that affirms the enduring validity and applicability of the law and prophets. However, as with Matthew's formula quotations, the default scholarly interpretation for this occurrence of πληρόω involves a foregrounding of temporality. The following quote from R.T. Frances' commentary on the gospel illustrates the inversion commonly resulting in such temporal foregrounding,

> The fulfillment of the law... sets out by means of a series of graphic examples the sort of obedience to the will of God to which the OT law could only begin to point the way.[155]

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[152] My suspicion seems to be confirmed by telltale statements like, "there is a certain obvious sense in which the Gospels *arose out of* the religious and cultural matrix of the Old Testament." (Hays, 5. italics mine.) Here, even as Hays explicitly rejects Marcionite readings, the old arborescent framing creeps back into the language.

[153] Recall that there are sixteen occurrences of πληρόω in Matthew. Twelve occurrences reference the scriptures of Israel relative to events in the life of Jesus. Ten of these are the so-called formulaic occurrences (listed by Luz). The two additional occurrences in 26:54, 56 also refer to the scriptures of Israel, but do not follow the same formulaic structure. In addition to these twelve there are four more instances, all of which are noted in this present discussion of fulfillment.

[154] Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus?: A Symbolic Reading*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 76-77.

[155] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 178ff. France's treatment of the larger passage (5:17-20) is a fine example of the contortions New Testament scholars continue to undertake in order to avoid the simplest and most straightforward reading of Matthew, that being one in which the commandments of the Torah are still in full effect. France repeatedly dismisses suggestions that Matthew intended his audience to keep the Torah (including food laws) as being "out of

So rather than affirming Torah, as France's comment makes evident, an *epochal* priming turns the *prima facia* meaning of Jesus' declaration on its head.

France's commentary we should note is not from the early or even late 20th century but it was published in 2007. Continuing with his line of reasoning and in an effort to "make coherent sense of the text as it stands," France paraphrases Jesus' declaration in 5:17 to read, "Far from wanting to set aside the law and the prophets, it is my role to bring into being that to which they have pointed forward, to carry them into a new era of fulfillment."[156] Here we see all the old triumphalist and supersessionist *epochal* tropes on full display.

The scandal of Jesus' declaration in Matthew 5:17 however, is precisely the reason so quickly dismissed by France. An *off-epochal* reading of the passage clearly reveals that Jesus' teachings in Matthew affects no breach, no new era, no new Torah. David Daube has argued that behind the "fulfill" of 5:17 we should hear the Hebrew *qiyyem* which he takes to mean "uphold." Thus,

> One nuance of *qiyyem* which seems to play a part in this passage is 'to uphold Scripture' in the technical sense of 'to show that the text is in agreement with your teaching'. This is a frequent application of the verb, based on the idea that the test of any teaching you propound is whether, proceeding from it, you can give full effect to, 'uphold', every word of the Law.[157]

This important observation serves to locate Jesus' declaration within a Torah-formed space. Jesus is not repudiating or replacing Torah.

Further evidence of this can be seen in the unique emphasis on Torah throughout Matthew's gospel that belies any attempt to frame Matthew in terms of *epoch*.[158] Consider the following verses from Matthew that are either entirely unique to Matthew or have references to the Torah that do not appear in the corresponding synoptic parallels:[159]

5:17-18 Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; **I have come not to abolish but to fulfill**. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. [cf. Luke 16:17, which does not include any mention of Jesus coming to fulfill the law]

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step with the overall thrust of NT Christianity" or running "counter to the rest of the NT" (ibid., 179-80.).

[156] Ibid., 180, 83. According to France, this understanding of "fulfilling the law" in Matthew has gained considerable traction among New Testament scholars in recent decades, "over against the older view of a *legally conservative Matthew*" (ibid., 183-84., italic emphasis mine).

[157] David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: The Athlone Press, 1956), 61.

[158] I have consciously decided to translate Matthaean occurrences of νόμος as Torah given that Matthew's usage reflects the Hebrew תּוֹרָה more than a post-Reformation understandings of νόμος as Law.

[159] The following are noted by Craig A. Evans, "Targumizing Tendencies in Matthean Redaction," in *When Judaism and Christianity Began: Essays in Honor of Anthony J. Saldarini*, ed. A.J. Avery-Peck, Daniel J. Harrington, and J. Neusner, Jsjsup (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 103-4.

7:12 In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is **the law and the prophets**. [cf. Luke 6:31, which does not include "the law and the prophets"]

12:5 Or have you not read **in the law** (οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ) that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? [cf. Mark 2:25; Luke 6:3, which read οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε and οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἀνέγνωτε respectively, but make no mention of reading "in the law" (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ).]

22:36 Teacher, which commandment **in the law** (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ) is the greatest? [cf. Mark 12:28, which does not include "in the law"]

22:40 **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**. [cf. Mark 12:29-31, in which there is no equivalent statement]

23:23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected **the weightier matters of the law** (τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου): justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. [cp. Luke 11:42, which does not include a reference to the law]

As these verses make abundantly clear, Matthew repeatedly modifies the synoptic tradition to foreground the ongoing prominence and relevance of Torah. Whatever is meant by his declaration in 5:17, Matthew's Jesus has in no way moved beyond Torah

This by no means suggests that Jesus was teaching a legalistic or literal observance of Torah, given that non-literal interpretations of Torah had long been accepted by Jews in Jesus' day.[160] The scholarship of E.P. Sanders and others have incontrovertibly demonstrated that drawing contrasts between Jesus' teachings and rigid fundamentalist Jewish reading of scripture supposedly normative in the Second Temple period is more a product of Protestant or anti-Jewish ideology than historical reality.[161]

An additional piece of support for the consistency of my *off-epochal* spatial connotation for πληρόω within Matthew's gospel may be indirectly found in Matthew's unique use of ἀνομία (lawlessness), a word not found in Mark or Luke, to describe those who do not follow Jesus' teachings. Matthew records the four instances of Jesus pronouncing judgment on ἀνομία (lawlessness),

- καὶ τότε ὁμολογήσω αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὐδέποτε ἔγνων ὑμᾶς ἀποχωρεῖτε ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν. (Matthew 7:23)[162]
- ἀποστελεῖ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ, καὶ συλλέξουσιν ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν (Matthew 13:41)[163]
- οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνεσθε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δίκαιοι, ἔσωθεν δέ ἐστε μεστοὶ ὑποκρίσεως καὶ ἀνομίας. (Matthew 23:28)[164]

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[160] Hare, 270.

[161] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. see also Sanders. See also Hays, 122.

[162] Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you *lawless ones*.' (translation mine)

[163] "The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of offense and all *the lawless*." (translation mine; the NRSV says *sin* and *evildoers*)

[164] "So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and *lawlessness*."

- καὶ διὰ τὸ πληθυνθῆναι τὴν ἀνομίαν ψυγήσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν πολλῶν. (Matthew 24:12)[165]

Contextually, in each of these passages, ἀνομία refers to a general state of separation that ultimately results in eschatological judgement and not to a singular offense/action. Spatial dislocation as an aspect of judgement figures in all four instances.

Let us consider the third occurrence of ἀνομία (23:28), which is particularly *apropos* given its proximity to the second of Matthew's four non-citation uses of πληρόω. Located in the sixth of a series of seven polemical *woes* directed at his opponents (importantly not only the Pharisees, but the scribes or those trained in the Torah)[166], here Jesus inveighs that his opponents are *full* (μεστο)[167] of hypocrisy and ἀνομίας, both of which are antithetical to completion/wholeness. Notice the spatial image of emptiness and the contrast of outside/inside employed in this woe,

> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (23:27-28)

Jesus' indictment here goes much deeper than the common Christian conclusion that Jesus is rebuking legalistic Jews for an outward show of works when he is concerned with the inner spiritual condition of the heart. On the contrary, Jesus is here equating emptiness with lawlessness not legalism.

In the next and final woe, Jesus goes on to identify his opponents as the children of those who murdered the prophets (υἱοί ἐστε τῶν φονευσάντων τοὺς προφήτας). Then in anticipation of his own treatment at their hands, Jesus continues the spatial imagery by ironically commanding them to, "Fill up [the imperative form of πληρόω] the measure of your fathers."[168] Jesus is commanding them to fully inhabit the space, the Greek word μέτρον referring to the measure of capacity, created by the actions of their fathers. Like Matthew's earlier description of Jesus' filling up of Torah through his own actions, here the process of filling up (πληρόω) the *measure* (τὸ μέτρον) of their fathers is likewise accomplished through action.[169]

Returning now to chapter 5, in an interesting move, Matthew follows his declaration that Jesus has come to fulfill the Torah with a series of six commands that take some variant of the general form, Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη... ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν (You have

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[165] "And because of the increase of *lawlessness*, the love of many will grow cold."

[166] For a concise discussion of the scribes (γραμματεῖς) in the Second Temple period see Luz, *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary*, 3, 139-41.

[167] But not *filled* (πληρόω).

[168] καὶ ὑμεῖς πληρώσατε τὸ μέτρον τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν (23:32). This imperative declaration does not appear in the parallel but shorter Lukan woe found in Luke 11:47-48. On the ironic imperative here see Luz, *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary*, 3, 132-33, esp fn. 49. Some have argued for a more explicit temporal movement to the imperative by claiming that the Scribes and Pharisees are here being instructed to *finish* what their fathers began. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 306. My reading here need not to be seen in conflict with the analysis of Davies and Allsion insofar as an off-epochal character of Matthew's Haltung does not foreclose temporality. My reading merely inverts the normal framing of space within time to one of time within space. There is still space for time within an off-epochal reading.

[169] Gibbs, 42.

heard that it was said... but I say to you). In each of these commands, Jesus first quotes from the scriptures of Israel before offering his own gloss on the text in such a way as to redirect or even transform the text.

While it is tempting, especially in light of 5:17-20, to take this series of pronoucements as being directed against Jesus' opponents (e.g. faulty interpretations of Torah), Jesus' statements here seem to be directed towards the Torah itself.[170] In his pronoucements, Jesus does not quote the interpretations of his opponents, thus we must take the verb Ἠκούσατε to simply mean something like, "you have hear the following said in the scriptures."[171]

If Jesus is in fact referencing the Torah directly and not merely rebuting faulty interpretations of Torah, are we to conclude that the pronouncements in 5:21-48 are a demonstration of the promised fulfillment in 5:17-20? Given that they immediately follow his claim that he has come to fulfill the law and prophets, such a conclusion seems reasonable. What sort of fulfillment is rendered visible in these pronouncements?

Once again, even as commentators debate this question, they nonetheless agree in their *epochal* framing of the question. Luz concludes, "the antitheses do not interpret the Bible; they extend and surpass it."[172] And while Davies and Allison rightly reject the label of *antitheses*, they go on to conclude, "[Jesus'] demands surpass those of the Torah without contradicting the Torah," and "the words of 5.21-48 go beyond OT teaching."[173] Contra Luz, and Davies and Allison, France argues that, "the dialogue partner is not the OT law as such but the OT law as currently (and sometimes misleadingly) understood and practiced," but then goes on to insist that Jesus' antitheses nonetheless, "[go] beyond [the] OT law."[174] As I noted in my opening chapter, *epochal* primings do not always result in explicitly anti-Jewish readings, but even in sensitive or sympathetic readings the end result nontheless becomes a distancing function. Within these *epochal* readings, Jesus' instructions invariably become evidence for a Jesus who is a, "new Moses who teaches a new Torah for the New Israel."[175]

The question still remains, how do we reconcile the affirmation in verses 17-20 with the six pronouncements that seemingly modify or change Torah? Here a brief excursus involving *the Book of Jubilees* should prove helpful in illuminating an alternative mode of relation that is possible in Matthew's conception of fulfillment as expressed in these six pronouncements. Let me be clear, in the following discussion, I am not suggesting that Matthew and *the Book of Jubilees* share a common genre or that they are somehow analogous. I am merely suggesting that the particular stance taken up by the *Book of*

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[170] Thus argues Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 1:228-32; also Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:506-09. For a discussion of the counter-claim (e.g. Jesus is arguing against particular interpretation of Torah) see France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 196.

[171] Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 1:230; also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 195.

[172] Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 1:230.

[173] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:501, 65.

[174] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 196-97.

[175] Scot McKnight, "Matthew as 'Gospel'," in *Jesus, Matthew's Gospel and Early Christianity*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtnre, Joel Willits, and Richard A. Burridge, Library of New Testament Studies (New York: T&T Clark International, 2011), 71, see also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 11-14, 182-84.; Hagner, 105-06.

Jubilees with respect to the Torah can provide corroboration that my *off-epochal* reading of Matthew is not only possible, but plausible within the larger corpus of Second Temple Jewish literature.

The *Book of Jubilees* belongs to a group of Second Temple Jewish texts (other notable examples include 1 and 2 Chronicles, the Temple Scroll, and 1 Esdras) sometimes referred to as *rewritten Bible* or *rewritten scripture*.[176] Setting aside, for the moment, the debate as to whether or not the terms denote a literary genre or a textual strategy, these texts involve the rewriting of earlier texts in such a way that the earlier text remains clearly present.[177] The *Book of Jubilees,* in particular, is a retelling of Israel's history as found in Genesis and the earlier portions of Exodus involving the life of Moses.

The *Book of Jubilees* opens by introducing itself as an account of all that Moses received from God during the forty days he spent on Mount Sinai. This account includes the creation narratives and concludes with God's instructions to Moses on Sinai regarding the keeping of the Sabbath. Throughout this retelling of history, *the Book of Jubilees* expands, condenses, omits, and adds to, thus transforming the accounts found in Genesis and Exodus. This is significant when we consider that while there was no fixed or universal canon of scripture in the Second Temple Period, writings from the period nonetheless consistently invoked the Mosaic Torah as authoritative.[178] So while the boundaries for what counted as sacred scripture were fuzzy and varied among various groups, the Mosaic Torah was part of the shared heritage.

As counter-intuitive as it may initially seem, scholars such as Philip Alexander have persuasively demonstrated that, "these texts [e.g. *the Book of Jubilees*] are not intended to replace, or to supersede the Bible."[179] It seems that *the Book of Jubilees* co-existed alongside the texts that it "rewrote." Such a coexistence lends itself to the spatial metaphors we have been employing throughout this inquiry. In an important discussion of t*he Book of Jubilees* as rewritten scripture, Hindy Najman notes,

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[176] The term "Rewritten Bible" was first introduced by Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1961). For a thorough discussion of the subject of Rewritten Bible, including the continued validity of the term itself, see József Zsengellér, ed. *Rewritten Bible after Fifty Years: Texts, Terms, or Techniques? A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2014). For an introduction to *Jubilees* see C. Endres John, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees* (Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1987).

[177] I am personally more inclined to follow the formulation of Rewritten Bible as a textual strategy as found in George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. M.E. Stone (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 89 f.

[178] Hindy Najman, "Interpretation as Primordial Writing: Jubilees and Its Authority Conferring Strategies," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 30, no. 4 (1999): 379.

[179] Philip S. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, Ssf.*, ed. D. Carson and H.G.M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 116. I do find it telling that an *epochal* framing doesn't seem nearly as ingrained in scholarly investigations of "non-Christian texts" from the Second Temple period as it is in scholarship regarding New Testament texts.

> It seems highly unlikely that proponents of Jubilees would have sought to replace the Pentateuch... Instead, we should understand rewritten Bible in terms of the problems of interpretation and authority which were so profoundly intertwined during the Second Temple period... Texts that "rewrote the Bible," like Jubilees, responded to the demand for interpretation and the demand for a demonstration of authority... Thus they appropriated the authority of Mosaic Torah for their own interpretations, without removing the authority from existing texts.[180]

This mode of relation seen in *the Book of Jubilees,* in which temporal co-existence not supersession is observed, is not a one-off occurrence. Najman goes on to note that both the heavenly tablets in *the Book of Jubilees* and the rabbinic Oral Torah are presented as conveying the divinely sanctioned interpretation of the Mosaic Torah, but neither are thought to replace or supersede the Torah of Moses.[181]

In his landmark study of *Jubilees*, García Martínez makes a similar connection between *the Book of Jubilees* and that of the later rabbinic tradition. He writes,

> ...in more than half of the cases in *Jubilees* where the expression [Heavenly Tablets] is used, it indicates that the [Heavenly Tablets] function in the same way as the Oral Torah (tôrah shebe'al) in Rabbinic Judaism. The [Heavenly Tablets] constitute a hermeneutical recourse which permits the presentation of the "correct" interpretation of the Law, adapting it to the changing situations of life.[182]

In other words, in seeking to meet the demands of their day, Jews of the Second Temple period continuously *re-formed* the Torah. This practice continued into later rabbinic writings. A malleable, *re-formable* Torah is not something that needs to be superseded.

Gabriele Boccaccini concludes, "nothing in the text of Jubilees suggests that the Mosaic Torah should be abandoned or disregarded... the author of Jubilees wanted neither to strengthen the Pentateuch nor to replace it."[183] It is hard to overstate the significance of this observation for the present work. I have not been able to find a single reference in New Testament scholarship where the possibility of an indifferent relation to the Torah is suggested. I would suggest that this is primarily due to inevitable conflict engendered by the pervasive *epochal* priming of New Testament scholarship in general.

Within the shared movement-space of Torah, various webs of authority-relations form in a non-linear fashion. The configuration of authority in this space is not foundational (arborescent descent) but proximate (rhizomatic). There is no need to speak of authority moving forwards or backwards in the intertwined and reciprocal notion of authority within rewritten scripture.[184] The authority of the texts being *rewritten*, here the Torah, does not

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[180] Najman, 408. See also Jon D. Levenson, "The Sources of Torah: Psalm 119 and the Modes of Revelation in Second Temple Judaism," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

[181] Najman, 410.

[182] F Garcia Martínez, "The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, ed. Matthias Albani, Jörg Frey, and Armin Lange, Texte Und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 259.

[183] Gabriele, 195-96.

[184] This claim is arguably anticipated in the work of George J. Brooke, "Between Authority and Canon: The Significance of Reworking the Bible for Understanding the Canonical

serve to move or carry its authority forward in time, rather it functions to authoritatively position of the author or speaker, here Jubilees but in our case Jesus, within a Torah-formed space.

My claim here is not that all things are equal, I am merely pointing out that there are alternative ways to establish authority other than the default replace or transcend modes typically used to describe Matthew. Even as the author of *Jubilees* seems content to stand alongside the Torah of Moses, the text nonetheless claims an equivalent or higher authority than that of the Mosaic Torah insofar as the revelation of the heavenly tablets is said to precede the Sinaitic revelation.[185] *Jubilees* however is not seeking a return to some distant past. On the contrary, the antiquity of the heavenly tablets functions to situate the *Book of Jubilees* alongside the Mosaic Torah.

The point of this brief excursus is not to suggest that Matthew is like the Book of Jubilees. What it does demonstrate though, is the possibility for other modes of relation in the series pronouncements in Matthew 5 between Jesus and the Torah. In surveying the topological field that is Second Temple Jewish literature the *off-epochal* mode of relation that I have proposed for Matthew becomes not only possible, but plausible and even probable.

Furthermore, it would be an *epochal* mistake to read the six pronouncements in Matthew 5 as Jesus advocating a return to some original interpretation of the law.[186] Matthew is not attempting his own version of an origins narration. What we see here is the very same attitude expressed in Jubilees. Jesus here makes no attempt to either undermine or strengthen the Torah. Since we haven't left, notions of supersession are vacuous. While admittedly something of a mind-bender, if Torah is the space within which Matthew is positioned, then the idea that Matthew likewise desired to neither strengthen nor undermine the Torah is quite plausible.

This is a question of *Haltung*, it's an orientation (a set of interpretative practices, authorizing heirarchies, etc) towards Torah. It is a pervasive, yet artificial, *epochal* impulse that insists on drawing a binary distinction between reading and writing when considering the relationship between the scriptures of Israel and the Gospel according to Matthew. Matthew's Jesus need not be abrogating the Mosaic law even as he seems to be rewriting

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Process," in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran: Proceedings of a Joint Symposium by the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature and the Hebrew University Institute for Advanced Studies Research Group on Qumran 15–17 January 2002*, ed. E.G. Chazon, D. Dimant, and R.A. Clemens, Stdj (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 96; and "Hypertextuality and the "Parabiblical" Dead Sea Scrolls," in *In the Second Degree. Paratextual Literature in Ancient near Eastern and Ancient Mediterranean Culture and Its Reflections in Medieval Literature*, ed. P.S. Alexander, A. Lange, and R.J. Pillinger (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 51 f. My analysis differs insofar as the question of temporal movement is not in play

[185] Najman, 394. Najman also notes that a similar claim seems to be found in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, where Jesus is said to precede both Aaron the priest and Moses the lawgiver (ibid., fn. 31).

[186] Matthew 19:3-9 is another instance where it is often claimed that Jesus is advocating a return to some original meaning of the Torah. E.g. David E Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 63.

it. The notion that Jesus advances his teaching through the negation of Torah may be vestige of reformation inspired Protestant readings of scripture, but it seems totally foreign to the shared movement-space of Torah as found in Second Temple Jewish literature.

Unlike Jubilees, Jesus' teaching in Matthew is not presented as the result of an angelic revelation. This then raises the question of Jesus' authority to make such changes. The answer to this question will be more fully explored in the next chapter but here it should be sufficient to note that this concept of a malleable or even fluid interpretation of Torah that we see in Matthew does not necessarily imply the possession of some divine perogative on the part of Jesus. In fact, on some level it doesn't even require divine sanction. This possibility is made quite clear in a well-known passage from the Bavli,

> On that day R. Eliezer brought forward every imaginable argument, but they did not accept them. Said he to them: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let this carob-tree prove it!' Thereupon the carob-tree was torn a hundred cubits out of its place – others affirm four hundred cubits. 'No proof can be brought from a carob-tree,' they retorted. Again he said to them: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let the stream of water prove it!' Whereupon the stream of water flowed backwards – 'No proof can be brought from a stream of water,' they rejoined. Again he urged: 'If halachah agrees with me, let the walls of the schoolhouse prove it,' whereupon the walls inclined to fall. But R. Joshua rebuked them saying: 'When scholars are engaged in a halachic dispute, what have ye to interfere?' Hence they did not fall, in honor of R. Joshua, nor did they resume the upright, in honor of R. Eliezer; and they are still standing thus inclined. Again he said to them: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let it be proved from Heaven!' Whereupon a Heavenly Voice (bat kol) cried out: 'Why do ye dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the halachah agrees with him!' But R. Joshua arose and exclaimed: 'It is not in heaven.' What did he mean by this? – Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai. After the majority must one incline. R. Nathan met Elijah and asked him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do in that hour? - He laughed [with joy], he replied, saying, 'My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me.' (Balvi, tractate Baba Metzia 59b)[187]

In a similar fashion, Matthew's Jesus does not rely on a heavenly voice to authenticate his pronouncements. The rabbinic notion that authorial intent is not the deciding factor (e.g. the Torah is not in heaven) fits well with Matthew own rhetorical framing. As the above passage from the Bavli suggests, changing the Torah does not imply that it is being superseded or that it is somehow deficient. Nothing in Matthew suggests that Jesus' modifications of *what they have heard* should be taken as an indictment of some supposed deficiency or inadequacy on the part of the Torah. The divine origins of the Torah do not result in fixed meaning. Meaning is constantly shifting, not just as a matter of

[187] I am not here disregarding the basic rule of Philology 101 that a later text cannot be made to interpret an earlier one, but I do wish to demonstrate that the concepts found in Matthew's line of reasoning are also found in later rabbinic writings and thus it would be safe to conclude that they existed in the larger Jewish conceptual repertoire of the Second Temple period. In other words, the reading I am suggesting here is one that fits well within the world other the Second Temple Period and thus cannot be dismissed as a modern interpolation.

interpretation, but also as a result of the Torah-forming processes taking place within the Second Temple period.

We already established in the previous section, that Matthew's use of πληρόω within the formula quotations functions to locate the life of Jesus inside a Torah-formed space. There Matthew's task was to show that events from the life of Jesus were at home in a Torah-formed space. Here we have seen that this understanding of fulfillment is not limited to the formula quotations, but Matthew's use of πληρόω in 5:17 functions in a similar fashion.[188] Not only that, but within our *off-epochal* reading of Matthew, the binary distinction between arguing against the Torah or specific interpretations of Torah collapses. It is both and neither. As a Second Temple Jewish *Haltung*, Matthew's gospel is both forming and filling. That is to say, the text being rewritten is not effaced by this process, but it is transformed.[189] Contra Paul, Matthew's Jesus is according to the γράμμα of the Torah, not the πνεῦμα.[190]

2.3.2.3 Contested Space

This inquiry into an *off-epochal* conceptualization of fulfillment would be incomplete without acknowledging that the task of occupation is a contested one. The Torah was never a vacant space merely awaiting of arrival of a new tenant. Even as the Torah-forming aspect of Matthew's *Haltung* seeks to make space for Jesus, the filling of that space is not without contest. The contested aspect of fulfillment can be clearly seen just following Jesus' declaration in 5:17 that he had come to fulfill the law and the prophets. In verse 20, Matthew records the following declaration,

> Λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.[191]

Our examination of Jesus' declaration begins in the tortured efforts of translators to render the verse into English. Even though the Greek is rather straightforward, the comparative expression (περισσεύειν...πλεῖον) seems to give most translators no small amount of

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[188] For a contrasting opinion, see Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 1:217-19, who argues that any attempt to connect Matthew's use of πληρόω in the formula quotations to that in 5:17 is "a diversion that leads to a dead end."

[189] Here it is important to refrain from suggesting that rewritten scripture involves an original text. There is no reason to suppose a singular exemplar for the various texts which were being rewritten. The evidence actually suggests the contrary.

[190] Contra France, who reflecting the all too common Christian *epochal* reading of Matthew, translates 5:20 as, "But do not imagine that simply keeping all those rules will bring salvation. For I tell you truly: it is only those who righteousness of life goes far beyond the old policy of literal rulekeeping which the scribes and Pharisees represent who will prove to be God's true people in this era of fulfillment," before later insisting, "It is in the promotion of this standard of perfection, going far beyond the literal requirements of the OT laws, that Jesus 'fulfills' it." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 191, 229. I personally cannot imagine a worse translation of Matthew 5:20 than that offered by France.

[191] For I tell you, if your righteousness *is not present in more abundance* than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (translation and italics mine)

difficulty. Ulrich Luz offers the following translational note in his commentary regarding the Greek comparative phrase,

> The comparative "shall exceed. . . more" (περισσεύειν. . . πλεῖον) is strange; μᾶλλον would be a more common word. πλεῖον suggests a quantitative interpretation: if your righteousness is not present in a measurably higher quantity than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.[192]

Even though Luz finds the choice of to be πλεῖον to be "strange," he nonetheless offers an unambiguous translation of the phrase in the latter part of his note. The Greek here is clear, the comparative phrase (περισσεύειν...πλεῖον) should be understood in a qualitative sense, just as Luz suggests in his note.

Luz's conclusion regarding the qualitative sense of the comparative is further confirmed when we also examine all five occurrences of περισσεύω in Matthew,

- For I tell you, unless your righteousness *exceeds* (περισσεύσῃ) that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (5:20)
- For to those who have, more will be given, and they *will have an abundance* (περισσευθήσεται); but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. (13:12)
- And all ate and were filled; and they took up *what was left over* (περισσεῦον) of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. (14:20)
- And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces *left over* (περισσεῦον), seven baskets full. (15:37)
- For to all those who have, more will be given, and *they will have an abundance* (περισσευθήσεται); but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. (25:29)

In all four of the additional occurrences of περισσεύω, Matthew uses some form of the verb to explicitly describe quantitative states of abundance or lack. The presence of πλεῖον in 5:20 is not sufficient reason to modify the basic spatial sense of περισσεύω. To the contrary, as Luz has noted above, it should reinforce the spatial/quantitative sense.

Comparing Luz's translational note with the translation he offers in his commentary proper, reveals an interesting shift. In contrast to his own textual note, in the opening section of his commentary on Matthew 5:17-20, Luz renders the Greek phrase περισσεύειν...πλεῖον into English as, "if your righteousness does not *far exceed* that of the scribes and Pharisees..." (italics mine). This translation by Luz, a translation we should note that employs vocabulary that obscures the quantitative sense of the comparison and shifts the register into a qualitative one, is not the exception. The NRSV provides the following translation for the verse,

> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:20)

Most English versions likewise translate the comparative phrase in such a way as to shift the register of the command from the quantitative to the qualitative: *exceeds* (KJV, ASV, NRSV, ESV), *surpasses* (NASB, NIV), *is better* (NLT), *goes beyond* (NET).

If the effect of this shift isn't evident, the primary entries in the Oxford English Dictionary for both of the most common English words should make the point. The OED offers the following in its first entry for *exceed*, "To pass out of (boundaries, etc.); to

[192] Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 1:221.

transcend the limits of; to proceed beyond (a specified point)..."[193] The definition given for *surpass,* is much the same, "To pass over, go beyond, overstep (a limit): often in fig. context; also, to go beyond (a certain period of time)... *"[194]* The connotation for ALL of these translations is a sense of movement beyond.

As we saw with πληρόω, the entry in BDAG for περισσεύω is misleading at best. BDAG records the following in its first entry for περισσεύω (the entry for which it lists Matthew 5:20 as an example),

> β. *be present in abundance* (X., Cyr. 6, 2, 30; PFlor 242, 2; PLond II, 418, 4 p. 303 [c. 346 AD] ἵνα περισσεύῃ ὁ φόβος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν σοί) 2 Cor 1:5b; Phil 1:26 ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων *unless your righteousness far surpasses that of the scribes* Mt 5:20…

Notice the discrepancy between the lexical definition in the entry, "be present in abundance" and the suggested translation for Matthew 5:20, "far surpasses." The former is quantitative while the latter shifts towards a more qualitative sense. It seems that Ulrich Luz is not the only one who seems to have a different impulse driving his translation.

As far as I can tell, the most likely reason for assuming a qualitative reading for the comparative phrase περισσεύειν...πλεῖον in 5:20–especially when it has already been acknowledged that the primary meaning of the phrase is quantitative–is an *epochal* priming. As we have already seen above in the work of R.T. France, occasionally a scholar will make the *epochal* bias of their translation undeniably evident. France only confirms my suspicion regarding the *epochal* priming behind the discrepancies in translation, when he translates the relevant portion of Matthew 5:20 as, "only those whose righteousness of life *goes far beyond the old policy* of literal rulekeeping" (italics mine).[195]

As all bilingual (or multilingual) people instinctually know, translation is always a matter of interpretation. The priming of the reader/translator clearly plays a significant role in translation/interpretation. Recognizing that the comparison here in 5:20 is one of quantity, abundance or scarcity (both spatial images), we can now proceed to examine the "what" of which Jesus requires more.

Righteousness has long been noted as an important theme in Matthew. In a very thorough work, Przybylski sums up Matthew's understanding of δικαιοσύνη and δίκαιος as follows, "Righteousness [δικαιοσύνη] refers to proper conduct before God" and "The righteous [δίκαιος] are basically those who obey the law."[196] Thus we may say that

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[193] "exceed, v.". OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/65693?redirectedFrom=exceed (accessed November 20, 2017). Exceed can have a quantitative sense in English but the primary meaning for the verb is more qualitative.

[194] "surpass, v.". OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/194978?redirectedFrom=surpass (accessed November 20, 2017).

[195] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 191. Italics mine.

[196] B. Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 99, 103. Przybylski's work is very thoughtful, but it cannot be used without serious qualification due to the overtly epochal framing that governs many of his conclusions.

δικαιοσύνη refers to a type of conduct and δίκαιος to the person who participates in that conduct.[197]

We cannot follow the traditional understanding of what it meant for Jesus to claim that his followers must have a righteousness that *exceeds* that of the scribes and Pharisees. Richard Hays's discussion of this passage reflect the most common reading, he says, "the higher righteousness is a matter not only of outward actions but of inner disposition and motivations."[198] This reading however falls back to the thoroughly discredited trope of Jesus combating legalism which is not anything close to Jesus in Matthew.

In this reading, there can be varying amounts of righteousness depending upon one's interpretation of the Torah.[199] Hence Jesus can tell his disciples that their righteousness must be quantitatively present in greater abundance than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, that is to say, the disciples must do more, not necessarily do differently. This reading finds further confirmation in a parenthetical note inserted by Davies and Allison in their discussion of 5:20. Their musing, which deserves to be quoted in full, is the following,

> It could be, that the contrast in 5.20 between two types of righteousness has as much or more to do with doing than with teaching. The previous verse, 5.19, is about doing and when Jesus elsewhere speaks of the scribes and Pharisees, he typically refers to their 'hypocrisy' (e.g. 15.7; 22.18; 23.13-15, 28). The slur presupposed that they really do know better. So in Matthew the main problem with the Jewish leaders is not that they do not know the difference between right and wrong, it is instead simply that, knowing what they should do, they do something else. In view of this, 5.20 may not so much anticipate unique teaching as enjoin readers to do, to act, to be. The better righteousness is the righteousness of action–based, of course, on the words of Jesus.[200]

So even as Davies and Allison repeatedly to refer to a "better righteousness" that *exceeds* that of the scribes and Pharisees, they wonder if perhaps such a righteousness is actually more quantitative than qualitative. To which we must reply, yes!

The *off-epochal* nature of both *righteousness* (δικαιοσύνη) and *fulfillment* (πληρόω) in Matthew can be seen in another uniquely formulated Matthean passage that brings both concepts together. All three synoptic gospels describe Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan river (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-10; Luke 3:21-22),[201] but Matthew's description alone offers an explicit rationale for the necessity of Jesus' baptism. Here, in

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[197] Here paraphrasing ibid., 108.

[198] Hays, 120-21. Even an erudite reader like Hays can become mired in the *epochal* swamp. There is no suggestion in Matthew's gospel that the righteousness being preached by Jesus is "higher" or "better" or "newer." Such a reading reminds one of Baur's claim that the Christian concept of δικαιοσύνην is one that departs from its roots in Jewish soil (see my discussion in the previous chapter).

[199] Thus Przybylski, 105., "there are degrees of righteousness, the righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees being that which corresponds to the interpretation of the law given by Jesus."

[200] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:498-99.

[201] There is some suggestion that John's account in 1:2-34, implicitly recounts John's baptism of Jesus, but this has no direct bearing on our present discussion.

Matthew's description of Jesus' baptism, we find the third of the four Matthean uses of πληρόω[202] outside of his formula quotations,

> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness (πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην)." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

Matthew, in 3:15, is explicit that the act of baptism *fulfills* all *righteousness* (πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην). I have never read anyone interpret this passage as an argument for baptism bringing to an end or finishing righteouness, much less enabling one to go far beyond righteouness. To say here that Jesus' baptism *fulfills* (πληρόω) all rightousness, is to say that baptism is the form righteousness (δικαιοσύνην) takes. It is the proper doing necessary to inhabit the shape of δικαιοσύνην. Once again, Matthew's use of πληρόω is consistent provided that one's mode of reading the text is *off-epochal*.

Returning once again to chapter 5, we are finally set to properly engage the conclusion of Jesus' extended discourse (5:17-48). Following the series of six pronouncements, Jesus concludes with a final command,

> ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν. (Matthew 5:48)[203]

As with 5:20, a few comments regarding translation are in order. This final command, ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι, is almost universally translated into English as "be perfect."[204] Davies and Allison go so far as to remark that, "without doubt, 'moral perfection' is the meaning in 5.48a."[205] The translation of τέλειός in Matthew 4:48 as perfect, however, is far from perfect. Here we must insist that τέλειός in Matthew, must be interpreted in light

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[202] The fourth Matthaean use of πληρόω, aside from the formula quotations, is found in Matthew 13:48. This occurrence comes in a parable describing the kingdom of God. Jesus says,

> Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full (ἐπληρώθη), they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. (Matthew 13:47-48)

That this final and most literal usage of πληρόω, is in complete agreement with the other Matthaean occurrences, is further evidence that my *off-epochal* reading has warrant. As I we have seen throughout this section, the Matthaean sense of πληρόω is a spatial one. It is only an *epochal* priming that would necessitate construing the Matthaean use of πληρόω to connote anything other than the basic spatial sense seen here in Matthew 13:48.

[203] Be *complete*, even as your heavenly Father is *complete*. (translation mine)

[204] Thus the NIV, NLT, ESV, NASB, KJV, ASV, NRSV.

[205] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 561. Unsurprisingly, France argues that perfection implies a contrast with the literal requirements of Torah, a standard "going far beyond." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 229.

of is occurrences in Jewish literature.[206] There are three basic possibilities for translating τέλειός, which appears but twice in Matthew's gospel (5.48; 19.20-21). There is the more common *perfect*, a more literal meaning of *complete*, and finally the connotation of *mature.* [207] I find the second sense of *complete* to be most compelling.

Given that Matthew here modifies the Q tradition, in which the command was to be οἰκτίρμονες (merciful) to read τέλειός, we have to assume that the vocabulary choice is intended to convey something important to Matthew that is lacking in Q (and Luke).[208] As we have already noted, Matthew is unique in portraying Jesus in terms of Torah fulfillment, so it is only reasonable that we at least consider this as a possible motivation.

Evidence for this possible motivation can be found in the LXX, where Noah is described as being τέλειός. Here the LXX translating τέλειός from the Hebrew תָּמִים. This Hebrew word, often translated as "blameless" also means "complete." The footnote for Matthew 5:48 in the *Jewish Annotated Study Bible* offers the following helpful note, "In Jewish tradition, Heb "tamim" ("complete", sound; see Gen 6.9, where Noah is "blameless") could indicate "completeness" with God, though not necessarily in a moral sense (e.g. Deut. 18.13; 32.4).[209]

Given the earlier occurrence of the comparative phrase, περισσεύειν...πλεῖον in v. 20, our understanding of v. 48 must take into account Matthew's quantitative understanding of δικαιοσύνην. Jesus words in 5:20 did not say that righteousness was inadequate, only that his disciples needed a greater abundance of righteousness than the Scribes and Pharisees. In 5:48 we learn that this righteousness is one that is complete, that is to say fully inhabited through action. It wasn't that the scribes and Pharisees had an inferior form, they had the Torah, it was that their lack of action resulted in them having an insufficient righteousness.

One final piece of support for my reading can be found in an interesting analysis of Matthew 23:1-12 by Mark Allan Powell. In this passage Jesus instructs his followers to

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[206] Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 289. Luz unfortunately refers to this as Matthew's "Jewish background." This passage is a clear echo to the divine directives of Leviticus 19:2 and Deuteronomy 18:13.

[207] So argues E. Yarnold who offers three possible meanings for the two occurrences of τέλειός in Matthew: (1) what he calls the specific "pharisaic" meaning of *blameless* or *perfect* – commonly found in the LXX as the translation of תָּמִים ; (2) the less common, but literal and basic meaning of *complete*, the opposite of lacking ; (3) drawing on classical Greek as well as Pauline writings (1 Cor. 13.9-11; Eph. 4.13-14; Heb. 5:14) but not the LXX, possible meaning of *mature*, *grown-up*. E. Yarnold, "Τέλειός in St. Matthew's Gospel," in *Studia Evangelica*, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968).

[208] The Lukan parallel, following Q, reads merciful, Γίνεσθε οἰκτίρμονες καθὼς [καὶ] ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν οἰκτίρμων ἐστίν. Some have thus suggested that when compared to the Lukan parallel, the Matthaean τέλειός gives the passage a more climactic function. (e.g. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 229.)

[209] Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12. The HarperCollins Study Bible likewise offers a similar gloss on the command to "be perfect" in the note for 5:48, "*Perfect,* whole, complete, mature." W. Attridge Harold, *The Harper Collins Study Bible: Fully Revised & Updated* (HarperOne, 2006), 1677.

listen to the scribes and Pharisees but to not do as they do (κατὰ δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν μὴ ποιεῖτε). Following a thorough and compelling critique of the major interpretations of Matthew 23:2-7[210], Mark Allan Powell offers the following reading,

> In saying that scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, Jesus may be simply acknowledging the powerful and religious position that they occupy in a world where most people are illiterate and copies of the Torah are not plentiful. Since Jesus' disciples do not themselves have copies of the Torah, they will be dependent on the scribes and the Pharisees to know what Moses said on any given subject. In light of such dependence, Jesus advises his disciples to heed the words that the scribes and Pharisees speak when they sit on the seat of Moses, that is, when they pass on the words of the Torah itself.[211]

Jesus' critique that the scribes and Pharisees "speak" (λέγων) Torah but do not "do" (ποιέω) Torah offers us a quantitative possibility for both the instruction that the disciples must have more righteousness (v. 20) and the command that they must be complete (v. 48). Both instructions reflect the Matthaean understanding that to fulfill Torah includes both word and deed as Jesus' words in 5:19 make abundantly clear.

While in some general sense it is doubtful that any single conception or hermeneutic can adequately account for Matthew's use of πληρόω, what we have seen in this attempt at an *off-epochally* primed reading is that Matthew's use of πληρόω is remarkably consistent.[212] If one can imagine Matthew fashioning a Torah-form space out of the

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[210] This passage is an expansion of Mark 12:37-40 with the addition of Q material (Cf. Luke 11:37-52).

[211] Mark Allan Powell, "Do and Keep What Moses Says (Matthew 23: 2-7)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114, no. 3 (1995): 431-32. Powell goes on to explain,

> Our conclusion, then, is that Jesus' statement that the scribes and the Pharisees "sit on Moses' seat" is not intended as an endorsement of their authority to teach or interpret the law. Indeed, Jesus does not say that the scribes and Pharisees *ought* to sit on Moses' seat or imply that their occupation of this position is a good thing. Rather, his statement merely acknowledges the reality of the situation in which his disciples must live and conduct their ministry. If they are to "do" (ποιέω) and "teach" (διδάσκω) the commandments (5:19) they must obviously know what Moses says. Since the scribes and Pharisees are currently the keepers of the Torah in the social and religious environment where these disciples live, Jesus' followers must be careful to do (ποιέω) and keep (τηρέω) all the words of Moses that they hear these leaders speak (λέγων). But in no case are they to copy what the scribes and Pharisees do (ποιέω) with Moses, for what the scribes and Pharisees do (ποιέω) and teach (διδάσκω) does not produce a righteousness that qualifies one for entrance to the kingdom of heaven (5:19-20). Why not? Because in spite of controlling accessibility to Torah that the scribes and Pharisees now exercise, they do not in fact have authority to *teach* (7:29). Their understanding of the law and their actions that derive from and demonstrate this understanding are wrong, and must be wrong, for the authority they presume to possess has been given to another (7:28-29; 9:6-8; 12:8; 21:23-27; 28:18). (ibid., 435.)

[212] So cautions Victor J Eldridge, "Typology—the Key to Understanding Matthew'S Formula Quotations?," *Colloquium: The Australian and New Zealand Theological Review* 15, no. 1 (1982): 48-49; Kirk, 89; D.A. Carson, *Matthew and Mark*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David

scriptures of Israel, his use of πληρόω then functions to locate/position Jesus within that space.

Matthew's *off-epochal* stance encloses time within the shared problem-space of the scriptures and serves to rebalance the relationship between time and space in our reading. Within this space, given its proper form by the law and the prophets, various temporalities and hermeneutical strategies (e.g. narrative embodiment or recapitulation) can unfold in truly innovative ways without necessitating an *epochal* breach.[213] In other words, fulfillment for Matthew is a question of the form given to the "doing" that takes place within "that which was written." Fulfillment is the task of the Mattaean *Haltung,* a task that involves a claim about the form given to action within the shared problem space of Israel's scriptures such that the proper shape of Torah is honored.

This notion of πληρόω neither goes beyond Torah nor does it replace Torah. On the contrary, Matthew's concept of *fulfillment* is the inhabiting of Torah through word and deed. This is how Jesus makes Torah *complete*. In the next chapter, we will consider in much closer detail, the result this *Haltung* has on the form given to Jesus himself in Matthew, but first we must say something about a possible *Sitz im Leben* for the reading I have set forth thus far.

2.3.3 Sect or Synagogue

Before concluding my discussion of Matthew as *Haltung* it seems reasonable to ask if this reading makes sense on the ground. By this I mean two things: one, by make sense I'm really asking if reading Matthew as *Haltung* clarifies more than it obscures; secondly, by on the ground, I mean within what we know of the socio-historical of the Jewish life in the Second Temple Period. The short answer to both is yes.

My effort to plausibly situate the Matthaean *Haltung* within Jewish life in the Second Temple period begins with Krister Stendhal, who first suggested the existence of a Matthaean community behind the gospel that is responsible for its composition, not a singular author, Matthew.[214] Following Stendahl, John P. Meier argues that Matthew's gospel is the product of a lengthy scribal tradition within the Matthaean community.[215]

Meier goes too far when he describes Matthew's composition as coming, "at the end of and inheriting the work of a whole Christian scribal school, which in turn drew upon

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E. Garland, vol. 9, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 52.

[213] A key difference between the reading offered here and Kirk's very insightful work, is that Kirk seems to see a common hermeneutical method at work in Matthew's formula quotations, one of narrative embodiment and "filling up." Kirk, 94. *Haltung,* however, is not a hermeneutical method that can be overlaid onto Matthew's gospel.

[214] Stendahl.

[215] Brown and Meier, 56. Meier, like Stendahl, also describes the Matthaean community as a church, but such a designation is problematic given the diversity of practice in the many Jewish synagogues co-existing in Antioch during the first century. Intra-synagogue conflict may be sufficient to explain the polemic found in Matthew without resorting to an explanation dependent upon a Matthaean church, "Jewish-Christian" or otherwise.

Jewish learning filtered through Jewish Christians in the community."[216] Having rightly disabused his readers of viewing Matthew's gospel as origin point, Meier's analysis nonetheless stumbles when he claims that it reflects a terminus point. There is no indication that Matthew's gospel was intended to serve as a terminus point. As *Haltung*, Matthew's composition reflects a node within a discourse already long in motion. Whether or not this *Haltung* ends up being adopted as the final word for a later church is a separate discussion.

Both Stendhal and Meier describe the Matthaean community as a church, albeit a Jewish-Christian church. Simply put, labeling the Matthaean community a church is without warrant.[217] As we have discussed above, the idea of an independent Christian identity, sufficiently developed as to sustain its own institutional structures, is not historically plausible at this point in time. Every indication in the text itself suggests that the Matthaean community saw themselves as part of Israel.[218]

This is not to suggest that the Matthaean community was part of a homogenous undifferentiated entity we may call the Jews. While there are no references to "Jewish Christians" within the ancient sources (including Matthew), there do seem to be distinctions made between Christians who are Jews and Christians who are Gentiles in other roughly contemporaneous literature.[219] For example, in the New Testament we find the following references:

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[216] Ibid., 56-57. Meier's analysis is unfortunately wedded to an early "parting of the ways" paradigm in epochal reading of Matthew is foregrounded. Hence comments such as, "Matthew's approach is truly synthetic. Being a true 'liberal conservative,' he does not throw away the various strands of the old Jewish-Christian tradition. Rather he absorbs them into a higher theological viewpoint, a higher synthesis" (ibid., 59.). Or even more problematic, "Matthew's schema of salvation history... portrays when and why Israel ceased to be the people of God and the church took its place... The privileged place of Israel ends with the end of the time of the earthly Jesus. The new period of the risen Jesus inaugurates the new time of the universal church." (ibid., 61-62.). While we cannot accept such conclusions, the observation– made first by Stendahl and further developed by Meier–that Matthew's gospel reflects a community process is an important one.

[217] Here a word of caution is in order. Attempts at reconstructing the Matthaean community have been plagued by overzealous scholars who have been too confident in their abilities to reconstruct a historical picture for which we have very limited evidence. As Judith Lieu notes, "The plethora of recent attempts to reconstruct from the texts the Pauline, Johannine, Matthaean, Thomasine, etc. communities, founded as they are on an assumption that we can work back from text to the distinctive community that generated it, have increasingly been recognized to rest on shaky foundations." Lieu, 24 see also n. 64 for an extended discussion. That being said, based on the historical evidence that does exist, I think we can safely draw some general conclusions without going down the rabbit hole.

[218] The most persuasive argument for this position has been argued by Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (University of Chicago Press, 1994), esp 124.

[219] Oskar Skarsaune, "Jewish Believers in Jesus in Antiquity-Problems of Definition, Method, and Sources," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 4.

- ἔλεγεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους[220] (John 8:31)
- οἱ δὲ ἀπειθήσαντες Ἰουδαῖοι[221] (Acts 14:1b)
- υἱὸς γυναικὸς Ἰουδαίας πιστῆς, πατρὸς δὲ Ἕλληνος[222] (Acts 16:1)

or even,

- περιτομῆς πιστοὶ[223] (Acts 10:45)
- Ἐξανέστησαν δέ τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἱρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες λέγοντες ὅτι δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως[224] (Acts 15:5)

We also find,

- Ἀκούοντα δὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἔχαιρον καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον[225] (Acts 13:48)
- περὶ δὲ τῶν πεπιστευκότων ἐθνῶν[226] (Acts 21:25)

Notice that with the exception of John 8:31, these references are found in the *Acts of the Apostles,* a sequel to the gospel of Luke, which narraties the actions of the earliest followers of Jesus. We should note that no such references actually occur in Matthew.

In addition to the New Testament texts, there are several references found in the writings of Origin and Eusebius that refer to *Jewish* or *Hebrew* believers, Ἰουδαῖων πιστεύσαντες (*Cels.* 2.1) as well as to Ἑβραίων πιστῶν (*Hist. eccl.* 4.5.2).[227] Oscar Skarsaune also notes two other significant occurences in the ancient literature. First, in the prologue to the (now lost) Latin translation of Aristo of Pella's *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus,* = Ps. Cyrian, *Ad Vigilium Episcopum de Iudaica Incredulitate* (ca. 3rd century) we find one Jason who is called a *hebraeus Christianus.* The second occurrence of note is found in the apocyphal *Martyrdom of Peter and Paul*, where we find a report of a discussion between two groups of Christians: the one group is called οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι Χριστιανοί; the other group [οἱ] ἐθνικοί [Χριστιανοί]. Later in the report we also find the second group being referred to as οἱ πιστεύσαντες Ἰουδαῖοι.[228] So here we have a Christian Jew as well as two groups of Christians, Jewish and Gentile. What we see in both occurrences noted by Skarsaune is that there is no distinction between these groups being

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[220] Then Jesus said to the Jews [Ἰουδαίους] who had believed in him…

[221] But the unbelieving Jews…

[222] The son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Gentile. [speaking of Timothy whose father was a Gentile]

[223] "Circumcised believers"

[224] But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses."

[225] When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers.

[226] But as for the Gentiles who have become believers,

[227] For a good discussion of the problem of definition see Skarsaune, 5-6; also James Carleton Paget, "*The Definition of the Terms* Jewish Christian *and* Jewish Christianity *in the History of Research*," ibid., 22-23.

[228] Oskar Skarsaune, "Jewish Believers in Jesus in Antiquity-Problems of Definition, Method, and Sources," ibid., 5-7, especially fn 12-14. Skarsaune's entire article is a very helpful introduction to the challenge of definition.

made on ideological grounds.[229] Furthermore, the adjectival element in the descriptors points to ethnicity, not doctrine or even praxis.

Boyarin draws an important distinction in semantic fields when he notes that 'Jew' is, "a member of the paradigm that includes 'Greek,' while 'Christian' identifies another semantic field – perhaps one that included such entities as 'Pharisee,' 'Sadducee,' and

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[229] In his analysis, Skarsaune remarks, "in the ancient sources, ethnicity is the sole criterion for the adjective 'Jewish' as it is used in the combined terms 'Jewish believer' and 'Jewish Christian.'" Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press 2002), 7. While I agree with his assessment of ethnicity being the point of distinction I am still at a loss as to why the descriptor should not read, Christian Jew? In later times it might make sense to suggest that Christian is the larger group, for the writer of Matthew, the believers in Jesus were Jews. We do not write about Jewish Pharisees or Jewish Essenes and so I have to wonder if there is some deeper anxiety that foregrounds Jewish as the modifying adjective when it is the appellation Christian that signals a change? As Tertullian wrote in the late second century, "*Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani" (Apol.,* 18.4*)*. A few pages later Skarsaune notes, "There is nowadays an emerging consensus among scholars to use "Jewish Christian" (*Judenchrist, judéo-chrétien*) as a designation of ethnic Jews who, as believers in Jesus, *still practiced a Jewish way of life*." ("Jewish Believers in Jesus in Antiquity-Problems of Definition, Method, and Sources," 9, italics in the original. This phrase highlights the inherent problem in the designation *Christian Jew*. Here we see the false assumption that the first believers in Jesus would do anything other than *practice a Jewish way of life* laid bare. There is no sense in Matthew than Jewish believers in Jesus would practice anything other than a Jewish way of life. What made them unique was not that they were Christians who were also Jews but that they were Jews who were Christians. I do think the following paragraph by Skarsaune is worth noting in full,

> The bottom line regarding Jewish identity, then, is that people who considered themselves Jewish and were considered to be Jewish by the Jewish community were Jewish. It seems fitting and right that the final 'power of definition' should lie with the (different) Jewish communities themselves. According to this principle, we consider Gentile believers who, as part of their conversion to faith in Jesus, accepted circumcision and a Jewish way of life as representing a border case, not as being 'Jewish believers' in the strict sense, since they would probably not have been recognized as legitimate Jewish proselytes by the local Jewish community." Ibid., 13.

James Carleton Paget's contribution, "*The Definition of the Terms* Jewish Christian *and* Jewish Christianity *in the History of Research*" in the edited word of Skarsaune and Hvalvik, provides a very thorough examination of these terms in the history of research. Paget concludes, "In antiquity no one, as far as we know, called himself a Jewish Christian or spoke of belonging to an entity called 'Jewish Christianity.' The terms are invented ones, introduced to describe a supposed phenomenon of early Christianity." James Carleton Paget, "*The Definition of the Terms* Jewish Christian *and* Jewish Christianity *in the History of Research*," ibid., 48. He then raises the question of doing away with the term altogether before ending with the following, "I leave this as a not unproblematic option at the end of this chapter. Some may think it unrealistic, not least because the term has for so long been a part of scholarly discourse. But that in itself is no reason to retain it. When one looks at its complex history and the ongoing complications of the debate about its meaning, a new start might be thought to be desirable." Ibid., 52.

'Essene.'"[230] While Boyarin's suggestion is worthwhile, here I would proffer an alternative "perhaps." To begin, this question can only be framed in terms of distinctions between different kinds of Jews.[231] This much is evident in Matthew, where the only distinction made is not between those who believe in Jesus and those who do not, but between those Jews who adopt the Matthaean *Haltung* vis-à-vis Torah and those who do not. This *Haltung* is occasioned by Jesus, but nonetheless still an orientation vis-à-vis Torah. As Zetterholm has aptly noted,

> A Jew who came to embrace belief in Jesus as the Messiah could not be said to change one symbolic universe for another. To become a Messiah-believing Jew would rather represent *a new orientation within the same symbolic universe.*[232]

The question then becomes, what kind of Jewish community?

Here the earliest attestation of Christians as a group offers us an important clue. In Acts 11:26, we find the following note, χρηματίσαι τε πρώτως ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τοὺς μαθητὰς Χριστιανούς (and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians"). This reference in Acts accords well with historical work of Raymond Brown and John Meier who make the compelling case that there was an ongoing and vibrant group of Jewish followers of Jesus living in Antioch beginning in the late 30s and continuing well past the best estimated dates for the composition of Matthew's gospel.[233]

Finally, the two most commonly suggested geographical locations for the Matthaean community are Antioch and the Galilee. For reasons that will soon be evident, it is my opinion that the former is a much more plausible location.[234] Taken together, it seems plausible to suppose that the reference to Christians in Acts 11:26 refers to the Matthaean community that produced the first Gospel.

The question then becomes, in light of everything I have discussed thus far, how might I reconcile the reference to the Matthaean Jews as *Christians* in the *Book of Acts* in light of an *off-epochal* priming. The answer is surprisingly straightforward. Once *epoch* is out of the way, it's clear that the synogogue offers the most *apropos* historical contextualization for how to understand how a Matthaean *Haltung* might be situated on the ground.[235]

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[230] Boyarin, "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/'Christianity'," 69.

[231] "Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to Which Is Appended a Correction of My Border Lines)," 28.

[232] Magnus Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation of Judaism and Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 6.

[233] Brown and Meier, 23. Meier describes the three-stage history of the Antiochene believers as follows: "the first generation, the church of Barnabas, Paul, Peter, and James (roughly A.D. 40-70); the second generation, the church of Matthew (roughly 70-100); and the third generation, the church of Ignatius (after 100)." (p. 27)

[234] So argues Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1. Also Brown and Meier.

[235] Anthony Saldarini has argued something close to this but Saldarini's framing of the Matthaean community as a deviant sect relies to heavily upon epochal primings. Cf. Saldarini. In his work, Zetterholm offers up an intriguing proposal, one by which I am not entirely convinced, but neither am I willing to completely rule out, that a "certain torah ideology, which specifically stated that torah obedience was worth dying for" was present among some

In an excellent historical and sociological work, Magnus Zetterholm has concluded that while there is only literary evidence for three synagogues in first-century Antioch, based on comparative sociological data drawn from Rome and Alexandrea, that there may have been as many as twenty to thirty synagogues in the city.[236] It is this existence of multiple synagogues in Antioch that offers us a compelling understanding of how the first use of *Christian* as a descriptive term for those Jewish followers of Jesus came be attributed to Antioch.[237] Zetterholm proposes that the practice of naming synagogues after either the founders or characteristics of the members in the synagogue would most likely have occurred in Antioch, just we know it did in Rome and Jerusalem during the first century.[238] Thus Acts' account in 11:26 that the disciples were first called Χριστιανόι (Christians) in Antioch is best understood as either the self-designation by the Jewish members of one or more synagogues in Antioch or as a designation given to them by fellow Antiochean Jews as a way of distinguishing one synagogue from another.[239] Such a designation reflects the differing *Haltung* of the Antiochean synagogues not the splintering of one religion into two. As Zetterholm writes, "That Christianity eventually became a non-Jewish, separate religion does not mean that this separation must already have taken place by the first time we hear the term 'Christian.' The sources actually indicate the opposite."[240]

The second and only other occurrence of Χριστιανός in the New Testament offers further support of this conclusion. In Acts 26:28, the Jewish king Agrippa responds to Paul's testimony by asking, ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι? ("Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?"). It is very significant here that Paul's testimony to Agrippa is prefaced by Paul's appeal first to Agrippa's knowledge as a Jew of, πάντων τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἐθῶν τε καὶ ζητημάτων (26:3) and then to his belief in the prophets, πιστεύεις, βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα, τοῖς προφήταις (26:27). Agrippa's use of the term Χριστιανός (Christian) refers not to a new religion called Christianity, but to a particular configuration

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Antiochean Jews on account of the connection between the tradition of the Maccabean martyrs and Antioch. Cf. Zetterholm, 80-83.

[236] This is based on an estimated population of about 22,000 Jewish residents of Antioch. For further discussion see the treatment in , 37-38..

[237] Acts 11:26

[238] Thus he concludes, "In sum, we find that names were given to synagogues according to several principles. Names could be given in honor of a patron or benefactor of the synagogue, to indicate the geographical origin of the founder, or to indicate the geographical or social origin of its members." Zetterholm, 91-92. Some known synagogue names from the first century include, "synagogue of the Hebrews," synagogue of the Augustans," "synagogue of the Agrippans," as well as "synagogue of the Vernaclesians." As Zetterholm notes, these names demonstrate that while some synagogues were named "to honor persons of importance for the Jewish community", other synagogues, "show that names were given to indicate the origin of the founder or some characteristic of the members" (ibid., 91.). Zetterholm also cites Luke's description of as many as five synagogues in Jerusalem in Act 6:8-9, including a synagogue named the "synagogue of the Freedmen."

[239] So concludes ibid., 95-96.

[240] Ibid., 96. As Zetterholm also notes, Tacitus' description of "Christians" in Rome during the 60s associated them with Jews.

of, "the customs and controversies of the Jews" that follows from a particular reading of the prophets.

This brings us to Matthew's treatment of the synagogue. Do the references to synagogue in Matthew support the scenario proposed above? The first thing to note is that Matthew's descriptions of Jesus's relationship to the synagogue as an institution seems to be largely positive. In fact, Jesus never condemns the synagogue *per se* in Matthew. There are only two occasions when Jesus speaks about violent confrontation in relation to the synagogue (10:17; 23:34). The first occurrence comes in a warning to his own followers about coming persecution,

> Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν). (10:17)

Note that the violence about which Jesus speaks is due to opposition from hostile crowds not a feature of the synagogue proper. Furthermore, Jesus is explicit that the violence will take place ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν (in *their* synogogues). Traditionally the *their* being taken as a reference to *the Jews,* as in *Jewish syngogues* as a general designation, but as we shall see, this is without merit.

The second occurrence comes in the midst of a series of rebukes (woes) by Jesus directed at the scribes and Pharisees,

> Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς ὑμῶν) and pursue from town to town. (23:34)

Again the reference here is very narrow. The synagogue, more precisely ταῖς συναγωγαῖς ὑμῶν (*your* synagogues), will be a site of violence, but this is due to the actions of a group of hostile scribes and Pharisees and says nothing about Jewish synogogues in general.[241]

In addition to the above, there are seven additional mentiones of the synogogue in Matthew (4:23; 6:2, 5; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54; 23:6). In four of the occurences Matthew's Jesus is described as teaching in the synagogue (in what appears to be a routine activity),

- Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶ) and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. (4:23; cf. Mk. 1:39, Lk. 4:44)
- Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν), and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. (9:35; cf. Mk. 6:6)
- He left that place and entered their synagogue (εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτῶν). (12:9)
- He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue (ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ αὐτῶν), so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? (13:54)

When describing Jesus' actual interaction with various synagogues Matthew is careful to note the particular nature of the synagogue. Jesus didn't just teach in in syngogues but always in "their" synagogues. This is a feature particular to Matthew. Of Mark's eight

[241] As Prof. Boyarin has rightly pointed out to me, "synagogue is not necessarily a technical term for Jewish places of worship but a more general term for congregations, places of assembly. It is partly because synagogue sounds so specific to us that the mishearing takes place."

mentions of synagogue, only two are modifed by a possesive pronoun (Mk. 1:23, 39).[242] Luke usage is similar in that only two of the fourteen references to a synagogue are modified by a possessive pronoun (Lk. 4:15; 7:5).[243] Matthew takes up five of the Markan mentions of a synogue,

- Mk. 1:39 (their) => Mt. 4:23 (their); Lk. 4:44 (the… of Judea)
- Mk. 3:1 (the) => Mt. 12:9 (their); Lk. 6:6 (the)
- Mk. 6:2 (the) => Mt. 13:54 (their); Lk. 4:16 (the)
- Mk. 12:39 (the) => Mt. 23:6 (the); Lk. 20:46 (the)
- Mk. 13:9 (the) => Mt. 10:17 (their); Lk. 21:12 (the)

Notice that in three of the four instances Matthew adds a possesive pronoun to the Mark general reference. Luke by contrast not only adopts the Markan accounts unchanged in all five accounts that Matthew uses but in two addition Markan passages (Matthew does not include), Luke also maintains the Markan form (Cf. Mk. 1:21, 23 and Lk. 4:33; Mk. 1:29 and Lk. 4:38).

For instance, in Matthew 12:9 modifies the Markan description of Jesus entering εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν to heal a man with a withered hand (Mk. 3:1) to read that Jesus entered εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτῶν. In contrast, in this instance the Lukan account leaves the Markan original unchanged (Lk. 6:6). The same process occurs in Matthew and Luke's use of the Marks account of Jesus visiting the synagogue in Narazeth (cf. Mk. 6:2; Mt. 13:54; Lk. 4:16).

Three remaining references to the synagogue occur in general statements when Jesus wishes to call attention to what he sees as inappropriate behavior,

- So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς) and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. (6:2)[244]
- And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς) and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. (6:5)
- They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς). (23:6)

Geography is important in understanding the rationale behind Matthew's consistent usage of possesive pronouns when narrating the activity of Jesus. In all four instances where Jesus is described as entering into various synagogues the location is clearly the Galilee. From the vantage of a community located in Antioch, the "their" in these instances should be taken as a reference to particular Galilean synagogues not Jewish synagogues in general.

It has become quite common in recent decades to speak of the sectarian nature of the Second Temple period.[245] Pharisees, Saducees, Essenes and even Christians have all been labeled as Second Temple Jewish sects. The problem with this designation may be

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[242] Cf. Mark 1:21, 23, 29, 39; 3:1; 6:2; 12:39; 13:9

[243] Cf. Luke 4:15, 16, 20, 28, 33, 38, 44; 6:6; 7:5; 8:41; 12:11; 13:10; 20:46; 21:12

[244] The pairing of 'synagogues' and 'the streets' is another reminder that neither are technical terms for Jewish space but are general references to places where Jews gather together. Again my thanks to Prof. Boyarin for pointing this out to me.

[245] Cf. Baumgarten.

found in the definition for sect given in Stark and Bainbridge's now classic work. According to Stark and Bainbridge, a sect is "a deviant religious organization with traditional beliefs and practices" and a cult is "a deviant religious organization with novel beliefs and practices."[246] As we have already noted earlier in this chapter, religion is an anachronistic label that obscures rather than clarifies how to think about Jews of the Second Temple period.[247]

Synagogue not sect provides us with a plausible historically appropriate *Sitz im* Leben for the Matthaean community described in this present work. The conceptual slippage between the *hairesis* (αἵρεσις) of Acts and Josephus and the post-Reformation *sects* of Stark and Bainbridge is just too great.[248] Synagogue on the other hand, has the advantage of being a designation used by Matthew's own community. This keeps us out of the realm of theory and abstraction. It is within the synagogue that the necessary negotiation and maneuvering can take place such that it can be said that a *Haltung* is taken up

2.4 A Habitable Space

In conclusion, this chapter has in no way offered a comprehensive re-reading of the Gospel of Matthew, such a task is well beyond the intent of this present work. What I have offered is a close examination of several key concepts in Matthaean studies vis-à-vis an *off-epochal* reading of the first gospel. Just as wisdom found a dwelling in Torah, so Matthew has fashioned a dwelling place in Torah for Jesus the Christ. Torah is indeed the language that Matthew speaks and it is in relation to Torah that the Matthaean *Haltung*, an assemblage of gestures, attitudes, styles and postures, renders visible the significance of a specific *kairos* within the Second Temple period, a *kairos* at whose center stands Jesus.

Rather than inagurating a new Christian *epoch*, in a double-movement, Matthew's *Torah-forming Haltung* creates room within the Jewish Second Temple period for the teaching and life of Jesus. The Matthaean Jesus, who Keck aptly defined as, "an abbreviation for the person who is the centre of an event whose boundaries are not self-evident," is incontrovertably a Jew of the Second Temple period.[249] The Matthaean *Haltung* offers the reader instruction as to how best be a Torah observant Jew, not a way

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[246] Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 124. As they explain in a subsequent work, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 25., key to any workable definition of sect is the recognition that sects are "deviant religious bodies."

[247] In some sense, this reading has now come round full circle. It was Durkheim who labeled the Jews as a church and now I have repaid the favor by labeling a group of Christians as a synagogue. Here, as Prof. Boyarin has rightly pointed out, we should note that the original honor of labeling a group of Christians as a synagogue goes to the first-century Jewish author of the Apocalypse who labeled compromising Christians as belonging to the synagogues of Satan.

[248] Stark and Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*.

[249] Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," 363.

to be Christian if by Christian we mean a religion or even as followers of Jesus as something that can exist a part from Israel.

Thus, to speak of the supposedly radical new ways in which New Testament authors read and use the scriptures of Israel presupposes a breach that is simply not present in the Gospel according to Matthew. When Richard Hays cites Rowan Williams' description of "an experience that so questioned the religious categories of its time" as the impetus driving the "reinterpretation of Israel's scripture," in the composition of the New Testament, I worry that their descriptions unconsciously reify a view in which the scriptures and practices of ancient Israel can achieve a *stasis* or equilibrium.[250] To phrase it another way, in what way can we meaningfully describe the scriptures of Israel as being transformed by Matthew if there was not stable or singular form waiting to be transformed?[251]

While it has become commonplace to describe the New Testament writings as being, "deeply embedded in a symbolic world shaped by the Old Testament–or, to put the point in a modern critical idiom, that their 'encyclopedia of production' is constituted in large measure by Israel's Scripture,"[252] my present work has made it clear that this is not the full story. What is largely missing from this formulation are the ways in which the New Testament writings–as Jewish literature of the Second Temple period–are participating in the continual forming and re-forming of that symbolic world. Matthew is not merely drawing on a static encyclopedia of production constituted in large or small measure by a stable field called Israel's Scripture, but he is an active participant in the ongoing *Torah-forming* processes of the Second Temple period.

The composition of Matthew's gospel is taking place completely inside an assemblage called the scriptures of Israel. This is not to suggest that the assemblage is hermetically sealed from outside influence, only that Matthew and the movement-space in which he is working cannot be separated from one another in some kind of simple cause-effect diagram. Torah-forming processes are in motion throughout this assemblage. There is no stable Torah for Matthew to inhabit, thus the need to *Torah-form* a space. Essentialist approaches to Torah and the Second Temple period are doomed from the start for this very reason. They assume a foundational entity upon which to build, but no such foundation existed.

Let me be clear, I am not speaking here of a transcendent or ideal Torah that Matthew attempts to instantiate. Matthew's gospel is not a world of ideal forms. The Second Temple period is flat. I am attempting to describe a series of moving lines on a

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[250] Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to St. John of the Cross* (Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1990), 11; Hays, 4-5. Let me here offer a brief personal aside to acknowledge the profound work of Rowan Williams and Richard B. Hays. These two scholars embody Christian scholarship at its finest. Their consummate skill in close reading is matched only by their sensitivity and graciousness. And while I understand that such a view is not necessitated by their description, it is nonetheless a clear and present danger in contemporary scholarship.

[251] For example, in what is an admirable attempt to foreclose any Marcionite readings of his work, Hays, 14. nonetheless implies such a movement when he writes, "*It is particularly important to see that the sort of figural interpretation practiced by the canonical Evangelists is not a rejection but a retrospective hermeneutical transformation of Israel's sacred texts*."

[252] Ibid., 10.

single plane of immanence with flows moving in multiple directions. As our reading has clearly shown, this process is not one that can be easily mapped with linear lines of causation. Furthermore, Matthew's Torah-forming endeavors are not without resistance.

Lastly, this reading has challenged, sometimes rather pointedly, much accepted wisdom within Matthaean studies. Admittedly, there is no smoking gun in the case that I have laid out in this chapter, instead we have a handful of carefully selected elements, which together give us probable cause to proceed further. Recognizing the multiplicty of *Haltungen* vis-à-vis the shared movement-space of Torah in the Second Temple period cautions us against concluding that we have now discovered the truth about either Second Temple Jewish literature or Matthew's relation to the larger topological field in which it exists. Much deliberative work remains before the jury can return a verdict but the arguments advanced in this chapter are more than sufficient to quash any calls for a summary dismissal. The trial must proceed.

There are many threads yet to trace within an off-epochal reading of the gospel. In the next chapter of this work we will attempt to trace one such thread that involves revisitng the Matthaean concept of divine presence with respect to Jesus. As we will soon explore in great detail, the Matthaean *Haltung* results in an interesting bit of a slippage as functional distinctions between Torah and Jesus blur in Matthew's gospel. Matthew's Jesus not only emphatically and unambiguously insists that the Torah remains fully in force, but he is himself described as inhabiting a Torah-formed space.[253]

[253] Ibid., 120.

Chapter 3: Torah-Transfigured

It is among the ruins that transfiguration takes place.[1]
- de Certeau

Multiple figurations of Jesus are produced in the composition of Matthew's gospel. Some of these figurations employ explicit titles – Christ/Messiah, son of God, Son of Man, rabbi, teacher, son of David, son of Abraham, Emmanuel, savior, prophet, and King of the Jews.[2] In addition to these explict figurations, scholars have also argued for the presence of more implicit christological or thematic figurations of Jesus in the gospel, such as that of Jesus as a, "new Moses."[3]

Having now sketched out one possible form that an *off-epochal* stance to Matthew might take–one that thoroughly inhabits Torah–we may now ask, what impact might this reading have on the figurations possible for a Matthaean Jesus? The claim of this present chapter is simply this, the Torah-form composition of Matthew's gospel opens space (creates an affordance to again borrow terminology from Deleuze) for a figuration of Jesus that is itself built of Torah. This figuration is much more than a series of allusions, echoes, or quotations. Torah is not only the material used in the composition of Matthew's gospel, but it is also the raw material for Matthew's assembly of his figure of Jesus.

While it may be tempting to characterize the task of this chapter as an effort to describe an *off-epochal* Matthaean christology, proceeding from the *off-epochal* Matthaean *Haltung* of the previous chapter, such a characterization would be misleading. Christology in the broad sense, is usually defined as something like a, "comprehensive term for the statement of the identity and significance of Jesus."[4] I, however, remain unconvinced of the claim that the gospel of Matthew presents us with a comprehensive or unified view of Jesus. The variety of titles and descriptions found in the gospel point us toward a multi-faceted Matthaean Jesus or even Jesuses. So, it seems that an important first step in our analysis is to disavow all attempts at advancing a "comprehensive" statement regarding either the identity or the significance of Jesus. This we must do if we are in fact to appreciate the rich and varied texture in the composition of Matthew's gospel.

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[1] Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, trans. Michael B. Smith, vol. One: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25. De Certeau speaks about the mystics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who finding themselves in a present that could only be described as an exile, nonetheless, "did not reject the ruins that surround them. They remain there." As de Certeau goes on to write, these ruins are the locations where, "the metamorphoses and revivals of history could be 'suffered.'" (ibid., 24-25.)

[2] The literature on the subject is legion. For an introduction see G.M. Styler, "Stages in Christology in the Synoptic Gospels," *NTS* 10 (1963-64).; also Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*.and D.A. Carson, "Christological Ambiguities in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Christ the Lord. Studies in Christology Presented to Donald Guthrie*, ed. Harold H. Rowdon (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982).

[3] Cf. Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Fortress Press, 1994).

[4] Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," 362.

In addition, Christology is inextricably bound up with theological and religious connotations that are not *apropos* to an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew.[5] A more appropriate characterization of the task at hand would be to say that this chapter is an inquiry into the possiblity of form with respect to an *off-epochal* Matthaean figuration of Jesus primed by my *off-epochal* reading of the first gospel.[6] This reading then, does not focus on the explicit titles given to Jesus in the gospel according to Matthew. Neither is it a survey or examination of the various implicit figurations proposed by scholars. Here, I am interested in only one figuration of Jesus, that one which is rendered visible by my *off-epochal* reading of the gospel.

Two further caveats about this task: 1) My description of the Matthaean figure of Jesus in this chapter is not a claim that this particular figuration should now be taken as the primary or governing figure of Jesus in the gospel. It is but one possible figuration rendered visible through one particular reading of the gospel, no more and no less. 2) My reading makes no claim as to whether or not Matthew, who ever *he* or *she* or *they* might have been, consciously intended for Jesus to be figured in the way that I now describe. In fact, I openly acknowledge the possibility that the figure of Jesus made visible in this reading is one that only emerges after the fact, as a concequence of my reading which adopts the figuration of Matthew as *bricoleur*. This chapter is itself a double-movement, in which I figure Matthew as *bricoleur* (an *off-epochal* approach), before exploring how this particular figure of Matthew as *bricoleur* gives form to a particular figure of Jesus (again in an *off-epochal* fashion).

3.1 Of Odds and Ends

Before proceeding to an examination of an *off-epochal* Matthaean figuration of Jesus, we must begin by looking at the figure of Matthew proper.[7] Just as there are multiple figures of Jesus in the gospel according to Matthew, there are multiple figures of Matthew

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[5] Without doubt, there can be (and are) statements and claims about the identity and significance of Jesus in the gospels that are non-christological (e.g. historical), but as Keck writes, "A statement of Jesus' identity and significance becomes christological when that significance explicates his religious meaning. Whoever affirms the religious significance of Jesus – a first order statement – implies a christological statement (a second order statement)." (ibid., 375, n. 2.) While it may be occasionally necessary to reference the ongoing debate in New Testament studies between *low* and *high* Christology camps, it is not the intent of this chapter to take a side in what seems to me to be an argument largely premised on an *epochal-framing* of the New Testament.

[6] Figuration we may define as either, the action or process of forming into a certain form, or the resulting form or shape. See "figuration, n.". OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/70074?redirectedFrom=figuration (accessed November 29, 2017).

[7] In the previous chapter I argued for the existence of a Matthaean community located in an Antiochean synagogue. For the sake of this discussion, I will speak about a singular figure Matthew, but this should not be taken to be a departure from my earlier claim. Speaking about Matthew as an individual is merely a rhetorical device employed for the sake of simplifying the discussion. The claims I make in this chapter are not only equally applicable to a Matthaean community, but they are claims about the Matthaean community.

resulting from differently primed readings of the gospel. Among other things, Matthew has been figured as apostle, systematic theologian, Jewish-Christian teacher, and even as a Christian apologist refuting the Jews. While these figurations are each more or less compelling, they are not my present concern as these figurations all share an *epochal* priming. The present chapter however is a continuation of my inquiry into the possible forms taken by an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew, already begun in the previous chapter, by now pursuing an explicitly *off-epochal* figuration of Matthew.

3.1.1 Bricolage

To find such a figure, I turn to the work of French anthropologist Claude Lèvi-Strauss. In his classic work, *La Pensée savauge,* Lévi-Strauss introduced his readers to the figure of the *bricoleur*. In his opening chapter, *The Science of the Concrete*, Lévi-Strauss writes,

> There still exists among ourselves an activity which on the technical plane gives us quite a good understanding of what a science we prefer to call 'prior' rather than 'primitive', could have been on the plane of speculation. This is what is commonly called 'bricolage' in French. ...in our own time the 'bricoleur' is still someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman. The characteristic feature of mythical thought is that it expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire [*un répertoire dont la composition est hétéroclite*] which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited. It has to use this repertoire, however, whatever the task in hand because it has nothing else at its disposal [*rien d'autre sous la main*, lit. nothing else to hand].[8]

Importantly, the *bricoleur* is not another craftsman, rather, when compared to the means employed by the craftsman, it may be said that the *bricoleur* employs devious means (*des moyens détournés*) in her activity. The devious nature of the *bricoleur* need not immediatly be read as subversive. As Lévi-Strauss makes clear, the activity of *bricolage* involves a mismatch of debris. It is not the seamless execution of pre-planned project following a precise schematic. It operates in a mode of recycling and reusing, in which the compositional process unfolds as much by trial and error as by clear objective.

Perhaps *diverted means* would be a better translation of the phrase *des moyens détournés*, given that it points us towards the limited and bounded nature of the materials at hand. It is as much the limited heterogeneous repertoire at hand that governs the process of *bricolage* as it is the designs of the *bricoleur*. For example, from the perspectivie of the craftsman or engineer, it is only through *devious* means that a hammer would become a doorstop. For the *bricoleur* however, the lack of an essential use makes repurposing the hammer fair game. So long as it holds the door open, the question of proper use is irelevant.

Next, Lévi-Strauss introduces us to another crucial characteristic of *bricolage*, contingency. He writes,

> The 'bricoleur' is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His

[8] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, The Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 16-17.

> universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions. The set of the 'bricoleur's' means cannot therefore be defined in terms of a project (which would presuppose besides, that, as in the case of the engineer, there were, at least in theory, as many sets of tools and materials or 'instrumental sets', as there are different kinds of projects). It is to be defined only by its potential use… because the elements are collected or retained on the principle that 'they may always come in handy'. Such elements are specialized up to a point… but not enough for each of them to have only one definite and determinate use.[9]

The contingent nature of the hetergeneous repertoire available to the *bricoleur* is simultaneously a contraint and source of creativity for the *bricoleur*. It is as much the potential use of the elements at hand that interests the *bricoleur*, as it is their prior or designated use. The prior purpose (or even the so-called *original* purpose) of the hammer is of secondary concern, if any, to the *bricoleur,* whose task is constrained only by the boundaries of the materials at hand and not by the concerns of prior projects. Within this finite repetoire, to analyze processes of de-territorialization and re-territorialization as matters of proper use or application become a nonsensical task.

Bricolage is not an a-temporal process, which brings us to our third important observation. It is not the absence of time that makes the *bricoleur* a promising candidate for an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew, rather it is the *bricoleur's* particular relation to time that offers us the possibilty of an *off-epochal* figure. This distinction is crucial. The *bricoleur* must contend with change and disruption, but does so without resorting to notions of linear progress. As Lévi-Strauss notes,

> …the engineer is always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization while the 'bricoleur' by inclination or necessity always remains within them.[10]

Properly understood as a series of re-formations (recycling), *bricolage* does not properly belong to any of the set of modes to which "post-" or "pre-" may be prefixed. *Bricolage* is itself a stance within (a *Haltung*), not a step beyond or a retreat to before.[11] Lévi-Strauss goes on to elaborate,

> Now, the characteristic feature of mythical thought, as of 'bricolage' on the practical plane, is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structured sets, but by using the remains and debris of events: in French 'des bribes et des morceaux', or odds and ends in English, fossilized evidence of the history of an

[9] Ibid., 17-18.

[10] Ibid., 19.

[11] Lévi-Strauss himself seems to suggest this in the final chapter of *The Savage Mind*, "History and Dialectic" where he criticizes Sartre's dialectical history and its sense of forward momentum. See the discussion in Christopher Johnson, "Bricoleur and Bricolage: From Metaphor to Universal Concept," *Paragraph* 35, no. 3 (2012): 368.

> individual or a society. The relation between the diachronic and the synchronic is therefore in a sense reversed.[12]

Bricolage is not a practice of abstraction (it does not produce new theories) by which the *bricoleur* utilizes materials at hand in an effort to transcend the problem space. As Christopher Johnson rightly notes, "The economy of *bricolage* is one of 'make do and mend', based on the recycling of extant materials which retain their historical and human depth…"[13] *Bricolage* is an immanent compositional practice in which existing materials at hand are utilized in order to more fully inhabit a fluid problem space.

Two additional aspects of *bricolage* have direct relevance for our inquiry into Matthew. First, explicitly drawing on the work of Lévi-Strauss, in a 1977 lecture at the University of California at Berkeley, François Jacob, a professor of cell genetics at the *Institut Pasteur,* described the figure of an engineer as follows,

> The engineer works according to a preconceived plan in that he foresees the product of his efforts…he has at his disposal both material specially prepared to that end and machines designed solely for that task…the objects produced by the good engineer, approach the level of perfection made possible by the technology of the time.[14]

Here we are reminded of the performance metrics that accompany the work of the engineer. Jacob can speak of the good engineer whose work approaches some level of perfection relative to both the forseen product and the technoology of the time, but this prompts the question of how might one speak of a good *bricoleur*?

One answer, I suggest, can be found in Jacob's idenitification of the mode proper to natural selection as being more akin to that of the *bricoleur* (Jacob uses the English 'tinkerer'), not an engineer. He writes,

> A tinkerer... does not know exactly what he is going to produce but uses whatever he finds around him whether it be pieces of string, fragments of wood, or old cardboards... who uses everything at his disposal to produce some kind of *workable* object... The tinkerer, always manages with odds and ends. What he ultimately produces is generally related to no special project, and it results from a series of *contingent events*...none of the materials at the tinkerer's disposal has a precise and definite function. Each can be used in a number of different ways... Unlike engineers, tinkerers who tackle the same problem are likely to end up with *different* solutions.[15]

The only performace rubric for the tinker is that of workability. An engineer might be said to have suceeded only when the product takes the form of the plan. No such constraint exists for the *bricoleur*.

Here Jacob's comments provide us with an important reminder that contingency within *bricolage* not only affects the materials available to the *bricoleur,* but it also serves to remind us that solutions to the same problem will vary. Because of the mode of composition, even with the same materials at hand, different *bricoleurs* will potentially produce different compositions. Furthermore, we can also say that because the materials at

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[12] Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 21-22.

[13] Johnson, 368.

[14] Jacob, 1163.

[15] Ibid., 1163-64, italics added.

hand have no precise and definite function, were the same *bricoleur* to attempt the project more than once, there is no reason to assume that the same object would result. This requires a particular disposition on the part of the *bricoleur*. As Levy Bryant remarks, "The bricoleur is that tinkerer that's willing to be surprised by her own work and to discover aims and goals that the junk pile she works with dictate, rather than those she envisioned."[16]

Jacob offers one more important caveat. While the finite and limited nature of the heterogeneous repertoire available to the *bricoleur* can result in the creation of similar objects, this should not be understood as implying a standard or preferred compositional pathway. The repeated creation of the eye is a perfect example. As Jacobs notes, "Eyes appeared a great many times in the course of evolution, based on at least three principles– pinhole, lens, and multiple tubes... Yet they did not evolve in the same way."[17] The existence of similar compositions then, should not be taken to imply shared pathways.

In sum, *bricolage* operates with the following key characteristics: 1) it involves the use of devious or diverted means; 2) it draws on a finite heterogeneous repetoire of materials; 3) it is contingent; 4) it is non-linear (both temporally and spatially); 5) it entails a muliplicty of both solution and pathway.

3.1.2 Matthew as *Bricoleur*

The activity of the *bricoleur* provides a conceptual repertoire well-suited to an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew. In fact, Lèvi-Strauss explicitly locates the figure of the bricoleur in what he terms a "prior" science, which we may read as refering to a non-Hegelian paradigm.[18] In the remainder of this introductory section, let me sketch out some broad implications of characterizing Matthew as *bricoleur,* before I move to a close reading of three key passages in Matthew's gospel.

To begin, one might ask what difference does this make? While that remains an open question, the field of evolutionary biology can provide us with some ideas. Recognizing the existence of these two modes, *engineer* or *bricoleur*, prompts evolutionary biologists and geneticists to not only ask very different questions of the data, but to view the data differently.[19] François Jacob rightly notes,

> "Whether mythic or scientific, the view of the world that man constructs is always largely a product of imagination. For the scientific process does not consist in simply observing, in collecting data, and in deducing from them a theory. One can watch an object for years and never produce any observation of scientific interest. To produce a valuable observation, one has first to have an idea of what to observe, a preconception of what is possible."[20]

I am not here suggesting that the processes of evolutionary biology are directly analogous to the compositional practices in Matthew. I am merely noting that approaching evolution

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[16] Levi R. Bryant, "There's Only Bricolage," in *Larval Subjects* (2013).

[17] Jacob, 1164.

[18] Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 16.

[19] There are no doubt more than two possible modes and here I am not suggesting we must take sides in a binary engineer/bricoleur debate. I merely use the figure of the engineer as a useful if artificial foil to draw a contrast with the reading I am here proposing.

[20] Jacob, 1161.

as *bricolage* prompted evolutionary biologists to ask questions previously invisible. Perhaps approaching the composition of Matthew as *bricolage* will have similar effects?

I begin with another reminder of the limited claims of this present inquiry.[21] The reading that follows is an attempt to render visible just one of many possible figurations for the Matthaean Jesus. Scholars have long noted not only the presence of diverse (sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory) christologies among the first followers of Jesus (e.g. New Testament texts themselves),[22] but also the presence of multiple christologies within the text of Matthew.[23] As Kupp aptly notes, "Matthew captures not one single moment of its communties's socio-historical context, but several, perhaps even conflicting moments."[24] The aim of this present work is merely the addition of one more figuration to the mix. This addition, importantly, is neither rebuttal nor replacement, it is merely offered up in an experimental mode exploring the possiblities afforded by an *off-epochally* primed reading of Matthew's gospel. I hope that this reading will serve as a reminder that not only is there a heterogeneous assemblage of materials in the composition of the gospel of Matthew, but a heterogeneous assemblage of traditions and figurations likewise make up the first gospel.

Not only is the figuration of Jesus in this reading just one of multiple possiblities, but a key ramification of understanding Matthew as *bricoleur* is an acknowledgement of contingency in his figuration of Jesus. The form given to the Matthaean figuration of Jesus rendered visible by my reading is contingent, which means that there is no compelling reason to suggest that were Matthew to repeat his process of composition and offer up his gospel anew, that his figuration of Jesus would take the same form. The materials at hand would remain the same and the eye very well may come about, but through an alternative route.

The skillfully woven fabric of Matthew's gospel should not be mistaken as evidence of some master plan. As Levi Bryant so beautifully observes regarding *bricolage*, "there's always an aleatory multiplicity that rumbles beneath any Apollinian order."[25] This is not to say that anything is possible or that the Matthaean figuration of Jesus is purposeless. It is however, a recognition that the materials at hand exert just as much agency in creating the boundary conditions for the composition as do any preconcieved images of a final product in the mind of the author.[26]

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[21] While the repeated reminders may seem unnecessarily redundant, it is crucial to understand that this reading is not one more attempt at a totalizing theory for Matthew.

[22] Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," 362-63.

[23] Kupp, 221. Also Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," 371, 74., "what is characteristic of communities is their capacity to affirm multiple and diverse christologies simultaneously" and "what is true of each Gospel, where elements of diverse christologies, logically incommensurate with each other, now interact in the overall construal of Jesus' identity and significance, is true also of the NT as a whole." The subsequent question, raised by Keck and borrowing a phrase from Paul (2 Cor. 11:4), of whether or not the different texts are preaching "another Jesus" is one that I cannot answer.

[24] Kupp, 223.

[25] Bryant.

[26] While such a claim may strike biblical scholars or engineers as being dubious, the concept of compositional contingency that I am here describing is one that will no doubt resonate with

Practically speaking, this enables my reading to avoid both the tyranny of authorial intent (still very prominent in biblical studies) as well as the nebulous lack of agency associated with some so-called inner-textual readings in which things seem to simply happen.[27] In this way I am also able to sidestep the question of whether Matthew is a genius or if I am simply reading too much into the text. No doubt, allusion and echo are present but there is also space for the material (as we shall see, both textual and tradition) to push on the author in ways that may not be obvious or recognizable to the author.[28]

As I have noted in the previous chapter, it was the scriptures of Israel, the Torah, that constituted the primary plane of content for Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. Matthew is no exception. Understanding Matthew as *bricoleur* makes explicit the rich texture of Matthew's composition in a way that resists any effort at flattening the rationale behind Matthew's use of scripture. It cannot be a matter of convenient proof texts as some have alleged. As we will see in our close readings that follow, Matthew's *bricolage* is particularly evident in the mixture of two interlocking aspects.

First, on the one hand, scholars have long noted that Matthew does not utilize the entire corpus of scripture associated in the Second Temple period with messianic fulfillment, including those passages, "easily susceptible to fulfillment-interpretation."[29] Were Matthew systematically mining the scriptures for proof, there is much that he neglects. The numerous scraps left on the table however suggest that it was a more complex and constrained process that was undertaken. I will elaborate more on this in the close readings that follow.

On the other hand, some passages taken up and incorporated by Matthew do not seem to have had any prior association with the coming of the messiah within the Second Temple period.[30] Such recycling has resulted in sundry accusations, everything from ignorance to malevolence, being leveled against Matthew.[31] Like his accusers, Matthew's

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many artists and artisans. One of my great-aunts, Arvada Fisher, is an accomplished Miwok basket weaver and medicine woman (Northern Sierra Miwok). I have heard people ask her about the "design" process for the stunning patterns woven into her baskets, she always replies that the patterns come from the materials themselves and that they emerge as the basket is being woven. While she gathers the materials and knows that she is weaving a basket, the final form is just as novel to her as it is to everyone else.

[27] Here I am grateful for a brief yet meaningful personal conversation with Richard Hays in which he pressed me to explain the role of agency in *bricolage*.

[28] See the important discussion of materialism and morphogenesis in Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, Bloomsbury Revelations (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[29] So Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, 194, who notes Micah 4:4 as an example of a passage neglected by Matthew which would have fit nicely in Matthew 26:67.

[30] Ibid. argues that since Isaiah 7:14 wasn't interpreted as a messianic passage in the Second Temple period that it was the nativity tradition that "molded the interpretation of Is. 7:14, rather than vice versa."

[31] Discussions of Matthew's supposed distortions, errors and misquotations are perennial favorites especially among those who wish to distance the New Testament writings from Second Temple Jewish thought and literature.

defenders typically attempt to explain Matthew's choices in engineering terms when really Lévi-Strauss's *des moyens détournés* seems most *apropos*. It would be a mistake to try to understand our *bricoleur* as working with some sort of one-to-one correspondence from a previous assemblage. Matthew's treatment of Exodus and exile are not elaborations or continuation; they literally are re-assemblages in which there are inversions, there are continuities, but also discontinuities.

In addition to Matthew's use of scripture, we must recognize Matthew's use of tradition in his *bricolage*. Here I am using tradition in reference not just to the stories of Israel, but to the already rapidly growing corpus of stories, legends, and sayings attributed to and about Jesus. We would do well to remember that Matthew is writing about a historical figure from within a community shaped and formed by the life and teaching of that historical figure.[32] Given the most probable dates for its composition, it is unlikely that Matthew is a direct first-hand witness to the historical Jesus. It is equally unlikely however, that Matthew is simply inventing history. Importantly, this Jesus tradition as I am using it is neither monolithic nor fixed, rather, like Torah, it is a topological field very much in motion.

Noting here that the materials available to and utilized by our *bricoleur* include not only scripture, but existing traditions about Jesus is significant for the following reasons.[33] There is no linear movement from scripture to tradition to gospel in Matthew's composition. As already noted in the previous chapter, Gundry makes a compelling case that Matthew, "does not search haphazardly or systematically for isolated proof-texts" but rather draws upon passages of scripture that have already been taken up by others relative to the life and teaching of Jesus.[34] In his use of the scriptures of Israel, our *bricoleur* is not turning to an original or pristine Torah to source his materials. He is repurposing materials that have already been sourced.

Tradition, not prophecy seems to be a primary selecting pressure in Matthew's use of scripture.[35] This however does not mean that Matthew must then use scripture in the same manner as the tradition. Tradition here serves as a sorting function, but the *bricoleur* re-purposes scripture to whatever ends. This re-purposing aspect of *bricolage* is further evidenced in the possibility that Matthew may even be taking existing traditions that did not belong to Jesus and re-purposing them. D. Daube has made an interesting case that

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[32] While mythicist claims about the supposed non-existence of Jesus continue to propagate in popular media culture, no reputable historical or biblical scholars doubt the historical existence of Jesus.

[33] Matthew's use and dependence upon tradition is well established in the scholarly literature. See Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, 194-96; also J. J. O'Rourke, "The Fulfillment Texts in Matthew," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1962): 402, n. 42.

[34] Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, 208.

[35] So argues ibid., 194-96. It is important to note that Gundry's discussion does not address the historicity of the events recorded in Matthew. His claim is simply that Matthew is largely working with received tradition. The question of what Matthew may have crafted himself remained unresolved.

Matthew's account of Mary and Joseph's flight with the infant Jesus to Egypt is modeled on a haggadic Passover story involving Jacob.[36]

Thus, our *bricoleur* is both enabled and constrained through the interplay of scripture and tradition that he finds at hand. Christopher Johnson has described this aspect of *bricolage* as a "double movement of projection-retrospection,"[37] which is the simultaneous movement of being both "enabled but also contrained by the historical density of the elements."[38] Lévi-Strauss's own description of the *bricoleur* at work, evokes the famous Matthaean image of the scribe trained for the kingdom of God when he writes,

> Consider him at work and excited by his project. His first practical step is retrospective. He has to turn back to an already existent set made up of tools and materials, to consider or reconsider what it contains and, finally and above all, to engage in a sort of dialogue with it and, before choosing between them, to index the possible answers which the whole set can offer to his problem. He interrogates all the heterogeneous objects [*objets hétéroclites*[39]] of which his treasury is composed to discover what each of them could 'signify' and so contribute to the definition of a set which has yet to materialize but which will ultimately differ from the instrumental set only in the internal disposition of its parts.[40]

Notice the striking similarities in Matthew, who uniquely records Jesus as saying, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure (ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ) what is new and what is old (καινὰ καὶ παλαιά)" (Matthew 13:52). This figuration of Matthew offers us a stark contrast to the image of an engineer who sees (either in her mind or in the scriptures) a clear blueprint for the life of the messiah and then sets out to describe the life of Jesus in such terms.

In describing the use of scripture in the gospels, James Dunn writes, "Clearly here in this kaleidescope of imagery we see earliest Christianity searching around for the most suitable way of understanding and describing Christ, ransacking the available categories and concepts to find language which would do justice to the reality of Christ."[41] While this may sound similar to what I have described as the work of *bricolage*, I quote Dunn here to show that there are some significant differences that need to be noted between Dunn's

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[36] Daube, 190f. Even though Gundry Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, 196, n.1. seems to see Daube's position in conflict with his own, I don't think such is necessarily the case unless Gundry truly believes that everything Matthew says about Jesus is based on existing traditions about Jesus. Even such a position doesn't answer the question of historicity.

[37] Johnson, 362.

[38] Ibid.

[39] It is worth noting that the French *hétéroclite* is a stronger word than the English *heterogeneous*. *Hétéroclite* conveys a sense of ill-sorted, disparate, or sundry (see Johnson, 2012).

[40] Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 18.

[41] James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1996).

description and the work that I am describing. Let me illustrate the contrast by rephrasing Dunn's observation and then setting the two side-by-side.

Clearly here in this kaleidescope of imagery we see earliest Christianity searching *around for the most suitable way* of understanding and describing Christ, ransacking the available categories and concepts to find language which would do justice to the reality of *Christ*. (Dunn)	Clearly here in this kaleidescope of imagery we see Matthew searching *within the primary way* of understanding and describing Christ, ransacking the available categories and concepts to find language which would do justice to the reality of *Torah*. (my reformulation)

The differences between these two formulations are not merely semantic. Dunn's formulation implies an external mode of relation consistent with *epochal* scholarly framings whereas my formulation has Torah as the space within which Matthew is working. While Dunn's formulation notes the use of scripture, it doesn't seem to adequately acknowledge Torah as a very real boundary condition for the gospel writers.

In his practice, Matthew stands well within the larger Second Temple Jewish practice. In an effort to frame Matthew's composition in Second Temple terms, Gundry describes Matthew as a *targumist* who uses his knowledge of the various Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek textual traditions to create *ad hoc* renderings suitable to his presentation of Jesus.[42] Similarities in the mode of adaptation/transformation of scripture at Qumran, in rabbinic literature and in Matthew, the mechanics of which, Gundry calls "targumically oriented" are just one more reminder that any suggestion that Matthew as *bricoleur* stands outside of or beyond the topological field of Second Temple Jewish literature is unwarranted.[43] Importantly, the mode of relation, proper to *bricolage,* between this Jesus tradition and the scriptures of Israel is a functional one. There are no interior or intrinsic properties connecting the two piles of material. The network of relations between scriptures and tradition in Matthew's gospel is constituted by their assembly in real time.

Locating Matthew as a *bricoleur* within the larger world of the Second Temple period also means that Matthew's composition need not be seen as the result of an identity crisis. *Bricolage* is making do with what is, but that doesn't imply crisis. Bricolage does not presuppose crisis, catastrophe or conflict. It seems to me, that the supposed need by the gospel writers to distinguish Jesus and his teachings from that of other Jews in the Second Temple period is more a product of later *epochal* primings than anything else.

Assumptions of contrast are not necessarily warranted as the erudite insights of Eric Gruen make clear. Gruen makes the compelling case that identity formation in ancient Mediterrean cultures should not be viewed from a stance (*Haltung*?) that assumes contrast as the driving feature.[44] Gruen's claim is not a return to universalism but a more nuanced

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[42] Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, 171-72, 205. Gundry nonetheless sees an eschatological fulfillment in the way that Matthew uses the scriptures of Israel to tell the story of Jesus. Thus he notes, "in Mt. it is the eschatological fulfillment, exposing the true and full meaning of the text, which gives authority to the free quotation." Ibid., 157.

[43] Ibid., 205.

[44] Erich S Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 5.

view of cultural formation in which "appropriation" is more central to the process than distancing or polemic. He writes,

> When ancients reconstructed their roots or fashioned their history, they often did so by associating themselves with the legends and traditions of others. That practice affords a perhaps surprising but certainly revealing insight into the mentalities of Mediterranean folk in antiquity. It discloses not how they *distinguished* from others but how they transformed or reimagined themselves for their own purposes. This is not rejection, denigration, or distancing–but rather appropriation. It represents a more circuitous and a more creative mode of fashioning self-consciousness.[45]

The work of the *bricoleur* is not inherently polemical. It is the linear movement of *epochal* thinking that primes a replace or contrast perspective. Recalling our example of the hammer; its repurposing as a door stop within an *off-epochal* framing need not imply any intentional contrast from its prior purpose of driving nails. It's success at holding the door open is irespective of its previous success at driving nails. It is neither better nor worse, it is.

Matthew's work as *bricolage* is intentional, but need not be cast in terms of progress, succession or even replacement. As we have already noted, fulfillment for Matthew is not a linear, forward-moving operation. We can now elaborate on our earlier observations by observing that for the *bricoleur*, fulfilment is the form/substance of that which is being fashioned. Inherent in this is destruction and reformation. That which survives, the *nachleben* are contingent not necessary.[46]

The *bricoleur* need not have a master plan and we should not feel compelled to establish one-to-one correspondences between each micro-element and some larger narrative scheme. Given the nature of tinkering, we should be cautious that we are not reading architecture backwards into what was a fluid or even gaseous process. As we have noted above, evolutionary theory may be described as drunken or a tinkerer, because it has *intention* without *telos*.[47] To assume Matthew has an end in mind before beginning is to presume that he is an *engineer* when no such grounds exist to make that claim.

Let me preempt a certain type of objection here at the outset. The question of whether or not the figuration of Jesus rendered visible by my reading can be reconciled (whatever that means) with either the rest of Matthew or the NT as a whole is one that need not be addressed. This paper is not an exercise in systematic theology. In fact, one should not expect that my readings in these chapters will assume a seamless final form. On the contrary, a close reading should reveal contradicitions and mis-matches that are tell-tale signs of the *bricoleur*. This is the unity of *bricolage*.

Such a unity as I am suggesting here for Matthew is not without precedent in

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[45] Ibid., 4.

[46] The German the term *Nachleben* literally means "survivals" or "after lives." Following Rabinow and Stavrianakis (Designs, 147), I take term from art historian Aby Warburg, who used it to identify enduring stylistic motifs in western art. See Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, Translated by David Britt, (Los Angeles: Getty Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999). German original: *Die Erneuerung der heidnischen Antike: Kulterwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Renaissance* (1932).

[47] Maxmen.

literature. It was Frye who noted that, "there is always something of a mosaic about the work of literature, a pattern where units are contiguous—in another Miltonic phrase—rather than continuous."[48] Frye continues, "what we see at the end is a unity of varied particulars."[49] This conceptualization of unity is not one typically ascribed to Matthew the *engineer,* but it is most *apropos* for Matthew the *bricoleur*.

This finally brings us to the narrow question of Matthew's figuration of Jesus proper.[50] As we saw regarding Matthew's gospel in general, Torah-forming once again seems to be selecting pressure in Matthew's composition. That is to say that Matthew's figuration of Jesus is not just a matter of the reader being able to see Jesus in the Torah (Torah pointing to Jesus), his audience must be able to see the Torah in Jesus (Jesus pointing to Torah). In some sense, this is a fractal image. On the larger level of Matthew's gospel, Jesus inhabits a Torah-formed space. A closer examination however reveals that Torah is not only the material of which the gospel space is formed, but it is also the material by which the Matthaean figuration of Jesus is constructed. Thus, Jesus not only inhabits a Torah-formed space, but he is himself Torah-formed. Merely saying that Matthew describes Jesus in terms of Torah doesn't go far enough. Torah is clearly evident in the Matthaean figure of Jesus, but in a way that goes deeper than metaphor or shared vocabulary.

The Matthaean Jesus is built of Torah, or to phrase it slightly differently, the Matthaean Jesus is Torah-transfigured. Transfiguration, to change shape or form (Greek μεταμορφόω)[51] of some material, is the most *apropos* way to describe Matthew's *bricolage*. The basic claim of this chapter is that the Matthaean figure of Jesus is a transfiguration of Torah brought about through the activity of *bricolage*. As I will discuss, this is not a simple identification of Jesus as Torah or even to say that Jesus is Torah incarnate. Those descriptions presuppose a figuration of Matthew as something like Lèvi-Strauss' engineer. As a *bricoleur*, Matthew assembles his figuration of Jesus from Torah and tradition. This results, perhaps unintentionally, in a figuration of Jesus in which the lines between Torah and Jesus are blurry and porous.

This identification of Jesus with Torah in Matthew's gospel is, in and of itself, not without precedent. In a short paper, presented in 1965, J.M. Gibbs set out a rather provacative thesis that has yet to be taken up in an sustained manner within New Testament scholarship. Namely, that the key figuration of Jesus in the of the Gospel of Matthew was

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[48] From Areopagitica, "And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every piece of the building be of one form, nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportional, arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure," in John Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 1st ed. (New York,: Odyssey Press, 1957), 744. Cited in Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature*, 74.

[49] *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature*, 74.

[50] From here on I will refer to "the Matthaean figuration" or a variant thereof. The definite article here is only meant to signal the figuration I am exploring and should not be taken to be establishing a new normative or totalizing figuration for Jesus in Matthew's gospel.

[51] The Greek μεταμορφόω is the verb used in Matthew and Mark's gospels to describe Jesus' mountaintop meeting with Elijah and Moses (see Mark 9:2; Matthew 17:2).

that of Torah incarnate. Focusing in on Matthew 5:17 (a passage that will likewise serve as a springboard for my own close reading in this chapter) Gibbs writes that Jesus' claim to have come in fulfillment of the law and prophets, "refer not to Jesus' teaching but to his deeds as the enfleshing of the Torah."[52] Gibbs goes on to describe the principal declaration in Matthew's gospel to be a declaration that, "in Jesus the Torah…is now totally and efficaciously present."[53]

This explicit identification of Jesus as Torah can also be found in the work of Pope Benedict XVI. In a particularly insightful, howebeit brief discussion, Benedict describes Jesus as being "himself God's living Torah."[54] Another particularly sensitive reader, Richard Hays, likewise recognizes a deeper connection between Jesus and Torah in Matthew 5:17 when he comments that, "Jesus' fulfillment of the law is partly related to his own embodied enactment of its meaning..."[55] These figurations all deploy incarnational language in their attempts to map out Matthew's identification of Jesus with Torah. This is important to note because incarnational language, especially that influenced by Johannine literature, is most often ontological language.

My point of departure from these previous scholars comes in that my focus in this present chapter is on the functional identification of Jesus with Torah, not an ontological one.[56] This departure is itself due to the *off-epochal* priming of my reading. As we saw in

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[52] Gibbs, 42. Here I should note that Gibbs' 1968 paper has been central in helping me formulate my reading of Matthew as Torah-transfigured.

[53] Ibid., 46.

[54] Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (New York: Doubleday Religion, 2007), 169. Benedict's claim is discussed at great length in Hans Herman Henrix, "The Son of God Became Human as a Jew: Implications of the Jewishness of Jesus for Christology," in *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today: New Explorations of Theological Interrelationships*, ed. Philip A. Cunningham, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). The concept of Jesus as Torah incarnate has also been critized, but such criticisms read incarnation in Johannine terms and thus do not engage the mode of transfiguration that this paper advances. See Karl-Heinz Menke, *Jesus Ist Gott Der Sohn: Denkformen Und Brennpunkte Der Christologie* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2008). For a brief discussion of Menke's claims see Henrix, 131-38.

[55] Hays, 122. Hays goes so far as to entitle his chapter on Matthew's gospel, "Torah Transfigured". This however should not be confused with my use of the phrase Torah transfigured. Whereas Hays uses transfiguration to describe the way in which Matthew has transformed the scriptures of Israel as a matter of figural representation (e.g. "Matthew, however, *trans*figures Hosea's texts by seeing how it *pre*figures an event in the life of Jesus" and "*The fulfillment of the prophets words can be discerned only through an act of imagination that perceives the figural correspondence between the two stories of the exodus and the gospel."* p. 113), I am attempting to use the word in describing how Matthew as *bricoleur* ends up presenting Jesus *himself* as the transfiguration of Torah.

[56] This is not to suggest that the ontological question of Jesus existence is not worth consideration. It is not my focus however and it seems to me that a clear distinction between functional and ontological claims must be maintained. The closest scholarly work I have found to my functional identification of Jesus with the Torah is Davies and Allison's discussion of Matthew 11:25-30 in which they label Jesus as "the functional equivalent of Torah." Their

the previous chapter, once again an *off-epochal* priming leads to a reversal of imagery/metaphor. An ontological/incarnational identification of Jesus with Torah is effectively *epochal* insofar as the Torah comes to take up residence in Jesus. This leads to a "new" state of affairs now present in Jesus. The work of our *bricoleur* is not incarnational, but functional. Jesus as Torah in a functional sense (*bricolage*) continues to foreground Torah insofar as Jesus is built from, that is to say bounded by Torah.[57]

One of the ongoing challenges of this chapter, given that the figuration of Jesus seems to be a task common to all New Testament literature, will be to resist the temptation to read Matthew through those other figurations. While I will place Matthew in conversation with other Second Temple Jewish texts, including those of the New Testament, this inquiry is really about a close reading of Matthew proper.

Reading Matthew's figuration of Jesus as *bricolage* also cautions us against assuming that similar solutions must come from similar pathways or processes. Evolutionary biology (itself a form of *bricolage*) has repeatedly demonstrated that sometimes similar solutions come from different pathways. Both observations are important when considering Matthew's relationship to the other writings of the Second Temple Period. My reading may render visble images common to other figurations, but these similarties should not be taken as evidence of similar compositional pathways. The different gospels are in fact different solutions, or planes of expression, where the shared problem space is the topological field formed from the scriptures of Israel, the plane of content.

The remainder of this chapter involves a close reading of three passages (Matthew 1:23, 18:20, 28:20) that are typically identified as passages locating the "divine presence" in the person of Jesus. As we will see, these claims are heavily dependent upon an *epochal* priming and once that priming is removed the passages have a much different flavor. This chapter will also demonstrate that this *epochal* priming imbues these passages with a pneumotological emphasis that is unwarranted. Reading these passage with an *off-epochal* priming as *bricolage,* renders visible a figuration of Jesus that involves a transfiguration of Torah that is otherwise lost in the background.

My emphasis on function not ontology is particularly important to note given that the remainder of this chapter will center on a close reading of three passages traditionally referred to as "divine presence" passages. This reading is in some sense a continuation of my discussion of Matthew 5:17 in the previous chapter. While no doubt referring to the teaching and actions of Jesus, Jesus' claim, οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι, offers a hint at something more. A hint at a concept of fulfillment that involves the use of Torah in Matthew's figuration of Jesus himself.

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discussion however does not develop this functional equivalence beyond the particular periscope. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 287-93.

[57] That such a claim would seem anathema, is due more to influence on our reading of Matthew from writers such as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews more than it is due to the writing of Matthew proper.

3.2 God is With Us (Matthew 1:23)

Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.
iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna;
iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
Virgil, *Fourth Eclogue*[58]

My attempt at rendering visible an *off-epochal* Matthaean figuration of Jesus appropriately begins at the end. Matthew opens his gospel with an account of Jesus' *genesis*, chapters one and two, commonly called the infancy narrative. Within the narrative world of the gospel, Jesus' infancy precedes his ministry, etc., but the composition of the infancy narrative itself represents one of the last stages in the formation of the gospel.[59] Significantly, the materials employed in the composition of Matthew's infancy narrative are not present in either of Matthew's two primary sources, Mark and Q, but have been sourced from elsewhere.[60]

Not only has this opening assemblage been fashioned by our *bricoleur* by poaching from beyond Mark and Q, but a close reading reveals that the relationship of these two opening chapters to the rest of Matthew is in fact more contiguous than continuous.[61] As we noted in the last chapter, Bacon labeled this material as an introduction to what he saw

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[58] Now is come the last age of Cumaean song;
the great line of the centuries begins anew.
Now the Virgin returns,
The reign of Saturn returns;
now a new generation descends from heaven on high.
(Virgil, *Fourth eclogue,* lines 4-7)

Latin text and translation from Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, vol. 63, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 48-49. The earliest attested interpretation of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue as a pagan prophecy of Jesus' birth is found ca. 313 in Lactanius's *Divinae Institutiones* VII 24; PL 6:810. See Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 564ff. for a worthwhile discussion of the relevance of the Fourth Eclogue to the gospel accounts. As Brown notes, while writers as early as Jerome have dismissed interpretations such that of Lactanius as ignorance (Jerome, *Epistola* LIII 7; PL 22:544-45), an examination of the poem can nonetheless offer some background context relative to how educated hearers of Matthew and Luke might have received the infancy narrative.

[59] For a detailed discussion see Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*.

[60] Neither Mark nor Q include and accounts of Jesus' pre-ministry life. Luke also begins his gospel with an infancy narrative, howbeit one very different from that of Matthew's. The magisterial treatment of the infancy narratives in both Matthew and Luke remains the aforementioned work of Raymond Brown.

[61] Here referring back to the earlier cited observation by Frye. Unlike Luke, Matthew gives no indicated as to the source of the material unique to the gospel. While the debate continues as to where Matthew derived the material found in the so-called infancy narrative, it does seem that Matthew has poached and sourced the material rather than cutting it from whole cloth.

as a five-fold replacement Pentateuch, but such a designation implies a form of unity that doesn't exist in Matthew's gospel. The absence of any reference, explicit or implicit, to the infancy narrative in the rest of the gospel suggests that the rest of the Matthaean composition was formed without any knowledge of the infancy stories.[62] Furthermore, Matthew makes no effort to harmonize the earlier material with the infancy narrative.

That being said, the opening of the gospel, taken together with the closing chapters of the gospel, do create a set of appendages crucial to the Matthaean figuration of Jesus. These appendages are in some sense a consequence of a mash-up between Matthew's five-fold Torah-formed gospel and a growing tradition surrounding the life and teachings of the historical Jesus. Rather than seeing these appendages as bookends, enclosing and shaping the five-fold Torah-formed gospel, my claim here is that the inner five-fold Torah-formed gospel is the scaffolding upon which the Matthaean figuration is built. The scaffolding gives form to the figuration of Jesus as much, or more so, as the other way round.[63]

To unpack the claim that I am here making, we begin with the New Revised Standard Bible's translation of what is usually taken as the programmatic christological statement of Matthew's gospel. Having learned that Mary, to whom he is engaged, is pregant, Joseph is prepared to dissolve the marriage commitment when an angel of the Lord appears to him in a dream to reassure him regarding the birth. Matthew describes the scene as follows,

> "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit (ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου). She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins (γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν)." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel (καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ)" which means, "God is with us (μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός)" (Matthew 1.20b-23)[64]

The angels words are sufficient to convince Joseph to alter his intentions and Matthew records that he does "as the angel of the Lord commanded him."

This annuciation account has proven to be fertile ground for *epochally* primed readings of Matthew's gospel. The account is usually taken to be a claim that in the person of Jesus, the divine is made present. The exact nature of the divine presence is somewhat debated among scholars, but the debates typically assume some form of an *incarnational* presence in Jesus and only differ with respect to the question of *to what degree* is Matthew

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[62] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 29-32. Brown also comments, "Paradoxically, one may speak of the Gospels as developing backwards. The oldest Christian preaching about Jesus concerned his death and resurrection, as may be seen in the formulas of Acts 2;23, 32; 3:14-15; 4:10; 10:39-40; and I Cor 15:3-4." Ibid., 26.

[63] The lines of direction are no doubt more complicated and I do not mean to imply that my reading simply reverses the lines of movement. It would be more accurate to say that my reading complicates any attempt at seeing only a singular directionality in the composition.

[64] Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, Division of Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

making explicit his claim of that incarnational presence. Here I wish to challenge that incarnational assumption through an *off-epochal* priming for my reading generated by my figuration of Matthew as *bricoleur*. Thus primed, the birth annunciation is no longer fertile ground, but familiar space.

3.2.1 The Sign

I begin unpacking this programmatic passage by looking at verse 23, Matthew's infamous explanation of the angelic declaration.[65] It is here, in reference to the angelic pronouncement, that Matthew offers the first of his so-called fulfilment quotations.[66] Recalling my discussion in the previous chapter, Matthew's welding of a passage from Isaiah to the words of the angel should not be taken as an attempt to prove that Isaiah had predicted the birth announced by the angel. In these verses, Matthew is incorporating an existing birth annunciation tradition into his figuration of Jesus through what I have already termed a Torah-forming process.[67]

According to Matthew, the *genesis* of Jesus, including the annunciation narrative, have all taken place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah. That Matthew fits Isaiah 7:14 to an existing scene raises two interlocking questions. First, what were the material properties of these words spoken through the prophet. Secondly, how were these materials taken up by our *bricoleur*? These two questions are not an an attempt to reintroduce authorial intent or determinism back into my reading. Exploring the context of Isaiah proper in this reading is a question of materiality. Matthew is free to repurpose the Isaiah material to whatever end(s) he so desires, but the form of the material at hand does constrain as well as enable that repurposing.[68]

Turning to Isaiah 7:14, we find the following two forms of the text as preserved in both the Masoretic Hebrew text and the LXX Greek text,[69]

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[65] I say infamous but notorious would also work. This is undoubtedly the most maligned and critiqued of Matthew's uses of scripture in his composition.

[66] For a comprehensive discussion of Matthew's textual sources in the infancy narrative see Prabhu, 63, 229-31. It is important to note that the existing tradition taken up by Matthew did not include the reference to Isaiah. See Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 300, also 160ff.

[67] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 190-95; also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 104-19; Prabhu, 63, 294-300.

[68] Here I wish I had the space and time to introduce Manuel DeLanda's discussion of morphogenesis and materiality.

[69] For the sake of convenience, I will continue the traditional practice of referring to the various Old Greek versions and text forms of Israel's scriptures that appear in Matthew as coming from the Septuagint (LXX). For a good discussion of the complexity obscured by this convenience see Moisés and Karen.; also Mogens, 206.

לָכֵן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנָי הוּא לָכֶם אוֹת
הִנֵּה הָעַלְמָה הָרָה וְיֹלֶדֶת בֵּן
וְקָרְאת שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל[70]

διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον
ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν,
καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Εμμανουηλ (LXX)

Returning to the Isaiah passage immediatly draws attention to a key framing aspect of the passage in both the Hebrew and Greek version, a framing that at first glance appears to be absent in Matthew's composition. Isaiah is explicit, the material condition of *Immanuel* is the giving of a divine *sign* (אוֹת / σημεῖον).

Given, that within subsequent traditional Christian exegesis, this passage has come to be synomous with messianic prophecy, one might be tempted to assume the existence of a well-known messianic connotation for Isaiah 7:14 within Second Temple Jewish literature at large, but such is not the case. In fact, there is no textual evidence of a pre-Matthaean messianic interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 in Second Temple Jewish literature.[71]

Even more striking, Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14, messianic or otherwise, is also unique among the texts of the New Testament.[72] The uniqeness of this citation is worth noting given that Matthew tends to incorporate passages from the scriptures of Israel that are also being cited by other New Testament writers. The omission of Isaiah 7:14 by the

[70] "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel."

[71] So argue Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:214. Beaton, 123, 91, 95, notes that Isaiah 7:14 is not widely cited in Second Temple Jewish literature and that we have no record, aside from Matthew, of it being cited in connection with a virginal conception. Fitzmeyer is even more forceful, "Neither in Diaspora Judaism prior to Christianity nor in Palestinian Judaism prior to or contemporary with the rise of Christianity was this text understood either of the Messiah or of a virginal *conception.*" Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament," *Theological Studies* 34, no. 4 (1973): 551. See also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 524; Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, 195.

[72] There is the possibility that the Lukan narrative (1:26-31) is dependent upon the Isaiah passage. The matter is still contested among scholars, but I find most compelling conclusions to the negative by Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 91; Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 153; and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-Ix: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, vol. 28, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 336. For the alternative position that affirm a Lukan dependence upon Isaiah 7:14 see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 212-13; François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Christine M. Thomas, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 43-44.

other New Testament writers is significant when we consider how much incarnational weight the passage is typically made to carry.[73]

If not incarnational, what then, might be the function of Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew's *bricolage*? If we wish to stay within a Torah-formed space, the historical context of Isaiah 7 can provide us an important clue to the possible function of Isaiah in Matthew's *bricolage*. The declaration in Isaiah 7:14 is drawn from a larger series of oracles (7:1-8:18) likely composed during the Syro-Ephraimite conflict of the eighth-century BCE.[74] In 7:1-8:18, the prophet Isaiah delivers a series of oracles meant to reassure Judah's king, Ahaz, of divine protection in the face of military agression by the kingdoms of Aram and Israel. The trustworthiness of these oracles is buttressed through the use of three symbolic names given to Isaiah's children.[75]

In Isaiah 7:3, Isaiah is instructed to take his son, bearing the name *Shear-jashub* (שְׁאָר יָשׁוּב) – meaning "a remnant will return" – and go out to meet King Ahaz. The presence of *Shear-jashub* with Isaiah functions to symbolically reinforce the reliability of the prophet's words to Ahaz that God will protect Judah. The name of the first son embodies the divine promise/word that only a remnant of the hostile armies will survive.

Following this initial declaration, the prophet presents Ahaz with the oppurtunity to ask for an additional sign to confirm the veracity of the oracle. When Ahaz declines, the prophet declares that God himself will provide an additional sign. This sign will come in

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[73] For instance, key episodes shared by more than one gospel often drawn upon the same quotations. When it comes to the ministry of John the Baptist, Isaiah 40:3-5 is quoted by all four gospels (Mt. 3:3; Mk 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23). When narrating Jesus' "triumphal" entry into Jerusalem three of the four gospel writers look to Psalm 118:26 (Mt. 21:9; Lk. 13:35, 19:38; Jn. 12:13). Finally, Jesus' rejection by humans and subsequent elevation by God is framed by Psalm 118:23,23 in not only the three synoptic gospels, but also in Acts and 1 Peter (Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10-11; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pt. 2:7). Here I am not arguing that New Testament writers must or did read the scriptures of Israel in the same fashion, rather I am merely suggesting that there seems to be a tendency of quoting/citing the same passages with respect to significant christological claims shared by more than one author. For example, if Matthew 1:23 was suggesting the same incarnational language as found in John or Luke, one would expect that the Isaiah 7:14 would make an appearance in those works.

[74] For an introduction to First Isaiah, including the interpretive difficulties surrounding the oracle found in 7:1-8:18 see J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah*, ed. Peter Machinist, Hermenia - a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015). See also Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); H. J. Hayes and A. S. Irvine, "Isaiah the Eight-Century Prophet: His Time & His Preaching," (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987); Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 159-71.

[75] Other possibilities have been offered as to who the three children are, but the conclusion that the three children are Isaiah's seems to be the best reading of the immediate context (Isa. 8:18). See the commentary by Roberts.; Herbert M. Wolf, "A Solution to the Immanuel Prophecy in Isaiah 7:14-8: 22," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91, no. 4 (1972). For an alternative see John J. Scullion, "An Approach to the Understanding of Isaiah 7:10-17," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87, no. 3 (1968), who argues that the child is that of Ahaz.

the naming of a second child, this time named *Immanuel*[76] (עִמָּנוּ אֵל) – meaning "God with us" – and before this child is weaned the invading armies will have all been destroyed.

Furthermore, the naming of the child *Immanuel* in Isaiah 7:14 also seems to signify that despite Ahaz's lack of faith in the oracle of divine protection, God will nonetheless continue to honor that oracle and be present as Judah's protector.[77] Importantly, it is the naming of this second child, not its conception that functions as the sign of an imminent, but future divine intervention on behalf of Judah. As a sign, the naming and life of the child point towards the larger reality that God is indeed present even in the face of bleak circumstances. Importantly, like the first child, the second child is named as a corporeal sign of surety regarding the word of divine presence among the people, not as a sign of the divine presence incarnate in the child.

This same pattern continues as the series of oracles conclude with Isaiah being instructed to write the name of yet a third child, *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* (מַהֵר שָׁלָל חָשׁ בַּז) – meaning "the spoil speeds, the prey hastens" – upon a tablet. The prophet then declares that before this third child is able to say "my father" or "my mother" the enemies of Judah will be destroyed. Once again the name carried by a child serves as a sign pointing towards the surety of the divine word and purpose. In additon to 7:14, we twice more find Isaiah using the phrase עִמָּנוּ אֵל (8:8, 10). In both instances the immediate context is the guarentee of protection because of the divine presence.

While it is possible that Matthew is doing something altogether different with the oracle from Isaiah, it seems to me that the burden of proof lies with those who insist on novelty in Matthew's fitting of Isaiah into his composition. With each of Isaiah's three children, the connection is between a symbolic name and the events in the life of the child that is meant to confirm the validity of the prophetic oracle. Matthew's application of this linkage to Jesus is a repurposing of the oracle, but not in the predictive *epochal* way it is traditionally framed. For example, some interpreters in their insistence on novelty have suggested that,

> Matthew was one of those at the beginning of the common era who believed that the prophets had possessed a special foreknowledge about the person and mission of Jesus. Like other interpreters, Matthew shows little awareness that the prophets might have been delivering oracles of crucial relevance to their original audiences.[78]

Such a strained reading of the text is both unnecessary and unwarranted. Matthew 1:23 presents Jesus' naming and life as a sign of God's presence/activity among his people – an interpretation admittedly proffered by numerous commentators – but not in an *incarnational* sense. In Matthew, the angelic annunciation is the oracle. The simpler reading, and one that remains within a Torah-formed space, is that Matthew fits the Isaiah

[76] For the sake of consistency, throughout I have opted to use the familiar English transliteration *Immanuel* (from the Hebrew עִמָּנוּ אֵל) instead of *Emmanuel* (e.g. from the Greek form Ἐμμανουήλ cited in Mt. 1:23).

[77] So argues Wildberger, 306-14. Originally cited in Hays, 163. See also Irvine, 159-71.

[78] Kupp, 167.

passage to the annunciation to give Jesus a second name as a *sign* that *the divine word* is dependable and enduring.[79]

3.2.2 Holy Spirit

In contrast to Matthew's unique fitting of Isaiah 7:14, his reference to the *holy spirit* in verses 18 and 20, seems, at least initially, to suggest an incarnational emphasis shared with other New Testament texts, specifically the gospel of John. It is important to pause and briefly linger over the actual use of phrase, *the holy spirit,* in Matthew's gospel given the ways in which the phrase comes to be later understood. While often taken as proof of Jesus as the incarnation of the divine, resulting from a virgin birth, once again I hope to show that such a conclusion is a consequence of *epochal* framings and not our only option. A simpler, *off-epochal*, reading suggests that the chief function of this reference is to remind us one again that the story of Jesus, while divinely orchestrated, is taking place within a Torah-formed space.

Our first clue that Matthew's use of *holy spirit* reflects a Torah-forming process and not incarnational theology, comes in the clear echoes to the *Book of Genesis*. [80] Twice in Matthew's opening chapter, we read of the γένεσις (1:1, 18) of Jesus and are likewise twice told that it is ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου (1:18, 20).[81] In Matthew 1:18 the connection between the γένεσις of Jesus and the work of the πνεύματος ἁγίου is explicit and undeniable.[82] Here, as in the Torah, Matthew's reference to the *spirit* reflects a well-

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[79] Ibid., 175. phrases it thus, "This masthead, *that Jesus' salvation of his people will be seen as God's presence with them,* now hangs over the whole Gospel." Matthew is not interested in Immanuel as real name for Jesus, his concern is with the symbolic nature of the name. It is a sign. See Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 152.

[80] lit. 'genesis.' For support in translating γένεσις as genesis see *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 58. For an alternative see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 155, 98. France opts for *origin,* France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 26, 46. It seems that Matthew's usage here is a clear echo of the Genesis accounts (see our earlier discussion in chapter two).

[81] lit. 'from the holy spirit.' Contra most English translations and commentaries, I intentionally leave the phrase *holy spirit* in lower-case. I find it significant that in most English translations, New Testament occurrences of the phrase are capitalized (i.e. Matthew 1:20), while those found in Isaiah, Psalms, and Wisdom remain in lower-case. I fail to see any justification within Matthew itself for treating the holy spirit as a proper noun (e.g. in terms of later Trinitarian thought) when it is clearly a well-established way of speaking about the creative power/agency of God (see Davies Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 200; also Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007 (1951)), 155-57.); also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 124-5. who notes that the expression is in the genitive and has no definite article, literally "of a Holy Spirit." For an important and thorough examination of the spirit in Second Temple Judaism see John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), esp 65-80.

[82] For a more detailed discussion see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 197-98, and Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 69-70. Also note our discussion the previous chapter regarding

established way of speaking about divine action/intervention in creation (cf. Job 26:13; Psalm 33:6; 104:30; Isaiah 32:15; 2 Baruch 21:4).

Furthermore, the presence and work of the *spirit* in the conception of Jesus should not be seen as overly unique given the common understanding, in both scripture and Second Temple Jewish literature, of the *spirit* as the source of human life (i.e. Genesis 6:3; Job 27:3; 33:4; Psalms 33:6; Isaiah 32:15; Ezekiel 37:9-10, 14; Judges 16:14; Jubilees 5:8; Sib. Or. frag. 1, 5; Philo, *Op. Mund.* 29-30).[83]

Secondly, while incorporating a wide range of raw materials in his composition, Matthew is consistent in his use of the phrase *holy spirit*. In addition to his references here in the opening of the gospel, the phrase appears four more times in Matthew (1:18, 20; 3:11; 12:32; 28:19).[84] A brief examination of these four remaining occurrences should prove helpful in illuminating the rather unremarkable, that is to say Torah-formed, nature of Matthew's usage here in 1:18, 20.

The second Matthaean reference to the *holy spirit* comes in the midst of John the Baptizer's declaration concerning the coming messiah, namely that αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί (3:11).[85] Here Davies and Allison rightly note that, "For the Baptist, fire and Spirit were not two things but one–'fiery breath' (hendiadys)."[86] Ample support for this reading of 'fiery breath' can be found in both Isaiah 30:27-8 as well as 4 Ezra 13:8-11.[87] In Isaiah 30:27-28 we find an oracle of judgement against Assyria in which the "name of the LORD comes from far away" and "his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is like a devouring fire; his breath (רוּחוֹ / πνεῦμα) is like an overflowing stream…"

In his sixth vision (4 Ezra 13), Ezra describes a man who comes up from the sea and flies with the clouds of heaven. This messianic figure who is later identified as the son of the Most High (v. 32) is described as having a stream of fire coming from his mouth and "from his lips a flaming breath" (v. 10). In 3:11, Matthew is repurposing well-established

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Matthew's possible use of the structure of Genesis as a signal that the gospel should be read as an expression of Torah.

[83] See the extended discussion in Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 200-01.

[84] Only in Luke, is the phrase *holy spirit* a common occurrence. The phrase occurs in Mark 3 times, Luke 13 times, and in John 4 times.

[85] Here Luke and Matthew are in complete agreement following Q while Mark records, αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ with no mention of fire. It has also been suggested that Q did not include a reference to the spirit, only fire, and it is only by bringing together Q and Mark that we arrive with a baptism of fire and spirit. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 316-17, and Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 138.

[86] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 317. They continue in the next sentence, "[John the baptizer] proclaimed that, at the boundary of the new age, all would pass through the fiery *rūach* of God, a stream that would purify the righteous and destroy the unrighteous." This type of *epochal* reading is one that I am suggesting we need not follow. The echo to Isaiah 11:4 suggests a restoration of the Davidic line more than an advent of a new epoch. This is not the *novus ordo seclorum*, unless of course we are reading Virgil proper, "*Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo. iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna, iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto"* (*Fourth eclogue,* lines 6-8).

[87] See the full discussion of fire and spirit in *ibid*.

imagery that combines fire and spirit as a sign of divine judgment from within the repertoire of Second Temple Jewish literature.

The next Matthaean reference to a *holy spirit* comes in 12:32, where we find an enigmatic warning by Jesus that, "whoever speaks against the *holy spirit* will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." This warning appears as part of two antithetical pairings brought together by Matthew in a parallel arrangement:

31a Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven
31b Blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven
32a A word against the Son of Man will be forgiven
32b A word against the holy spirit will not be forgiven

This parallel structure apparently reflects the juxtaposition of two different versions of the same saying. Verse 31 is derived from the Markan account, whereas 32 reflects the version in Q (preserved in Luke 12:10a).[88] The most straightforward explanation for this arrangement is that in Matthew's framing, the two versions, while not identical, do reflect some overlapping meaning.[89]

When it comes to ascertaining what exactly Matthew means in verse 32, leading commentaries confess ignorance. Davies and Allison conclude, "As it stands, Mt 12.32 has no obvious meaning… We remain stumped."[90] Luz likewise concludes, "I must confess that none of the interpretations that I have found in the literature satisfy me. The most honest approach is the information that Matthew here simply preserves the wording he had received and that v. 32a for him was probably *d'importance secondaire."*[91] While I am not prepared to *solve* this great mystery, I do think two observations can be made given the parallel structure of verses 31 and 32.

First, if we are willing to set aside an incarnational framing, verse 32 clearly draws some kind of contrast between the Son of Man and the *holy spirit*. Second, and more importantly, the parallel structure of 31b and 32b seems to make it clear that the *spirit* and the *holy spirit* are interchangeable for Matthew (similar to the equivalence between *the Kingdom of God* and *the Kingdom of Heaven* in Matthew). Matthew's adjectival use of *holy* with respect to the *spirit* finds a parallel in the Isaiah Targum which routinely adds

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[88] Compare:

> "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." (Mark 3:28-29)
>
> "And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven." (Luke 12:10)

For further discussion see *Matthew 19-28*; Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, 2, 2:201.

[89] Mysteriously, in spite of noting this parallel structure, Davies and Allison nonetheless maintain that Matthew, "does not seem to have given them the same meaning." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 346.

[90] Ibid., 348. Here they are in good company as no less a commentator than Augustine described the quest for its meaning as perhaps the most difficult question in the bible. Cited in Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, 2, 206.

[91] *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, 2, 209.

the adjective "holy" to occurrences of spirit (cf. 40:13; 42:1; 59:21).[92] The *holy spirit* then, would not be a who, but a what, namely shorthand for the oft recorded divine intervention in creation. We can then safely conclude, that whatever else the verse may be suggesting, for Matthew, Jesus as the Son of Man is a sign of God's work but he is not synonymous with God's spirit.

The fifth and final Matthaean reference to the *holy spirit* is found in the famous commissioning scene at the end of the gospel (28:19). I will return to this passage later in this chapter, but here a few brief observations are in order. In 28:18-20, Matthew records the final words of Jesus as follows,

> All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος), and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (28:18-20)

Notice that the modern translators have once again rendered τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος with the capitalized phrase "the Holy Spirit."

Matthew is unique among the evangelists in mentioning *the holy spirit* in Jesus' final commission to his followers.[93] In keeping with his other uses, the idea that Matthew here intended *holy spirit* as a proper noun is unlikely. The singular τὸ ὄνομα strongly suggests that Matthew is not referring to three distinct entities. It would definitely be a mistake to read in Matthew 28:19 evidence for Trinitarian theology. Whatever is meant by the three-fold directive in verse 19, verse 18 makes it abundantly clear that πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς has been given to Jesus.

Taken together, the five occurrences of πνεύματος ἁγίου in Matthew's gospel clearly and repeatedly demonstrate that Matthew is repurposing existing material in a mode consonant with Jewish practices of the Second Temple period. Reading *holy spirit* as the agent of conception to mean that a divine Jesus must result is an unwarranted imposition on the text.

Matthew's use of *holy spirit* is likewise in keeping with the few references to the *holy spirit* that occur in the LXX (Psa. 50:13; Isa. 63:10, 11; Wis. 9:17[94]). For example, in the LXX, the *holy spirit* is never described as a person, but in each case the phrase functions in a way that would be very familiar to the readers of Matthew. Notice the framing of the occurrence of *holy spirit* in Psalm 51 (LXX),

καρδίαν καθαρὰν κτίσον ἐν ἐμοί, ὁ θεός,
καὶ πνεῦμα εὐθὲς ἐγκαίνισον ἐν τοῖς ἐγκάτοις μου.
μὴ ἀπορρίψῃς με ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου σου

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[92] Evans, "Targumizing Tendencies in Matthean Redaction," 109.

[93] Comparing Matthew 28:19 with Mark 16:16 and Luke 24:47 reveals a few other key differences. In the Markan account there is no formal command to baptize, only that ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται. For Luke, we likewise do not get a command to baptize, only a directive that, καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. In Luke's second work, Acts, this instruction does seem to be understood as a commend to baptize.

[94] It can be argued that the phrase also occurs in Wisdom 1:5, howbeit in a slightly different form. I would argue that this occurrence is more akin to Jubilees 1:20-21 (see note below).

καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιόν σου μὴ ἀντανέλῃς ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ.
ἀπόδος μοι τὴν ἀγαλλίασιν τοῦ σωτηρίου σου
καὶ πνεύματι ἡγεμονικῷ στήρισόν με. (51:12-14 LXX)[95]

Here *holy spirit* is paralleled with the presence of God. Notice also that psalmist bookends the divine presence/holy spirit with a request for the human spirit to be renewed and strengthened.[96]

In the Greek text of Third Isaiah, the prophet declares that the realization of God's restorative work is near at hand.[97] In chapter 63, following an oracle celebrating the triumphant return of the divine warrier, we find in verses 7-14 a brief recitation of God rescuing acts in the Exodus, the wilderness and then the settlement of the land. In 63:10-12 we find these two two occurences of *holy spirit*,

> αὐτοὶ δὲ ἠπείθησαν καὶ παρώξυναν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐστράφη αὐτοῖς εἰς ἔχθραν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπολέμησεν αὐτούς καὶ ἐμνήσθη ἡμερῶν αἰωνίων ὁ ἀναβιβάσας ἐκ τῆς γῆς τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων· ποῦ ἐστιν ὁ θεὶς ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. ὁ ἀγαγὼν τῇ δεξιᾷ Μωυσῆν, ὁ βραχίων τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ; κατίσχυσεν ὕδωρ ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτῷ ὄνομα αἰώνιον...[98]

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[95] (51:13 MT) אַל־תַּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלִּפְנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קָדְשְׁךָ אַל־תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי

[96] Levison, 65, esp fn 13. argues that the holy spirit in Psalm 51 can also be read as being identified with the human spirit, the "sustaining power of human life." While the holy spirit may in some sense be seen as the sustaining power of human life I don't find it compelling to suggest that the human spirit and the holy spirit can therefore be identified with one another. Levison further cites the Wisdom of Solomon 1:5, and Pseudo-Philo 18:11 in arguing that "the human spirit, understood as that which is constitutive of life itself, could be designated the holy spirit." Ibid., 70. While the reference in Wis. 1:5 does seem to refer to a human spirit, there the construction is a bit different from the rest of the occurrences we find in the LXX. The following reference in Pseudo-Philo 18:11, seems to be one that can just as easily be read as indicating the loss of divine inspiration and thus the end of Balaam's ability to prophesy, "I am restrained in my speech and cannot say what I see with my eyes, because there is little left of the holy spirit that abides in me." James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 2: Expansions of the Old Testament and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 326.

In Jubilees 1:20-21 we find another parallel between an upright spirit for the people and a holy spirit that seems to support Levison's claim, "Oh Lord, let your mercy be lifted up upon your people, and create for them an upright spirit... Create a pure heart and a holy spirit for them. And do not let them be ensnared by their sin henceforth and forever." Ibid., 52-53. This reference seems much more like that in Wisdom 1:5, "for a holy and disciplined spirit will flee from deceit" (ἅγιον γὰρ πνεῦμα παιδείας).

[97] For a discussion of Third Isaiah see Wildberger.

[98] Compare with the MT:

> וְתֵּמָּה מָרוּ וְעִצְּבוּ אֶת־רוּחַ קָדְשׁוֹ וַיֵּהָפֵךְ לָהֶם לְאוֹיֵב הוּא נִלְחַם־בָּם: וַיִּזְכֹּר יְמֵי־עוֹלָם מֹשֶׁה עַמּוֹ אַיֵּה הַמַּעֲלֵם מִיָּם אֶת רֹעֵי צֹאנוֹ אַיֵּה הַשָּׂם בְּקִרְבּוֹ אֶת־רוּחַ קָדְשׁוֹ:
> מוֹלִיךְ לִימִין מֹשֶׁה זְרוֹעַ תִּפְאַרְתּוֹ בּוֹקֵעַ מַיִם מִפְּנֵיהֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ שֵׁם עוֹלָם:

Notice that the *holy spirit* is again synonymous with God's saving presence and action among his people.[99] The second occurrence places the *holy spirit* in parallel with God's glorious arm further emphasizing the understanding of the *spirit* as God's power.

This association of the *holy spirit* with God's action in the world is likewise seen in Wisdom 9:17-18 where we find the following,

> Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high (καὶ ἔπεμψας τὸ ἅγιόν σου πνεῦμα ἀπὸ ὑψίστων)? And thus the paths of those on earth were set right, and people were taught what pleases you, and were saved by wisdom (καὶ τῇ σοφίᾳ ἐσώθησαν)."

The writer here parallels the gift of wisdom with the sending of the holy spirit from on high. The paths of those on earth are thus set right and people are saved through the instruction of wisdom.

This excursus is not intended to offer a comprehensive examination of the role of the *holy spirit* in Matthew's gospel. My aim here is only to demonstrate that when properly situated within Second Temple Jewish literature, there is no innovation to be found in the Matthaean usage of the phrase the *holy spirit*. Even otherwise insightful commentators like Davies and Allison push too hard when they ask, "Jesus is at once descended from David and conceived by the Holy Spirit. *How* can this be?"[100] Their misstep is in seeing Matthew's description as reflecting two different lineages. In Psalm 2:7 (LXX), David himself is said to have to declared, "The Lord said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten (γεγέννηκά) you.'" The verb used in the LXX to describe David's origin is the same used by the angel to Joseph when he declares that the child conceived (γεννηθὲν) in Mary is from the *holy spirit*. There is no need to posit, as Davies and Allison do, that, "through his mother and the Holy Spirit he has a more exalted origin" in contrast to his Davidic lineage.[101] These are two ways of saying the same thing.

Failing to grasp the significance of Matthew's use of *holy spirit* invariably results in forced, *epochal* readings of Immanuel as *God with us,* as R.T. France's commentary serves to demonstrate,

> At this point it would be possible to read "Immanuel" only in its probable OT sense as a statement of God's concern for his people, "God *is* with us," but the name as applied to one who has just been declared to owe his origin to the direct work of the Holy Spirit was probably in Matthew's mind a more direct statement of the presence of God *in Jesus himself*. . . that God is present in the person of Jesus. Matthew's overt interpretaion of "Immanuel" thus takes him close to an explicit doctrine of the incarnation such as is expressed in John 1:14.[102]

Such a reading requires an innovative use of *holy spirit* by Matthew, an innovation that is patently not the case as my analysis above has clearly, even if tediously, demonstrated. In Matthew, like most other Second Temple Jewish literature, employing the phrase *holy*

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[99] It is also possible that the holy spirit here is associated with the "angel of his presence" (Exodus 33:2, 14-15) see Levison, 65, fn 13.

[100] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:219. They of course are not the first to ask, Ignatius likewise wondered how a son of David could also be ἐκ θεοῦ (Ignatius, *Eph.* 7:2)?

[101] Ibid., 220.

[102]France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 49.

spirit to describe the work of God in creation carries no incarnational implications with respect to the outcome of that divine intervention.[103]

3.2.3 Of Virgins and Immaculate Contraptions[104]

What then of a virgin giving birth?[105] Once again, rather than pushing us towards incarnation, an *off-epochally* primed reading suggests that we have other options regarding Matthew's virgin. First, miraculous birth stories are more the rule than the exception for important figures in Second Temple Jewish literature. This includes important characters in the scriptures of Israel. Divine intervention (either by God himself or via an angelic intermediary) is ascribed to the conceptions of Isaac (Genesis 18:9; 21:1-3); Samson (Judges 13:2-7), and Samuel (1 Samuel 2:21). Divine intervention in itself does not connote an incarnational aspect to the miraculous birth.

The scriptural descriptions of these divine interventions are ambiguous enough to prompt speculation regarding the exact nature of the intervention. For example, the scriptural account of Samson's conception is rather mysterious. His mother meets an angel out in the field and then conceives? Yair Zakovitch has suggested that behind this narrative one can still ascertain elements of an older story involving a more direct form of divine intervention in Samson's conception. In describing Isaac's conception, the *Book of Jubilees* records,

> And in the middle of the sixth month the LORD visited Sarah and did unto her as he had said. And she conceived and she bore a son in the third month in the middle of the month, in the time when the LORD told Abraham. (*Jubilees* 16:12-13)[106]

While Raymond Brown argues that what "the Lord did unto her" is simply to remove her barrenness so that Abraham could father a child with her, the passage in Jubilees can be read as suggesting a more direct intervention.[107] Even with the ambiguity, none of these interventions were taken to have resulted in an incarnational birth.

In addition to the miraculous stories found in scripture proper, Second Temple literature contains accounts of miraculous births being attributed to other famous biblical

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[103] Here I say "most" only because I leave open the possibility that Luke or John may have intended some incarnational valence. What is clear is this, aside from other New Testament texts, there is no indication that *holy spirit* implied any incarnational activity.

[104] My section title here is drawn from the modern apocryphal story of a young boy who upon returning home from Sunday School proudly announced to his mother that the baby Jesus had been both without sin due to his mother Mary's own "immaculate contraption." This of course being a pun on the later doctrine that Mary's own conception was sinless (immaculate conception) and not to be confused with the virgin conception of Christ.

[105] Here is not the place to rehash long running discussions regarding Matthew's or the LXX's understanding(s) of the meaning of the Hebrew עַלְמָה. My reading does not suggest that Matthew is trying to prove anything, he does however have a passage from Isaiah at hand (LXX version) that provides a nice opportunity to Torah-form his figuration of Jesus and so that is what he does.

[106] Charlesworth, 88.

[107] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 524, fn. 21.

characters. For example, D. Daube reads one Passover *Haggadah* to suggest that the phrase וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹהִים in Exodus 2:25 should be read as playing off the double meaning of ידע ('to know' and 'to have sexual intercourse') and thus implying that God intervened directly to cause the conception of Moses.[108]

In 2 *Enoch* 71:1-23, there is an account of the miraculous conception of Melchizedek. While this conception occurs without a human father, the mother is not a virgin and there is no explicit mention of a divine agent.[109] Notice the description here,

> And behold, the wife of Nir, Sothonim, being sterile and never having given birth to a child by Nir– And Sothanim was in the time of old age, and in the day of death. She conceived in her womb, but Nir the priest had not slept with her, from the day the LORD had appointed him to in front of the face of the people. (2 *Enoch* 71:1-2 [A])[110]

When the pregnant Sothanim is about to give birth (she has kept the pregnancy hidden) she is confronted by her husband and falls down dead. In a one recension we read,

> And the archangel Gabriel appears to Nir, and said to him, "Do not think that your wife Sofonim has died because of (your) error; but this child which is to be born of her is a righteous fruit, and one whom I shall receive into paradise, so that you will not be the father of a gift of God." (2 *Enoch* 71:11 [A])[111]

After digging a grave, Nir and his brother Noe come to take the body of Sothanim to bury it but they are surprised to find a fully clothed child, that had come out of the dead Sothanim, sitting beside the corpse. The child is fully formed physically and blesses the LORD. Noe remarks that "this is from the LORD" and that "God is renewing the continuation of the blood of the priesthood after us" (71:19-21). Lest there be any doubt as to the divine role in the conception, having learned that God would soon send the archangel Gabriel to take the child up into paradise, Nir blesses God by saying,

> Blessed be the LORD, the God of my fathers, who has not condemned my priesthood and the priesthood of my fathers, because by his word he has created a great priest, in the womb of Safonim, my wife. For I have no descendants. So let this child take the place of my descendants and become as my own son, and you will count him in the number of your servants. (2 Enoch 71:30-31 [A])[112]

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[108] Daube, 5-9. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 524, fn. 21. argues that the reference is both too late to be of significance for Matthew and that it is "highly dubious." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:215, on the other hand, refer to Daube's proposal as "an inviting possibility."

[109] This account in 2 Enoch does not appear to be an imitation of the infancy narratives in either Matthew or Luke. Anderson, F.I. in James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 97. argues that the passage is clearly not Christian. Likewise Charles H. Talbert, "The Myth of a Descending-Ascending Redeemer in Mediterranean Antiquity," *New Testament Studies* 22, no. 04 (1976): 426, fn. 1. who also maintains a first-century date for the passage.

[110] Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 206.

[111] Ibid., 207.

[112] Ibid., 209.

Who the actual father is remains a mystery but we do not find any suggestion that "the gift from God" implies some form of divine incarnation.

In noting these various miraculous birth narratives, I am not suggesting that there is some 1:1 correspondence between them and the account found in Matthew.[113] Their value is in demonstrating that a non-incarnational, yet miraculous birth of Jesus to a virgin, is completely at home amidst this assemblage called the Second Temple period. As with his use of the phrase *holy spirit*, Matthew's virgin is often an over-played card in contemporary scholarship desperate to free the Matthaean Jesus from Judaism.

One should also wonder how important the virgin conception really is for Matthew, given that it never appears, explicitly or implicilty, again in his gospel.[114] Recalling our earlier observation that our *bricoleur* must make do with the materials at hand, I would like to advance the admittedly provocative claim that the virgin conception reflects material that our *bricoleur* is forced to deal with. While I agree with scholars that Matthew 1:20-23 is a key element in Matthew's figuration of Jesus, it seems to me that Matthew's work here is more an attempt *to make something of* the virginal conception than it is an apologetic or defense.[115]

Here it is important to bring in a few observations from source critical analyses of this passage. It is well established that key elements in the narrative of Matthew 1:18-2:23 come from pre-Matthaean sources that have been taken up by our *bricoleur*.[116] Important for our discussion is the recognition that included among the pre-Matthaean traditions taken up into Matthew's composition were a dream sequence and a birth annunciation narrative.

The significance for our analysis is the inverse of what normally would be taken. I am not interested in showing how Matthew continues to develop these materials, but rather

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[113] The only other actual reference to a virgin giving birth that I can find is a brief reference in *Apocalypse of Adam* (7:9) about the coming *Illuminator* who is said to have come from a virgin womb. While I am inclined to see the work as reflecting an independent tradition, the provenance of the work is still much contested. For example, G. MacRae has argued for a Jewish apocalyptic or gnostic composition free from Christian influence (ibid., 707-10, 16.). Contra Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 92, fn. 24. who sees this text as being most likely a Christian text based on Revelation 12. For those interested in a more exhaustive discussion of the virginal conception see the magisterial work of Raymond Brown who provides a thoughtful and comprehensive exploration of the subject in Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 517-33, 697-712. For further discussion of the LXX translation of הָעַלְמָה by ἡ παρθένος also see Prabhu, 63, 203-31.

[114] Beaton, 123, 92.

[115] For those who see the Isaiah 7:14 citation functioning in an apologetic manner see Richard S. McConnell, *Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel: The Authority and Use of the Old Testament in the Gospel of St. Matthew* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1969), 107; also F. W. Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew: Translation, Introduction, and Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 71.

[116] For a thorough discussion of this position see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 190-95; also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 104-19.; Prabhu, 63, 294-300.

how their presence exerts possibly undesirable influence on the final project. Reading Matthew as *bricolage* prompts us to ask what counter-force are the building materials/debris exerting on the final composition? Or framed another way, the question of how the materials are undermining the work of the *bricoleur,* not just how are they helping, is of crucial significance.[117]

Not only do the materials of scripture constrain the form of Matthew's compositon, but so do the developing Jesus traditions. Why need we assume everything in the gospel is there because Matthew wanted it (e.g. Matthew as engineer)? The general consensus seems to be that the evangelist saw christological implications in the infancy narratives that would be useful in their presentations of Jesus.[118] What if this were not the case? This is the question Matthew as *bricolage* requires that we ask. *Bricolage* also provides the mechanism to explain how unwanted material may end up in a composition. By unwanted I do not mean to suggest that Matthew had no choice in the matter, only that Matthew's limited repetoire may have necessitated the fitting of material he would have otherwise left aside.

When Mark composes his gospel, the circumstances of Jesus' birth had evidently not yet become an issue.[119] This situation rapidly changes such that by the time Matthew and Luke are writing in the last few decades of the first century, accounts of the life of Jesus must now include traditions about his pre-public ministry life; traditions that evidently include references to a virgin birth.[120]

This trajectory of elaboration and growth in traditions of Jesus' early life continues beyond the cannonical gospels. Not long after the composition of the cannonical gospels, we find an account of a virginal birth (a miraculous and painless birth in which Mary's hymen was not ruptured) in addition to the earlier accounts of a virginal conception. For example, in the second-century *Protoevangelium of James* we find this rather detailed account,

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[117] As Markus Bockmuehl remarks, "It seems both a matter of fact and part of the biblical author's intent that their engagement with the Old Testament is at least a much a function of the text's own agency in terms of its (divine) *claim and impact on them*, rather than merely of their 'use' of it." Cited in Hays, 7.

[118] For example, Raymond Brown writes, "Matthew and Like saw christological implications in stories that were in circulation about Jesus' birth; or at least, they saw the possibility of weaving such stories into a narrative of their own composition which could be made the vehicle of the message that Jesus was the Son of God acting for the salvation of mankind. When the infancy narratives conveyed that message, it became quite appropriate to prefix them to the main body of Gospel material about Jesus, which had the same message." Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 29.

[119] This suggestion is further reinforced by the similar absence of any birth narratives in Q. Thus, our two oldest sources for the life of Jesus both lack any traditions about Jesus the predate his public ministry. For further discussion of Q and the infancy of Jesus see Kloppenborg.. I should also note that there is no discussion whatsoever regarding the pre-ministry life of Jesus in the letters of Paul or James (the earliest among all New Testament texts).

[120] John's gospel sidesteps the historical narrative, but nonetheless takes up the question of "what was before?".

> And the midwife went out of the cave, and Salome met her. And she said to her, "Salome, Salome, I have a new marvel to describe to you. A virgin has given birth, which her nature cannot provide." And Salome said, "As the Lord my God lives, unless I thrust my finger and search her nature, in no wise shall I believe that a virgin has given birth." And the midwife went in and said to Mary, "Open yourself, for there is no small contention concerning you." And Salome thrust her finger into her physical aspect, and cried out and said, "Woe for my lawlessness and for my unbelief, because I put to test the living God, and behold, my hand is falling away from me in fire." (*Protoevangelium of James* 19:3-20:1)

The growing Jesus tradition doesn't stop here, but continues on, eventually including not only an account of Mary's own immaculate conception, but detailed narratives of the early life of Jesus.[121]

Matthew is typically situated within this trajectory and described as one stage somewhere between Mark/Q and the *Protoevangelium of James.* But perhaps Matthew reflects not only a resistance to this trajectory but a movement in another direction? Not necessarily backwards, within the rhizome there are more directions than just forward and reverse.

This suggestion that Matthew might be *stuck* with the virgin birth finds additional, howebeit limited, support when we consider the relationship between Luke and the developing Jesus traditions. While the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke express numerous common elements,[122] the accounts do appear to be independent of one another.[123] These commonalities are due to the fact that Matthew and Luke draw on pre-existing tradition/accounts that are known, at least in part, to both authors. [124]

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[121] Two key examples being the already mentioned *Protoevangelium of James* (circa mid second-century) and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (circa late second-century). The former being a gospel probably written about 150 CE, which expands the infancy stories contained in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, including a narrative concerning the birth and upbringing of Mary herself. The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* is another gospel dating to the late second century in which we find an expanded account of the childhood of Jesus, including full-fledged accounts of miraculous deeds performed by the wonder-child Jesus. In addition to these two aforementioned gospels there are several others including: the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* (also referred to as the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew* or the *Birth of Mary and Infancy of the Savior*), which is which seems to be a recombination of the *Protoevangelium of James* and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*; the *Syriac Infancy Gospel* (ca. sixth century); and the *History of Joseph the Carpenter,* a late 6th or early 7th century expansion on the childhood of Jesus including stories about the lives of Mary and Joseph.

[122] Depending on the scholar there seem to be 9 or 11 elements shared by the two accounts. See discussion in Fitzmyer, "The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament," 564.

[123] Here the magisterial work of Raymond Brown is still most compelling, see Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 109-19, 250-53, 521-31; also Fitzmyer, "The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament," 562, esp. notes 72, 73.

[124] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 161.

A close look at these two accounts makes it clear that the two evangelists are taking this shared pre-gospel annunciation narrative in different directions.[125] One key difference between Matthew and Luke can be see in the way the Lukan narrative shapes the virginal conception in order to bolster one of his key claims, namely that Jesus is superior to John the Baptist. Raymond Brown explains,

> [the] build-up of the superiority of Jesus [over John the Baptist] would fail completely if [over John the Baptist] was conceived in an extraordinary manner and Jesus in a natural matter. But it would be continued perfectly if Jesus was virginally conceived, since this would be something completely unattested in previous manifestations of God's power.[126]

This is preceisely the point I alluded to earlier with regards to *epochal* readings of Matthew's birth narrative. The virgin conception here in Luke functions to push beyond the other miraculous birth stories found in scripture and most of Second Temple literature. Luke's composition, unlike Matthew's, presents us with a reason such a leap forward would be needed, namely to elevate Jesus above John the Baptist.

In addition, while Matthew's account makes it clear that a conception has occurred (1:18, 20) – in keeping with the form of miraculous births found in the scriptures of Israel – we are not given any indication of exactly how this conception has taken place.[127] In contrast, Luke's annunciation account offers the reader a clear account of, "the begetting of God's Son in the womb of Mary through God's creative Spirit."[128] Brown goes on to make a compelling case that the language of the conception in Luke marks a more explicit christology with respect to virginal conception.

Lastly, two other Lukan references, the "betrothed" (2:5) and the "supposed son" (3:23), are most likely attempts to harmonize other material in his gospel with the virginal conception.[129] Matthew, however, does nothing to develop the notion of a virgin birth and it seems to play no role in the gospel outside of being an interpretive gloss on the birth annunciation.

This contrast between Matthew and Luke's treatment of the virgin conception is deeper than most suppose. An *epochal* framing primes one to see the shared reference to the virgin as evidence of some shared incarnational pathway between Matthew and Luke, howbeit with slightly different focus and rhetorical aims. Shifting to an *off-epochal* priming suggests something quite different might be underway. Namely that the references to the

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[125] These differences between Matthew and Luke are typically coded as differences in how the evangelists "develop" the earlier material, see ibid., 162, but my claim is different in suggesting that development is not an accurate reflection of the process, at least as undertaken by Matthew.

[126] For a full discussion of Brown's argument see ibid., 299-301.

[127] As I noted above, the description that the child is conceived ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου, doesn't explain the conception as much as it locates in within the well-established form of miraculous births found in the scriptures of Israel.

[128] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 312. It should be noted that some have argued that Luke doesn't explicilty assert a virgin birth. For a nuanced, howbeit ultimately unconvincing, argument for this position see Fitzmyer, "The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament," 566-72.

[129] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 521, n. 12.

virgin in Matthew and Luke not only aim at different goals, but that they move in different directions.

Let me return to this idea of Matthew being forced to deal with a virgin birth. If this this the case, how might his incorporation of the material work if not in a sympathetic manner? Here is where my alternative suggestion regarding the function of Isaiah in Matthew's *bricolage* comes into play. But first, several key reminders are in order: 1) we have already ruled out linear notions of temporal prediction for understanding the function of fulfillment in Matthew; 2) Torah-forming is the mode of composisiton driving our bricoleur; 3) rhizomatic assemblages involve non-linear pathways of motion.

What if, as I have alluded to above, Matthew's use of Isaiah is not an effort to prove or ground the virgin conception in scripture? What if Matthew's use of Isaiah actually serves to push the question of the virgin to the background? Once a person sets aside an *epochal* framing this suggestion is not nearly as radical as it may initially sound. As Davies and Allison themselves rightly note, "reflection on Isaiah's prophecy was not a sufficient cause of belief in the virginal conception of Jesus."[130] To this I would add the following question, what if the opposite is the case? A more plausible function for "reflecting" on Isaiah 7:14 is that it undermines the incarnational connotations of a virgin birth.

Matthew as a rhimozatic *bricolage* offers us at least two plausible mechanisms by which this could take place. First, Matthew clearly knows Hebrew, including the text of Isaiah 7:14. As such, his use of Isaiah 7:14 could be an activation of the Hebrew עַלְמָה, which would constrain the semantic range of the Greek παρθένος found in Matthew 1:23. Granted, this is a tenuous possiblity, but one that cannot be ruled out *prima facia*.

A second and more plausible flow would be an activation of παρθένος from the Greek text of Isaiah that then constrains the semantic range of παρθένος found in Matthew 1:23. As the primary lexical entry for παρθένος in BDAG reads, it simply means, "a young woman of marriageable age, w. or without focus on virginity."[131] The context of Isaiah 7:14 makes it clear that the child's mother is not a virgin. Matthew also combines this with the role of the name as sign pointing to the life, not the birth of the child. By forcing the reader to hear παρθένος within the Isaiah context, the nascent yet increasingly incarnational meaning associated with παρθένος is subverted and repurposed. While Matthew may have been too clever by half for his own good, the movement is rather subtle, the possibility remains that this is in fact what Matthew was up to.

It seems to me that the only reason to argue for a forward-moving expansion in the use of παρθένος by Matthew is an *epochally* primed reading. Absent that, Matthew's construction of verses 1:20-23, as an *off-epochal* rhizomatic assemblage, would suggest a flow in which backwards and sideways motions are just as plausible as that of the forward direction. Matthew is not offering us a commentary or new interpretation of Isaiah, but he may be using Isaiah to resist and even subvert a rapidly spreading incarnational tradition associated with a virgin conception of Jesus.

Rather than a leap forward, this Torah-forming use of Isaiah by Matthew serves to redirect his readers to an earlier understanding of Jesus. For Matthew, the virgin birth is material that must be fitted, not apologetic proof of divine sonship. In drawing attention

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[130] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:214.

[131] It is not my intent here to re-litigate all aspects of the centuries old discussion regarding Matthew's choice of παρθένος. I only raise it here to demonstrate that power that

away from the virgin birth Matthew is also drawing attention away from incarnational readings of Jesus as Immanuel. Shortly I will return to Matthew's use of Isaiah in pointing his audience to an earlier figuration of Jesus, but first one more detail.

3.2.4 Salvation

In the angel's closing words, Matthew uniquely provides an etymology for Jesus' name with the gloss, "γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν.[132] Once again, we find *epochally* primed commentators reading into Matthew much more than the text itself warrants. The default scholarly understandings of this angelic declaration that Jesus, "will save his people from their sins" seem to always be framed in both terms of national messianic deliverance and blood atonement.

No less an authority than Davies and Allison write, "our verse is not very illuminating with regard to exactly *how* Jesus saves," before continuing to claim that, "the atoning death must be in view…"[133] This 'must,' however, is undercut by their own words, just a few sentences later, when not only do they suggest that Jesus' healing of the sick could be thought of as salvation from sin, but they also remark, "Jesus' revelatory imperatives and abiding presence (18.20; 28.20) are salvific in so far as they encourage and enable believers to obtain the 'better righteousness' (5.20). Perhaps, then, Matthew thought that Jesus saved his people from their sins in a variety of ways."[134] Davies and Allison are not alone in quickly becoming mired in an epochal swamp when it comes to understanding salvation in Matthew.

This common scholary insistence on blood atonment theories is unwarranted. I would agree that the crucifixion of Jesus is something that our *bricoleur* would have no doubt had to include, but there is no reason to suppose that the crucifixion is uniquely key to Matthew's understanding of salvation. Like the rest of Matthew's material, it is both indexed and deployed as it can be made to fit.[135]

Davies and Allison's observation, noted above, that Jesus' imperatives and abiding presence are salvific is correct, but in a way that seems to escape them. Understanding Matthew's emphatic declaration that Jesus has come to save his people from their sins

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[132] This gloss "for he will save his people from their sins" no doubt plays on the fact that the Greek Ἰησοῦς (Jesus) is from the Hebrew יֵשׁוּעַ (Yeshua), itself a later form for יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Joshua), both of which were popularly thought to be connected to both the Hebrew verb יָשַׁע (to save) and the noun יְשׁוּעָה (salvation). See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:209-10; also Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd Edition* (University Of Chicago Press, 2001). The name Jesus/Joshua was a common Jewish name in first-century and is not a christological title in Matthew. See the discussion in France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 34, esp. fn. 27; also Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:155.

[133] *Matthew 1-7*, 1:210.

[134] Ibid., 210.

[135] Like the virgin conception, we would do well to avoid assuming a priori that Matthew's use of the crucifixion is in alignment or agreement with the other writings of the New Testament. This may well be the case, it is unfortunately outside the scope of this present work, but it is also possible that Matthew's use of the crucifixion moves in a very different direction than that of the other New Testament writers.

requires an understanding of the nature of their plight. Matthew is not offering up a theoretical or speculative rumination on the plight of humanity in general, but in speaking of Jesus, Matthew clearly identifies "his people" with Israel.[136]

Matthew is also quite clear that the responsibility for the plight of his people, the reason for which they need saving, is due to the teachers and authorities who have led them astray.[137] In Matthew 15:1 Jesus specifically addresses the Pharisees and goes so far as to accuse them of using "the tradition of the elders" to negate Torah.[138] Jesus' instruction to the twelve disciples in Matthew 10:5-6 that they, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" seems to echo the word of the Lord in the prophet Jeremiah who had lamented,

> My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains; from mountain to hill they have gone, they have forgotten their fold. All who found them have devoured them, and their enemies have said, "We are not guilty, because they have sinned against the LORD, the true pasture, the LORD, the hope of their ancestors." (Jer. 50.6-7)

The charge being made in Jeremiah 50 is against the leaders of Israel who have lead the people astray. While these leaders in Jeremiah may have been political, for Matthew the shepherds are the scribes and Pharisees who teach people. Jesus' people need to be rescued/saved from false teachers and faulty teaching.

Scholars are correct to see Israel's salvation in national terms, but most fail to make an important connection between the deportation to Bablyon and the abandonement of Torah.[139] According to the prophets, exile was God's judgement on Israel for her infidelity to the covenant as laid out in the Torah.[140] The needed rescue, salvation, then must involve a return to covenant via Torah observance. It is by leading the people back to proper Torah observance that Jesus will save them.

This Matthaean conceptualization of salvation as a return to proper Torah observance is one that we find in other Second Temple Jewish texts. The Isaiah Targum offers us just such an example of how other first century Jews might similarly conceive of salvation. In Targum Isaiah, repentance is clearly a return to the Torah.[141] Note the following two references from the opening chapter of Isaiah (vv. 16, 18):

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[136] Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 95.

[137] Hays, 129.

[138] This passage reveals the contours of Matthew's earlier statement that Jesus had come to uphold and fulfill the Torah (5:17-20).

[139] Hays, 111. See also Boris Repschinski, "For He Will Save His People from Their Sins (Matthew 1: 21): A Christology for Christian Jews," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2006).

[140] Hays, 128.

[141] Chilton, 38.

MT	*Isaiah Targum*
Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil. (Isaiah 1:16 MT) Come now, let us argue it out,	Return to the Torah. Be cleansed from your sins; remove the evil of your deeds from before My Memra; keep yourselves from doing evil. (Isaiah 1:16 LXX) Therefore, when you return to the Torah, seek from before Me and I will grant your requests,
says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18 MT)	says the Lord. If your sins be stained like dyed cloth, they will be white like snow. If they be red like scarlet, they shall be clean like wool. (Isaiah 1:18 LXX)

In both of these verses the Targumist has explicitly linked a return to Torah with a washing away of the people's sins. There is no blood atonement in view in these passages. In the verses preceeding this call to return to Torah, the Lord makes it abundantly clear that he has no desire for further sacrifices. Bruce Chilton has nicely summarized the Targumist's understanding of restoration as follows, "law is the means offered God's people for relating themselves to him... law is Israel's only way of putting herself on the path to restoration."[142] It is only a return to Torah that will bring about healing for the land and the people.[143]

This connection between a return to Torah observance and healing is present in Matthew. Richard Hays has pointed out that Jesus' response to John's disciples in Matthew 11:2-6, connects the messianic role of Jesus to healing not conquest.[144] In response to John's question, "Are you the one who is to come?", Jesus replies, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them" (11:4-5). As Hays has noted, these actions are introduced by Matthew in 11:2, as τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.[145]

Matthew also would have had to have known the various songs of Israel that identify Torah obervance with salvation. For example,

> The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
> the decrees of the LORD are sure,making wise the simple;
> the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
> the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;

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[142] Ibid., 13.

[143] In Isaiah 1:5, both the MT and the Targum explicitly mention the sickness of the people and the land.

[144] Hays, 149. Aside from the small apocalypse passage, there are no hints in Matthew of an earthly messianic kingdom like that of David being established by Jesus.

[145] Ibid. Here I can't help but hear an echo to the ἔργων νόμου.

the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb. (Psalm 19:7-10)[146]

For Matthew, Torah is the gift of God and righteousness is humanity's response to that gift, namely obedience.[147] Jesus will save his people from their sins by bringing them Torah. Salvation in Matthew is not the God's gift of righteousness, but his gracious gift of Torah that brings healing and renewal to the lost sheep of Israel.

Paul Voltz has demonstrated that this same path from law/instruction to restoration is also present in 2 Baruch.[148] Volz's work focuses more specifically on the linkage between the law and cult, but for our purposes I simply wish to note that in these texts we have a conceptual framework in which a Matthaean claim that Jesus's mission is to save "his people" from their sins by coming as Torah transfigured would be readily comprehensible. In the Isaiah Targum the saving teachings will come from the Temple[149], in Matthew, the saving teaching come in and through Jesus. In Matthew and various other Second Temple works, there is a clear link between a return to Torah and the promised messianic restoration of God's people.

3.2.5 God with Us

It is only now, after having unpacked the rest of 1:20-23 that we are ready to make proper sense of the second name, Immanuel, given to Jesus in 1:23b.[150] Not only does Matthew apply this second name to Jesus, but importantly, he explicitly glosses Immanuel as, "God is with us."[151] Within traditional epochal readings of this passage, Immanuel and the accompanying gloss *God with us*, is almost universally understood as connoting some

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[146] Greenberg, 20. notes that the Torah is here described, "not merely as an instrument leading to righteousness and holiness. It is rapturously affirmed that being a student of the Torah, reciting it, meditating on it, is a delight to the soul."

[147] Here we see the crucial importance of reading Matthew on its own terms and not importing a Pauline understanding of righteousness.

[148] Paul Volz, *Die Eschatologie Der Jüdischen Gemeinde Im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Hildescheim: Olm, 1966), 43. "Wenn die Juden geduldig ausharren und sich dem Gesetz und dem Weisen unterwerfen, so werden sie die Tröstung Zions schauen 44.7; 46.6, Jerusalems Neubau für immer 6.9; 32.4 und die Sammlung der Zerstreuten 78.7."

[149] Chilton, 18.

[150] ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν,
καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ,
ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός. (Matthew 1:23)

[151] If ὁ θεός were a predicate of Jesus, then we could expect to read, Ἐμμανουήλ. . . ὁ θεός μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν. Matthew however, following the word order of Isaiah 8:8 and 10, gives us Ἐμμανουήλ. . . μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός. Matthew uses the same inverted word order as found in Isaiah 8:10, μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν κύριος ὁ θεός. This suggests that we should probably take μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν in an adverbial sense, which would lead us translate the gloss on Ἐμμανουήλ as "with us is God" instead of the more common "God with us". For further discussion see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 1:217.

degree of divine incarnation in Jesus.[152] Richard Hays reflects this majority perspective when he writes, "In contrast to Mark's circumspect indirection in identifying Jesus with the God of Israel, Matthew explicitly presents Jesus as the embodiment of divine presence in the world."[153] Likewise R.T. France, who goes so far as to say, "Matthew's overt interpretation of 'Immanuel' takes him close to an explicit doctrine of the incarnation such as is expressed in John 1:14."[154] Given what we have already seen with respect to the other elements in this passage, we are now more than primed to regard this incarnational connotation with suspicion and to question its validity.

My reading begins with a reminder that the verse itself is *bricolage* and several clues are imbedded in the assemblage itself that point us towards an alternative significance for understanding the claim that in Jesus, "God is with us." To better follow my analysis, consider the following comparison between the two versions of Isaiah and Matthew:

MT Isaiah 7:14	LXX Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23a
Look, the young woman (הָעַלְמָה)	Look, the virgin (ἡ παρθένος)	Look, the virgin (ἡ παρθένος)
is with child (הָרָה)	shall be with child (ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει)	shall conceive (ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει)
and shall bear a son,	and bear a son,	and bear a son,
and she shall call (וְקָרָאת) him	and you shall call (καλέσεις) him	and they shall call (καλέσουσιν) him
Immanuel (עִמָּנוּ אֵל).	Emmanuel (Εμμανουηλ).	Emmanuel (Εμμανουηλ)
		which means, "God is with us"

First, Matthew has significantly altered the Isaiah passage with respect to who it is that will be calling this child *Immanuel*.[155]

(Isa. 7:14 MT) וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל	"she will call"
καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Εμμανουηλ (Isa. 7:14 LXX)	"you will call"
καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ (Mt. 1:23)	"they will call"

Whereas the MT and LXX are clear, Matthew's text seems to leave the reader to wonder who this "they" might be. Some have suggested that the "they" here is a change introduced

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[152] Positions vary with respect to the degree of the incarnational nature of the claim. For a discussion of the variation within this perspective see ibid., 217. Ulrich Luz is in general agreement with Davies and Allison, but does qualify his comments with the following, "Although he did not identify Jesus with God, he probably implied that for him Jesus is the form in which God will be present with his people and later with all nations" in Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 1:96. For the position that Matthew does in fact see Jesus as God (or God in Jesus) see Hays, 163. Likewise, France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 49.

[153] Hays, 162-63.

[154] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 49.

[155] Some have made the argument here that Matthew here is quoting from a textual variant that is no longer extant. For example, Menken, *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist*, 121; Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel. With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, 89-91; cf. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 151. Such a position however is unwarranted. For support of the position that Matthew has intentionally changed the LXX to fit his narrative see Beaton, 123, 90; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 213-14; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 58, esp n. 67; Kupp, 58, 165. For further discussion about the possible sources for Matthew's citation see Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 151-52.

by Matthew to create the oppurtunity for Joseph to name the child Immanuel, but this seems unlikely.[156] A more reasonable explanation, is that this additional name is one that will be ascribed to Jesus by his people (τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ), whom he will save from their sins.[157] The "they" for Matthew are the people of Israel, to whom Jesus has been sent.

The significance of this shift has been overlooked by those who see an incarnational connotation to this second name. Not only is this title one that will be applied to Jesus by the people, but significantly, the shift from she/you to they also heightens the sense that this will be a *future* title for Jesus and not a birth name *per se*.[158] Matthew's modification of the singular second person or singular third person to a plural third person, "they" points the reader away from the actual birth. That it is "his people" who will eventually come to call him Immanuel suggests that it is something about the life of Jesus that will demonstrate *God is with us,* not the miraculous nature of his birth (e.g. incarnation of God).[159]

Secondly, Matthew's gloss on Immanuel, μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός (God is with us) comes not from Isaiah 7:14 (LXX) but from Isaiah 8:8 (LXX). In Isaiah 7:14 (LXX) we find the Greek transliteration of עִמָּנוּ אֵל, given as Εμμανουηλ. In 8:8 the LXX glosses the Hebrew עִמָּנוּ אֵל with μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός. Matthew takes the two references and brings them together in the person of Jesus.[160]

From an *epochal* priming it is easy to see how this juxtaposition can create a sense that the gloss "God is with us" might suggest some connection with the virgin conception. This often results in scholars ascribing a two-level meaning for Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8 in which the text becomes both an affirmation of the virgin conception and of Jesus as incarnating some form of the divine presence.[161]

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[156] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 49.

[157] So suggests Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 152; also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 58. Others have suggested more specifically that it is the church who will call Jesus Immanuel see Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 1:91; also Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 214. Stendahl, 98. goes so far as to see this as a confessional designation.

[158] Kupp, 58.

[159] I should also note that the phrase *God is with us* may also be read in light of Jesus' recapitulation of Israel. For an important and detailed work on Jesus as the recapitulation of Israel see Kennedy.. See also the excellent discussion in Hays, 113-20, 39-43, as well as the earlier work of Allison, Dale C. Allison, "The Son of God as Israel: A Note on Matthean Christology," *Irish Biblical Studies* 9 (1987): 77.

[160] This is not the only instance where Matthew's use of scripture involves a bricolage of two or more texts. For example,

Matthew 2:6 = Micah 5:1-3 + 2 Samuel 5:2

Matthew 4:14-16 = Isaiah 9:1-2 + Isaiah 42:6-7

Matthew 11:29 = Sirach 51:27 + Jeremiah 6:16

Matthew 21:5 = Isaiah 62:11 + Zechariah 9:9

Matthew 27:39 = Psalm 22:7 + Lamentations 2:15

Cf. Hays, 186.

[161] Kupp; McConnell, 108; Beaton, 123, 95.

For example, Beaton says, "Matthew employs this text in a messianic fashion to validate not only the virgin birth but, perhaps more importantly, to define Jesus' identity as one in whom the community experiences the presence of God."[162] As we have seen, Matthew however does not incorporate Isaiah to bolster claims of the virgin birth. As Kupp has succintly argued, "Both rhetorically and historically, Matthew's interest in the child's conception is at best secondary. Isaiah 7:14 is employed because the meaning of Emmanuel 'fulfils', captures best the person and mission of Jesus as narrated in Matthew 1.1-21."[163] I differ from Kupp only insofar as we have different understandings of what it means that Immanuel fulfils the person and mission of Jesus.

In Jesus, the community does *experience* the presence of God, but not in an incarnational sense like that found in John or even Luke. Raymond Brown, likewise looking at Isaiah 8:8 to make sense of Matthew's gloss on Immanuel concludes, "One should not read 'God with us' in a Nicean sense, as if it were identifying Jesus as God."[164] My insistence that Matthew was not using incarnational language is shared by numerous scholars.[165] These scholars, after affirming that Matthew is not saying that Jesus is God, nonetheless then retreat to vague incarnational descriptions of Jesus as the "expression of God's presence"[166] or that the passage nonetheless establish Jesus as God's son.[167]

Taken altogether, my analysis has clearly demonsrated that Matthew's gloss, "God is with us" is a functional claim about Jesus' doings, not an ontological one about his being.[168] Nothing about Matthew suggests the existence of an incarnational or pre-existence christology. God is with us, not God is uniquely in him, is the prima facia meaning of the Matthaean passage. The burden of proof is on those who wish for it to mean

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[162] Beaton, 123, 95.

[163] Kupp, 168.

[164] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 150, fn. 52.

[165] Even after a monumental expose of Jesus as the divine presence, Kupp nonetheless qualifies his work by saying, "Although I have used the term 'divine presence' continuously in connection with Jesus, it does not requie that Jesus is God." Kupp, 220. Raymond Brown likewise sees no evidence of pre-existent Christology in Matthew. See Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 140-41.).

[166] *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 150, fn. 52.

[167] Cf. Ibid., 150-53. For a compelling rebuttal to those who see a primary focus in Matthew 1-2 on a "Son of God christology" see Kupp, 172.

[168] Kupp, 56.

more.[169] Quick jumps to ontological claims employing terminology suggesting incarnation or pre-existence are unwarranted.[170]

In short, Matthew 1:23 isn't a quote of or from Isaiah. It's a *bricolage* of Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8 that transfigures Torah in the person of Jesus. This *bricologe* of scripture is itself what gives form to Matthew's Jesus, thus on multiple levels the Mattaean figure of Jesus is Torah-transfigured. On one level, Jesus is Torah-transfigured insofar as his life (including its meaning) is not simply narrated by Matthew as in a *bios,* but fleshed out through the juxtaposition of scriptural debris that has been fashioned into a new, but old assemblage. Matthew betrays his own handiwork when he describes the scribe trained in the kingdom of heaven as one who brings forth the old and new. The new significantly coming forth out of the treasury not from beyond. The new is the composition, the old the materials at hand.

In a second sense, perhaps as an unintended consequence of the first, we find Jesus as Torah-transfigured insofar as his life and teaching, become the functional equivalent of the Torah in the life of his disciples. Jesus does not fulfill some prediction of Isaiah by abstractly signalling God's presence. In Jesus' life, that is to say in the person of both his actions and teachings, he embodies the surety of Torah.

This *off-epochal* reading of 1:20-23 as *bricolage* returns us to the immanent plane of experience. What I have shown here is that there is neither need nor warrant for an incarnational (aka transcendent) figuration of Jesus. Taken altogether, the various pieces in my *off-epochal* reading of Matthew 1:2-23 suggest that there is a plausible alternative to the standard incarnational figuration of Jesus. As I have repeatedly demonstrated, incarnational explanations for the various parts of this passage are forced readings that are derived more from the *epochal* priming of the reader than from the text itself. I want to be clear, there is very little new material in my examination of Matthew 1:20-23. This lack of novelty however is not evidence against my reading, rather it supports my repeated contention that it is the *off-epochal* priming of my reading not the discovery of some new material that leads to the possiblity of an alternative figuration of Jesus in Matthew.

What I have here offering is evidence of how Matthew repurposes existing tradition and scripture in such a way as to transfigure it, without resorting to novelty or epochal shifts. The final form of the material, as it appears in Matthew 1:20-23, now serves to figure Jesus, but in a way that is still *familiar* and at home within a Torah-formed space. This figuration effectively shifts the focus of Jesus' *genesis* away from being a uniquely special occurrence. Matthew's true focus remains Torah, a focus that will continue to impinge upon his figuration such that by the end of his gospel we will be more than justified in seeing Jesus himself as the transfiguration of Torah.

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[169] I was once asked what would convince me that Matthew did in fact have an incarnational Christology. My answer was and remains quite simple, had Matthew used the language of John or even Luke, I would be convinced. We don't have to speculate as to what form an incarnational figuration would take. We have a rather developed one in John's gospel. Matthew however does not use the language and imagery of John. Likewise, Matthew never openly asserts that Jesus is divine.

[170] e.g. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, 24-5.

Granted, at this point in the analysis, the evidence for Jesus as Torah-transfigured is somewhat circumstantial and may not be sufficient to convict, so let us proceed to the two remaining "divine presence" passages and see if my reading is sustainable.

3.3 I am in the Midst (Matthew 18:20)

"If you have the Dharma body with you,
if you have confidence in the Dharma,
if you practice the Dharma,
I am always with you."
Jesus also said,
"Wherever two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there."
- Thích Nhất Hạnh[171]

The second divine presence declaration in Matthew's gospel, comes from the mouth of Jesus himself. In the midst of the fourth of Jesus' five discourses, largely based on Mark and Q, Matthew uniquely records the following declaration,

> Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. (Matthew 18:17-20)

It is Jesus' striking promise in verse 20, "οὗ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν" that will be the center of my focus in this section. What does it mean that Jesus will be in the midst of his disciples whenever they are gathered in his name?

That this declaration is linked to Matthew 1:23, seems undeniable, but what is the nature of that linkage? For those who assume an incarnational reading of Matthew 1:20-23, Jesus' declaration here in 18:20, extends that incarnational understanding of *Immanuel* to now include an ongoing mediation of the divine presence through the abiding *spiritual* presence of the now risen, and ascended immaterial Jesus. Such is the pervasive reading in contemporary scholarship and I will not rehash the particulars here.[172]

Here I am only interested in whether or not this figuration of Jesus as Torah-transfigured, that I began to develop in my reading of Matthew 1:20-23, is sustainable with respect to this second so-called divine presence passage here in 18:20? If the answer is in the affirmative, I would expect once again to find Torah foregrounded, not incarnation, as the nexus or sign of divine presence.

The possibility of Torah observance and not incarnation as the driving force in Matthew's composition is evidenced in the long noted scholarly observation that some

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[171] Thích Nhất Hạnh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, 20th Anniversary ed. (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007), 50-51.

[172] For a representative sample of this dominant scholarly view see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 790; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commmentary (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 750-51; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 698.

relationship exists between Jesus' declaration in 18:20 and the rabbinic tradition of God's presence being associated with the study of Torah.[173] Let me here quote the rather lengthy commentary of Davies and Allison to establish the framework for the rabbinic parallels that I wish to briefly comment upon. They write,

> V. 20 especially recalls a saying in *m. 'Abot* 3.2 recorded in the name of R. Hananiah b. Teradion (who was killed in the Bar Kokba revolt), the father-in-law of R. Meier: 'But if two sit together and words of the Law (are spoken) between them, the Divine Presence rests between them…'. Similar is the saying attributed to R. Simeon ben Yohai (A.D. 100-70) in *m. 'Abot* 3.3: 'If three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it the words of the Law, it is as if they had eaten from the table of God'. It is possible that the saying of R. Hananiah b. Teredion was called forth by the gospel saying as a kind of counterblast, but more probably it expresses what was a rabbinic commonplace–which would make Mt 18.20 a Christified bit of rabbinism. Compare also *Mek*. On Eodus 20.24 and *m. 'Abot* 3.6: 'R. Halafta b. Dosa of Kefar Hanania said: If ten men sit together and occupy themselves in the Law, the Divine Presence rests among them...[174]

We should immediately note that in the rabbinic passages cited by Davies and Allison, the association is between Torah study and the divine presence. Engagement with words of Torah somehow makes present the divine presence. While the nature of this presence is not elaborated, importantly, the divine presence associated with Torah study in the rabbinic accounts does not have the pneumetological flavor associated with the Holy Spirit in Luke/Acts or John.

Herein lies the significance of the various rabbinic parallels raised in my reading. The rabbinic material is clearly later than Matthew, at least in the form that we have, and should not be construed as "proof" of what Matthew intended.[175] That being said, the rabbinic passages do reflect a series of Second Temple stances (*Haltungen*) in which Torah is explicilty foregrounded and privelaged as the nexus between God and the people of Israel.

If Matthew is in fact engaged in the Torah-forming processes that I have detailed in earlier chapters, then we would rightly expect to see some overlap here due to a shared tradition between the rabbis and Matthew.[176] This is not to suggest that Matthew supplies

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[173] Nolland, 751; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 789-90.

[174] *Matthew 8-18*, 790. We may also think of Rabbi Halafta's saying in *Abot de Rabbi Natan* where he also notes the presence of the Shekinah among any, "two or three who sit together in the marketplace and the words between them are of Torah." English translation here Anthony J. Saldarini, *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan (Abot De Rabbi Nathan): A Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1975). Originally cited by Joseph Sievers, "'Where Two or Three…': The Rabbinic Concept of Shekhinah and Matthew 18.20," in *Standing before God: Studies on Prayer in Scriptures and in Tradition with Essays: In Honor of John M. Oesterreicher*, ed. Asher Finkel and Lawrence Frizzell (New York: Ktav, 1981), 174.

[175] Davies and Allison go too far in suggesting that Matthew's comment is a "Christified bit of rabbinism." Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 790.

[176] That such a shared tradition(s) exists has been argued by Sievers, 176ff. Also Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 142.; C.H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), 58-62.

us with some missing link between the rabbinic tradition and Christianity. It is only to recognize that the binary view of two rapidly diverging Second Temple trajectories, typically called something like a Torah-based Judaism and Jesus-based Christianity, must be discarded.

In Matthew's account, Jesus links gathering together *in his name* with his own presence. In other words, gathered εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα is standing where we would expect Torah study were this a rabbinic passage. The default assumption by scholars is that one must choose between Jesus or Torah and that in Matthew's composition, Torah is in fact replaced by the ὄνομα of Jesus.[177] These readings, with their ontological and incarnational primings, fail to appreciate the way in which Jesus as Torah-transfigured can exist in a Torah-formed space without displacing Torah. To functionally identify Jesus with Torah does not mean that Matthew is offering Jesus *instead* of Torah, that is to say as an alternative to the Torah.[178]

This, along with the rabbinic parallels mentioned above, suggests that gathered εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα might then mean something more than just several followers of Jesus showing up in the same place at the same time.[179] Revisting the aforementioned *m. 'Abot* 3.2 reveals something interesting that Davies and Allison, among others, neglected to note. Following the claim that words of Torah spoken between two brings the divine presence, the passage then cites Malachi 3:16. Note,

> If two sit together and the words between them are not of Torah then that is a session of scorners, as it is said, *Nor hath sat in the seat of the scornful*. But if two sit together and the words between them are of Torah, then the *Shekinah* is in their midst, as it is said, *Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of rememberance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name* (Mal. 3:16).[180]

Thinking upon the name of the Lord is here explicitly linked with Torah study. Here of course, caution is warranted lest we make too much of parallel sounding passages or

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[177] So argues Gerhard Barth, "Law and Christology," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, ed. Gunther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 135.

[178] Contra Hays, 169, who sees Jesus replacing Torah as "the effective agent mediating divine presence to the people of God." Importantly, the claim made by Hays presupposes a mediating role for Torah – a claim that I second. My argument here is not that the Matthaean Jesus replaces or supersedes the role of Torah, but that he inhabits it.

[179] Contra most commentators, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 789. The phrase εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα occurs nowhere else in Matthew, but could be considered in light of 7:22 where many powerful deeds are done in Jesus' name. As Davies and Allison note, the construction of συνάγω plus εἰς usually has its reference as a place. Ibid. France understands this verse to make sense only as a forward looking reference to the presence of the resurrected Jesus among his followers but such a reading need not be necessary. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 697-98

[180] Translation by *The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the Fathers and Its Classical Commentaries*, trans. J. Goldin (New York: New American Library, 1957), 120-21. This parallel has been noted since at least as early as H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament Aus Talmud Und Midrasch* (Munich: CH Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), 1:794.

assume causal connections where none exist. Here I am doing neither, I merely wish to show that it is not an unreasonable possiblitiy that gathering together in Jesus' name could be as a circumlocution for practicing his teaching.[181]

As I have noted in the previous chapters, in the Second Temple period, Torah even more than Temple, comes to signify the place of the divine presence. In the references of *m. 'Abot* above, the claim doesn't seem to be that the speaking of Torah somehow produces the *Shekiniah* so much as it is that Torah is the nexus of the divine presence. Likewise, here in Matthew, Jesus is not made spiritually present by merely gathering, but gathering in his name, that is to say living in his teaching, is to be in his presence since the teaching and the person are functionally equivalent.

This connection between name and teaching/commandments is not as tenuous as one might imagine. One of the repeated descriptions of the Temple in the scriptures of Israel is its designation as that place where God will cause his name to dwell. Nehemiah explicitly links a return to doing God's commandments with restortation and return to the place where he has caused his name to dwell (see Nehemiah 1:7-10).

There also appears to be a parallel between Matthew 18:20 and Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 5:3-5, where Paul likewise invoked the name of Jesus relative to a gathering of Jesus' followers.[182] In both 1 Corinthians 5 and Matthew 18, the context for the assembled followers centers on passing judgement. In 1 Corinthians 5:3-5, Paul explicitly claims to be absent in body, but present in spirit. I have yet to find a commentator however who argues that Paul was claiming that he was actually present in a disembodied way among the assembled Corthinians. As the context makes clear, Paul was present in spirit insofar as his teaching/judgement was authoritative in their gathering.

Regarding, Paul's invocation of ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, there is some disagreement among translators as to whether it continues verse 3 as an authorization of Paul's judgement, or if it should be read in light of the second clause in verse 4 as a descriptor for the gathering itself. This however is not something we need to resolve, as ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι would function in both readings as a reference to either the judgement or the gathering being done in accordance with the authoritative teaching of Jesus.

Taking Matthew 18:20 on its own, the nature of Jesus' promised presence is ambiguous, but ambiguity is not sufficient cause to assume that Matthew had an actual spiritual presence in mind.[183] A more plausible reading would follow from my aforementioned claim that Matthew is the story of how God's presence is made evident through Jesus as Torah-transfigured. This same presence, the authority of the word of God, would then to be present among Jesus' followers who continue in his teaching, which is Torah.[184]

In a striking observation, Buddhist scholar Thích Nhất Hạnh quotes the Buddha as saying, "If you have the Dharma body with you, if you have confidence in the Dharma, if you practice the Dharma, I am always with you." Thích Nhất Hạnh then remarks, "Jesus also said, 'Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there.'" This connection

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[181] "In his name" may also be seen as "living as Jesus lived." See Margaret Davies, *Matthew* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 129.

[182] This connection seems to have been first noted by Dodd, *New Testament Studies*, 60.

[183] So admits Kupp, 198-99.

[184] Cf. Dodd, *New Testament Studies*, 62.

Thích Nhất Hạnh makes between the teachings of Jesus and the continued presence of Jesus is not a spiritual one. Thích Nhất Hạnh rightly observes that Jesus is made present insofar as his person and his teachings are functionally one and the same. That an outside reader such as Thích Nhất Hạnh can so precisely identify this connection speaks volumes to the dangers of conditioned *epochal* and/or spiritual readings.[185]

While they are not part of the traditional divine presence triad (1:23, 18:20, 28:20), there are two other passages in Matthew (12:6; 11:28-30) further illuminate Matthew's figuration of Jesus as Torah and strengthen the reading I am here suggesting in 18:20.

3.3.1 Greater than the Temple

In Matthew 12, Jesus is confronted by a group of Pharisees who object to his disciples picking grain on the Sabbath. In defense of his disciples, Jesus calls their attention to the account in 1 Samuel 21:1-6 where David enters into the tabernacle and eats the holy bread, the bread of the presence, that is normally reserved for the priests. Jesus not only says that David's actions were unlawful, but he also says that the priests in performing their duties in the temple are breaking the Sabbath. Jesus declares that both, however, are guiltless (see Matt. 12:3-5). Jesus then pivots to the present and makes a rather astounding claim in verse 6, "I tell you, something greater (μεῖζόν) than the temple is here."

Matthew does not explicitly say what this "something" is that is greater than the temple, but the context suggests that Jesus himself is the implied answer.[186] This of course raises the question, in what way can Jesus be greater than the temple? In what way, can anything be greater than the temple? Most scholars have suggested that the answer can only be God, the one to whom the temple is dedicated.[187] From this it's a short step to once again concluding that here we have a statement affirming the divinity of Jesus or at least equating Jesus with God.

That Matthew locates this provocative declaration in the midst of an argument with Pharisees over proper *halakha* may not be accidental. Of the multiple competing stances in the Second Temple period, the Pharisees may have been the most likely to grasp Jesus' claim in the way that I am reading Matthew.[188] For the Pharisees and Matthew, the answer to the question of what could be greater than the temple is easy. The Torah is greater than the temple.

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[185] That Matthew envisions Jesus's continuing presence in a figurative sense only was advanced by C.H. Dodd in the 1950's. See Kupp, 19.

[186] Kupp is much more forceful, writing, "the 'something greater' in 12:6 can be nothing less than Jesus himself." Ibid., 76.

[187] So argues Hays, 168. Kupp claims this to be one of Jesus' boldest christological statements. Kupp, 76. Alternatively, the kingdom of God has been raised as a possibility for the "something greater."

[188] Here I am reminded again of the famous passage from the Bavli (tractate Baba Metzia 59b), discussed in the previous chapter, in which the Torah has already been given and thus no heavenly voice is needed to properly adjudicate its meaning. Once again, Matthew's Jesus need not speak as God in order to make definitive halakhic judgements. He speaks as Torah-transfigured.

If there is a holy place for Matthew within his Torah-formed world it is Sinai not the temple. More foundational than temple or tabernacle, it was at Sinai where God and the people came face to face and the Torah was given. Sinai was, "the great symbol of Israel's social, political and religious birth, the mountain at which the slaves become free, at which Pharaoh's sort of mastery is replaced by that of YHWH."[189] Citing Deuteronomy 4:6-8, Gorman notes that, "In the law, God has drawn near to Israel as the one who is present for its life and redemption." [190] It is this pairing of divine presence and Torah, structurally parallel to one another, at Sinai that serves to mark Israel as unique among the nations.[191]

This stance of privileging Torah above the temple is itself found in the Psalms. Psalm 138 declares,

אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל־הֵיכַל קָדְשְׁךָ
וְאֹודֶה אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ עַל־חַסְדְּךָ וְעַל־אֲמִתֶּךָ
כִּי־הִגְדַּלְתָּ עַל־כָּל־שִׁמְךָ אִמְרָתֶךָ׃

Here the psalmist while bowing down toward the temple, nonetheless confesses that it is God's word that is exalted over all the heavens. The last phrase is a bit problematic. The literal translation of the text as is being, "for you have exalted your word over all your name." Some translators have emended the text to read שָׁמֶיךָ (*shameykha*) instead of שִׁמְךָ (*shimkha*) thus giving us, "for you have exalted your word over all your heavens."[192] In Psalm 119, the Psalmist goes so far as to imply that the temple is itself a by-product of Torah.[193]

The Torah, as much or more so than the temple, is the symbol of divine presence in the Second Temple period. Writing in a post-temple dymanic, Sinai *nachleben* survive in both the rabbinic tradition and in Matthew's gospel. The rabbi's explicitly claimed Sinai, not the Temple as the source of their authority to teach and instruct the people. As the Mishnah famously records,

> Moses received the Torah on Sinai and handed it down to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets handed it down to the men of the great assembly. (*Mishnah Pirke Aboth* 1:1)

This link to Sinai avoids the trouble of no longer having a Temple and provides an alternative source of authority governing the daily lives of the people. The doctrine of an "oral Torah" developed by the rabbis is a stance towards Torah. As the passage in the Mishnah, cited above, demonstrates, the rabbis claimed that the oral Torah went back to the Mosaic revelation on Sinai and as such they were the only legitimate interpreters of Torah not the priests or any other Jews for that matter.[194]

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[189] Kupp, 116.

[190] Frank Gorman, "When Law Becomes Gospel: Matthew's Transformed Torah," *Listening* 24 (1989): 234.

[191] Ibid., 235.

[192] e.g. see Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 2007), 476, n.2.

[193] David Noel Freedman and Andrew Welch, *Psalm 119: The Exaltation of Torah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 92. *Genesis Rabbah* 1:4 teaches that the creation of the Torah preceded both the creation of the Throne of Glory and the creation of the Temple.

[194] Segal, 121.

That a connection exists between Sinai and Jesus has been noted by commentators, but the default readings either focus on Jesus as a new Moses who ascends the mountain to receive a new teaching, or on Jesus the Son of God who incarnates the divine presence that was present on Sinai.[195] The divine presence on Sinai has a very specific function, the giving of Torah. The Matthaean Jesus is not presented as a second Moses who goes up to get the Torah. In Matthew's figuration, Jesus is himself built of Sinai *nachleben,* including his conception/giving through divine intervention.[196]

Like the rabbis who would follow him, Matthew is reaffirming the primacy of Torah. In the rabbinic literature we find an explicit claim that Torah study is greater than the building of the Temple.[197] The rabbinic claim that Torah study is greater than the offerings of daily sacrifices is itself strikingly similar to Jesus' own reference, immediately following his something greater statement in 18:20, to Hosea 6:6.[198] Both Matthew and the rabbis are simply recognizing that properly speaking, Torah precedes temple.

Matthew's stance differs from the later rabbinic tradition however, in that for Matthew, Torah is transfigured in Jesus. Matthew recyles the Sinai *nachleben* in Jesus, not the community at large. This is not an attempt by Matthew to replace Torah with Jesus. The *bricoleur* may reuse without replacing; the "something greater" works and thus can be repurposed. In Matthew, it is precisely in Jesus as Torah-transfigued that God has drawn near to the people.[199]

This incorporation of Sinai *nachleben*, especially as that which stands in contrast to Zion, into Matthew's figuration of Jesus coheres with the overall claims of this chapter.[200] As we have repeatedly seen, Matthew does not share the same pneumotological

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[195] For example, Kupp, 238. Rightly claims that "Matthew finds in Jesus a new paradigm for the central symbols of Sinai." Kupp however fails to make the Torah connection, reading the passage only in terms of divine presence.

[196] For a compelling argument against seeing the Sinai connection as establishing Jesus as a second Moses see Kingsbury, 91. Kingsbury however, like Kupp and others, reads a high Christology into the Sinai connection and likewise misses the Torah connection.

[197] Discussed in Richard Kalmin, *The Sage in Jewish Society of Late Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 16. The actual text of the reads,

> "Rav, or some say Rabbi Shmuel the son of Marta, said, 'Greater is the Study of Torah than the building of the Temple, for all the time that Baruch the son of Neriah was alive, Ezra did not leave him and go up [to Jerusalem]'" (Megillah 16b). From The William Davidson digital edition of the *Koren Noé Talmud*, with commentary by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz Even-Israel, released with a CC BY-NC license by Koren Publishers. https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Talmud

[198] "Rabbi Shmuel bar Inya said in the name of Rav: Torah study is greater than the offering of daily sacrifices, as the angel said to Joshua: 'I am now come,' i.e., on account of the second sin, demonstrating that neglect of Torah study is a more serious offense than neglect of the daily offerings" (Eruvin, Daf 63b). From The William Davidson digital edition of the *Koren Noé Talmud*, with commentary by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz Even-Israel, released with a CC BY-NC license by Koren Publishers. https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Talmud

[199] Gorman, 237.

[200] Seeing Sinai standing in contrast to Zion/temple does not necessarily imply an anti-temple polemic in Matthew. Reading Matthew 12:6 together with the Q logia used in 12:41-42 (the

or incarnational emphasis found in other New Testament texts. Matthew's focus is on Sinai not the temple.[201] As such, the Matthaean Jesus' provocative claim that he is something greater than the temple should not be construed as introducing a new era.[202]

Properly understanding this passage as *bricolage* reminds us that the question is not what new thing is being created, but what old thing is being transformed. At Sinai the presence and giving of Torah are inextricably intertwined. It is in this functional sense, not an ontological one, that Jesus transfigures the Sinai event and thereby makes that which is greater than the temple present.[203]

3.3.2 My Yoke is Easy

Let me linger over one final passage to round out my reading of Matthew 18:20, before moving on to the final of our three divine presence passages. In Matthew 11:28-30, the chapter just prior to Jesus' striking claim that he as Torah-transfigured is greater than the temple, we find the following an invitation offered by Jesus,

> Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

The relevance of this passage for my discussion of Matthew 18:20 is immediately evident on two fronts.

First, Jesus' promise of rest is yet another echo of Sinai, this time from Exodus 33:14, where God declares to Moses, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."[204] Interestingly, Exodus 33 is something of a prelude to Moses' ascent of Sinai to receive the Torah in chapter 34. These repeated appearances of Sinai *nachleben* in Matthew are not accidental but reflect the importance of Sinai in the Matthaean figuration of Jesus as Torah-transfigured.

Secondly, Matthew's phrase εὑρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν corresponds word for word to the Hebrew wording of Jeremiah 6:16.[205] In Jeremiah, the Lord exhorts the people to, "Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it and find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). Importantly,

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Jonah and queen of the south/Solomon comparison), Jesus' claim to be greater than the temple need not be an anti-temple polemic per se, but may reasonably understood to be a matter of comparison only. See Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew*, 83, 130.

[201] Kupp, 225.

[202] Contra France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 460.

[203] Recall that in Exdous 24 Moses is commanded to bring the tablets of stone (a second set to replace the broken original tablets) back up Sinai so that God may again write on them. There God passes before Moses and the concept of divine presence and written instruction (Torah) are interwined.

[204] This connection is likewise noted in Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 289.

[205] MT: וּמְצָאוּ מַרְגּוֹעַ לְנַפְשְׁכֶם See Hays, 157. Hays rightly notes the ominous overtones of the Jeremiah passage and the dangers thus implied in rejecting Jesus's call, noting that "fools who turn away from Wisdom's instruction will suffer calamity and destruction (e.g. Prov 1:20-33, 8:35-36; cf. Matt 22:1-14)," but he misses the significance of its connection to Torah.

the ancient paths, wherein lies the good way, is not the path of wisdom. Jeremiah makes it clear that this good way is Torah. Judgement is pronounced because the people reject Torah, וְתוֹרָתִי וַיִּמְאָסוּ־בָהּ (v. 19). The sentiment expressed here seems to be more like that of Psalm 1 where the pathway is Torah and judgement explicitly comes because of a rejection of Torah not wisdom.

Jesus' invitation, a *bricolage* of Exodus 33:14 and Jeremiah 6:16, once agains fits together two now familiar elements, Torah and presence. [206] While the connection between Torah and rest is only implicit in Exodus, Jeremiah makes this connection more explict. The Lord himself declares in Jeremiah that rest for one's soul is to be found in Torah. The pathway from Exodus and Jeremiah to Torah-transfigured in Matthew however is not a straight one.

In addition to Exodus and Jeremiah, Matthew's *bricolage* repurposes material also found in the *Book of Sirach* – two chapters in particular, 24 and 51. That there is some connection between Matthew 11:28-30 and *Sirach* is a long and well-established position in New Testament scholarship.[207] *Epochally* primed readings seem to have missed the mechanism by which the wisdom tradition reflected in *Sirach* as is taken up and repurposed by our *bricoleur* in the service of his Torah-forming work.

The portrait of lady Wisdom found in Sirach 24 is a beautiful one. The passage begins with a cosmic description of Wisdom's journey, a journey that begins in the highest heavens where she comes from the mouth of the Most High (Ἐγὼ ἀπὸ στόματος ὑψίστου ἐξῆλθον), and continues as she travels throughout the earth looking for a resting place (24:1-6), until she comes to dwell in Israel (24:7-8). Having offering up this sweeping description of wisdom, Ben Sira now records Wisdom's invitation,

> Come to me (πρός με), you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits. For the memory of me is sweeter than honey, and the possession of me sweeter than the honeycomb. Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more. Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame, and those who work with me will not sin. (Sirach 24:19-22)

Ben Sira's personification of Wisdom however is not in itself an end. Having extended Wisdom's invitation to come and eat, Ben Sira pivots and declares,

> All this is the book of the covenant (βίβλος διαθήκης) of the Most High God, the law (νόμον ὃν) that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob. (Sirach 24:23)

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[206] Hays' failure to appreciate the role of Torah in Jesus' invitation leads him to dismiss Allison and Davies's identification of Exodus 34 with, "the wording of that passage is not even remotely as close to Matt 11:28 as is Jer 6:16." Ibid., 404, n. 120.

[207] See for example E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos. Untersuchungen Zur Formengeschichte Religioser Rede* (Berlin: Teubner, 1913), 280-85; H. Windisch, "Die Göttliche Weisheit Der Juden Und Die Paulinische Christologie," in *Neutestamentliche Studien*, ed. A. Deissmann (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1914), 220-34; Felix Christ, *Jesus Sophia: Die Sophia-Christologie Bei Den Synoptikern* (Zwingli-Verlag, 1970), 100-19; Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence, Wisdom, and the Son of Man: A Study of the Idea of Pre-Existence in the New Testament* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1973), 68; Celia Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11:25-30* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987); Talbert.

In some sense, *Sirach* is a Second Temple Torah-forming of the Israelite sapiential tradition.[208]

In the first line of the prologue, Ben Sira's grandson celebrates the great teachings that have come to Israel in the scriptures. Ben Sira's grandson goes on to laud his grandfather who, "had devoted himself especially to the reading of the Law and the prophets and the other books of our ancestors" (0:10-11). According to his grandson, Ben Sira is then led to write his book so that "those who love learning (οἱ φιλομαθεῖς) might make even greater progress in living according to the law (τῆς ἐννόμου βιώσεως)" (0:13-14). The prologue concludes with an explicit statement by Ben Sira's grandson explaining his own motivation in translating and publishing his grandfather's work, "I have applied my skill day and night to complete and publish the book for those living abroad who wished to gain learning and are disposed to live according to the law (ἐννόμως βιοτεύειν)" (0:35-36).[209]

The results of this Torah-forming process in *Sirach* are not limited to the repurposing and transformation of wisdom, but they also include the transformation of Torah. As I have discussed at length above, Torah in the Second Temple period is not a stable or fixed field. As I will discuss below, this fitting of wisdom and Torah together that we see in Ben Sira provides us a view of the possible Torah-forms at hand for Matthew's own figuration of Jesus as Torah-transfigured in Matthew 11:28-30.

Framing Wisdom's invitation in terms of eating and nourishment fits together Wisdom and Torah in a way that blurs boundaries. Ben Sira's blurring of wisdom and Torah through the eating imagery finds an echo in Matthew's own tactile description of tasting and eating of the divine word. Recall that in Matthew, having fasted forty days and nights Jesus is hungry when the tempter comes to him (4:2). It is this hungry state that the tempter seeks to exploit by asking Jesus to turn stones into bread (4:3). Jesus replies to the tempter,

> "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

In quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, Jesus not only affirms the primacy of Torah instruction but connects it to the very processes of life. This trope of eating, taken up by both Matthew and Ben Sira is itself present in Torah. The Deuteronomy passage, cited by Matthew, itself mixes the imagery of eating with Torah instruction. Chapter 8 begins,

> This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase, and go in and occupy the land that the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to

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[208] The identification of Wisdom with Torah is found in Baruch 3:9, 37-4:1; 2 Baruch 38:4; Testament of Levi 13:1-9. See discussion in Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 289, especially fn. 42.

[209] I should note that while it is possible that the prologue was a later addition to the main body of teachings attributed to Ben Sira, such an addition would only strengthen my claim that Sirach as we have it, is a Torah-forming of the Israelite sapiential tradition.

> make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 8.1-3)

Matthew's citation of Deuteronomy is an important reminder that he is actively working with both strands of eating, that reflected in Ben Sira and that in Torah proper.

In addition to the overlap with *Sirach* 24, Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11:28-30 contains signficant overlap with *Sirach* 51. Unlike 24, *Sirach* 51 is not a speech attributed to Wisdom; it's an invitation offered by Ben Sira, who having sought wisdom himself, now extols its virtue by encouraging others to do likewise.[210] This invitation by Ben Sira shares some characteristics with Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11. Compare the following passages,

Sirach 51:23-27	Matthew 11:28-30
Draw near to me (πρός με),	Come to me (πρός με),
you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction. Why do you say you are lacking in these things, and why do you endure such great thirst?	all you that labor[211] (κοπιῶντες) and are carrying heavy burdens,
	and I will give you rest (ἀναπαύσω).
I opened my mouth and said, Acquire wisdom for yourselves without money.	
Put your neck under her yoke (ζυγόν),	Take my yoke (ζυγός) upon you,
and let your souls (ψυχὴ) receive instruction;	and learn from me;
it is to be found (εὑρεῖν) close by.	for I am gentle and humble in heart,
See with your own eyes	
that I have labored (ἐκοπίασα) but little	
and found (εὗρον) for myself much serenity (ἀνάπαυσιν).	and you will find rest (εὑρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν)
	for your souls (ψυχαῖς).
	For my yoke (ζυγός) is easy, and my burden is light.

As these parallel columns make clear, there is significant overlap between the invitations given by Ben Sira and the Matthaean Jesus. Recognizing that this overlap is between the sage and Jesus, precludes us from rushing to identity Jesus with Wisdom proper. Something much more subtle is actually taking place.

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[210] Hays, 156.

[211] Here I differ from the NRSV to follow Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, 2, 2:172, in rendering κοπιῶντες as *labor* not the passive *weary*, contra Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 2:228.

Let me pause here for a moment on this overlap between the figuration of Widom in *Sirach* 24 and that of the sage in *Sirach* 51. This overlap, largely overlooked discussions regarding Matthew 11, is important in thinking through the repeated overlap we have seen in Matthew between Jesus and Torah.[212] Note three key parallels between Sirach 24 and 51: (1) Both Wisdom and Ben Sira call to the unlearned to come and receive instruction (24:19; 51:23, 26); (2) Both are described as opening their mouths (24:2; 51:25); (3) Heeding the words of Ben Sira, which is to place oneself under the yoke of wisdom, brings great reward (51:26-27), echoes Wisdom's own promise that those who obey and work with her will avoid shame and sin.[213] Here the sage has internalized Wisdom such that an implicit functional equilvalence seems to exist between the two.

This brings us to the function of Matthew 11:28-30 in Matthew's figuration of Jesus as Torah-transfigured. The numerous points of commonality between Jesus' invitation in Matthew and Sirach 24 and 51 have lead some scholars to see an explicit identification of Wisdom and Jesus. For example, Celia Deutsch writes,

> The presence of these motifs (invitation, yoke, promise of rest) in our passage, indicates that Matthew is presenting Jesus as Wisdom incarnate, thus making explicit the Wisdom tendencies already present in the Q saying of 11.25-27.[214]

She continues,

> We believe the presentation of 11.28-30 is analogous to the way in which Wisdom is represented in Sirach 24. There Wisdom comes to reside in Torah, thus becoming 'incarnated' in and identified with Torah. So in Matthew, Wisdom is identified with Jesus as its incarnation.[215]

While Jesus as the incarnation of Wisdom is a bit of a leap, there is no denying that Wisdom imagery is found in Matthew's figuration.[216]

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[212] Noted and discussed at length in Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 197. As Gathercole notes, most scholarly attention has been directed towards the depictions of Simon ben Onias in Sirach 50, which seem to imply either identification with Wisdom or even the embodiment of Wisdom. For example see C. T. R. Hayward, "Sacrifice and World Order: Some Observations on Ben Sira's Attitude to the Temple Service'," in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S.W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22-34.; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Wisdom Christology and the Partings of the Ways between Judaism and Christianity," in *Christian-Jewish Relations through the Centuries*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and B. W. R. Pearson, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement (Sheffield: JSOT, 2000), 52-68..

[213] Gathercole, 197.

[214] Deutsch, 130.

[215] Ibid., 134.

[216] Scholars like Graham Stanton argue contra Deutsch, "In short, it is not at all clear that Matthew identifies Jesus as Sophia. The use of Wisdom themes in 11.28-30 is not being disputed but they do not seem to be the key to the passage as it now stands in Matthew's Gospel." Graham N. Stanton, "Salvation Proclaimed: X. Matthew 11:28-30: Comfortable Words?," *The Expository Times* 94 (1982): 6.

Traces of Wisdom are present in Matthew's figuration, but not for incarnational reasons. Matthew is not establishing an identification between Jesus and Wisdom.[217] These traces are present because Matthew's Torah itself has a Wisdom flavor. The constant forming and reforming of Torah within the Second Temple period has provided Matthew with a set of materials in which clear distinctions between Torah and Wisdom do not exist.

So while it may be tempting to read Matthew 11:28-30 as placing Jesus in the place of Wisdom,[218] a more probable reading exists. As we have repeatedly seen, *bricolage* requires the use of what is at hand. There is no doubt that Wisdom is at hand, but it is used as a building material not as an end in itself. Matthew 11:28-30 and Sirach are both works of *bricolage* drawing on a shared repetoire.[219]

In both *Sirach* and Matthew the audience is called to take upon themselves the *yoke* by receiving *instruction/learning*. In both, the end result is that they hearers will find *rest*. While it may seem that these are two different yokes, that of Wisdom and Jesus, my reading suggests that in fact, the *yoke* in both cases is Torah.[220] Recognizing the nature of the relationship between the Matthaean Jesus and Wisdom in *Sirach* as that which properly belongs to a rhizomic *bricolage* once again serves to identify Jesus with Torah.[221] For Ben Sira, Wisdom does in fact come to reside in Torah. Matthew need not replace Wisdom with Jesus or Torah with Jesus, but his composition can take up and transfigure *Torah-as-Wisdom-incarnate* in his figuration of Jesus.

That Matthew's figuration of Jesus is something more than Wisdom incarnate is seen most clearly in the verses immediatley proceeding Jesus' invitation of rest. Note the introduction to Jesus invitation of rest,

> At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Matthew 11:25-27)

The role of sonship in this passage is one of revelation. Authority has been handed to the son (*all things have been handed over to me*), but not in a kingly or messianic way, but

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[217] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 295.

[218] See Hans Dieter Betz, "The Logion of the Easy Yoke and of Rest (Matt 11: 28-30)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, no. 1 (1967). Betz cites D.F. Strauss as first noting this parallel. See also M. Jack Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

[219] Here I agree with Davies and Allison that Matthew is most likely not directly dependent upon Sirach. It is more probable that both authors draw on a shared tradition in which wisdom and Torah overlap. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 2:292-93.

[220] In the Second Temple period, yoke comes to function as a metaphor for obedience, thus the rabbis would later speak of the yoke of the Torah and the yoke of the commandments. See ibid., 289.

[221] Several commentators have noted that some connection between Jesus and Torah exists here. See ibid., 2:287-93. Luz comments, "Since Jesus is inserted without interruption in to the house of wisdom, a continuity to the law is also given which Judaism identified with wisdom." Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, 2, 2:172.

directly connected to the question of revelation. The Son is the gift of divine revelation. To truly know the Father one must accept the yoke of the Son who reveals the Father. As Gathercole notes,

> The "hand-over" Christ has received far exceeds what the sage has learned: this can be observed by comparing the relative claims of Sirach and Matthew. In Sirach's description of Wisdom, "the first man did not have perfect knowledge of her, nor will the last search her out" (Sir. 24.28). In Matthew 11, by constrast, God has handed over *all things* to the Son, and the Son has exclusive knowledge of the Father.[222]

Matthew 11:25-27 is effectively a declaration that true knowledge of God is impossible except by means of Jesus. This however should not be read in Johaninne terms. Coding this text in terms of logos theology is a mistep. For example, reading this passage within an incarnatation framework leads to an artificial seperation between this statement and the wisdom parallels that follow.

The juxtaposition of this revelatory claim to the wisdom parallels that follow are the key to understanding the function of the passage.[223] As Torah transfigured, Jesus is being presented as the way to truly know God. The wisdom parallels here are functioning–contra Johaninne claims of the incarnation of a pre-existent being–to foreground and privelage Torah as the means of knowing God.[224] Here Davies and Allison make my point when they write,

> How very significant this is should not be missed. For Judaism 'Torah' is 'all that God has made known of his nature, character and purpose, and of what he would have man be and do' (Moore 1, p. 263); it is the full revelation of God and of his will for man. So the identification of Jesus with Torah makes Jesus the full

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[222] Gathercole, 198, fn 13. Gathercole, arguing for Jesus as a preexistent entity, again fails to see that the most straightforward conclusion here is that Jesus is not just another sage, but instead embodies Wisdom in a way that is only analogous to Torah itself.

[223] Casey maintains that the parallels to Wisdom that follow Jesus statement in Mt. 11.27, "do not provide a proper explanation of the origin of Matthew 11.27/Luke 10.22. For this we must look to its function. It declares that knowledge of God is impossible except through Jesus. This view does not have a satisfactory *Sitz im Leben* in the teaching of the historical Jesus, for it necessarily implies that diaspora Jews did not know God." Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1991), 45-46. Function is indeed key! What Casey misses here is the way in which the Wisdom parallels function to evoke Torah. This is not a matter of merely noting parallels–the mistake often made by the History of Religions school, e.g. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 170, but of inquiring into the function of the *bricolage*. With limited materials at hand, we are challenged to see how this particular material has been brought into the functioning (or not functioning) whole.

[224] Gibbs understands this passage in view of what he calls the older themes of, "O.T. sonship, for the son is the one acknowledged as such by the father, and through obedience, dependence and submission the son is conformed to the character of his father and shows him forth." Gibbs, 44. The wisdom parallels however incline one to think that Matthew had something more in mind. At hand was not just sonship language but also wisdom, our bricoleur brings these together with Torah.

> revelation of God and of his will for man. But this is precisely what 11.27 has already done, for there the Son declares that he knows the Father and has been given a complete revelation. Hence Jesus, in both 11.27 and 29, and in contrast to Moses, is the perfect embodiement of God's purpose and demand and the functional equivalent of Torah.[225]

One might ask why such a convoluted path? Perhaps Jesus becomes transfigured Torah even though he doesn't begin there. One aspect I wish to suggest is this, the ends may not have been clear at the beginning. What are the grounds for assuming that Torah transfigured was a plan? None. It is an emergent image that results from *bricolage* as activity, driving the process as much as the *bricoleur* as agent.[226]

3.4 I am With You Always (Matthew 28:17)

By now, the contours of my *off-epochal* reading should be clear as we come to the third of Matthew's so-called divine presence passages. This third divine presence passage occurs in the closing verses of Matthew's gospel, when the risen Jesus commissions his disciples thusly,

> All authority (πᾶσα ἐξουσία) in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples (μαθητεύσατε) of all nations, baptizing (βαπτίζοντες) them in the name (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching (διδάσκοντες) them to obey everything that I have commanded (ἐνετειλάμην) you. And remember, I am with you (μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι) always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Scholars have long noted that 28:20, together with the earlier 1:23, form an *inclusio* for the gospel.[227] I would concur with this observation insofar as this final commissioning scene is in fact linked with the angelic declaration in the gospel's opening, but it is not the *incarnational* or *spiritualized* reading most commentators suppose.

Reflecting the common scholarly reading of 28:18-20, Richard Hays writes, "No merely human figure could offer such an extravagant promise of eternal presence; the very

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[225] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 289-90.

[226] This possibly was raised by Lévi-Strauss himself. As Johnson points out,

> As Lévi-Strauss will state a few years later in the introduction to *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964), 'I therefore claim to show, not how men think (*pensent*) in myths, but how myths operate (*se pensent*) in men's minds without their being aware of the fact.' Similarly, it could be argued that it is *bricolage* which thinks, or operates, through the *bricoleur*, rather than the reverse—as we shall see, (s)he is never entirely in command of his or her means of production. Johnson, 360, citing Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 12.

[227] These two verses have been long viewed as the programmatic texts in establishing the high christology read in Matthew's gospel. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 48. goes as far as to claim that the, "highest level of Matthew's Christology is effectivley summed up" in these two verses.

content of this comforting word implies the divine identity of the one who speaks it."[228] Neither of these two claims are warranted in the reading that I have offered up in this chapter thus far.

As in 18:20, Jesus' promise here in 28:20, that he would be with his followers is not an implicit claim to divinity. Jesus' reference to father, son and holy spirit echo the angelic declaration in the opening of the gospel, but they are not suggestions that we now identify Jesus as God as Holy Spirit.[229] The use of the singular τὸ ὄνομα further suggests that this passage is not establishing some ontological incarnational relationship for Jesus.

The singular τὸ ὄνομα is better understood as reflecting a singular name, a "revealed name of power" (Exod. 3:13-15; Prov. 18:10; Jub. 36:7).[230] Supporting the possibility of this interpretation are several early texts which do seem to indicate a shared name that can apply to both Jesus and God (Jn. 14:26; 17:11; Phil. 2:9; *Gos. Truth* 38:5-15). This position also finds indirect support in Acts where baptism is described as being carried out using some variation of the name of Jesus. Note the following descriptions of baptism:

- ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Acts 2:38)
- εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (Acts 8:16)
- ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Acts 10:48)
- εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (Acts 19:5)
- ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ [αὐτοῦ = Jesus] (Acts 22:16)

Assuming that the writer of Luke had access to Matthew or to some form of this commissioning statement, the usage noted here suggests that the writer likewise understood this command in a non-incarnational way.

This commissioning passage is not an identity statement (e.g. a proto-trinitarian formulation), but model by which the followers of Jesus can themselve fully inhabit the Torah-formed space of the Matthaean gospel. The Matthaean Jesus commissions his followers to continue in the Torah that he has made known to them, a Torah transfigured in his very person.

3.4.1 Teaching

To better understand this final divine presence passage we must pause to consider the role of Jesus as teacher in Matthew's gospel. It is not an overstatement, to say that teaching is the preeminent activity of Matthew's Jesus.[231] Some have objected to foregrounding Jesus' role as teacher, noting that in Matthew, only Judas (26:25, 49) and

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[228] Hays, 171. Other scholars may not be as forceful as Hays in making such an explicit connection between Jesus and the divine identity but most nonetheless hold that some form of incarnation of divine presence is in view.

[229] Comparing this closing with 1:23, France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1119. writes, "But the difference now is that it is not God himself who promise to be 'with' them, still less an angel sent by him, but the risen Jesus, who has just been declared to stand alongside the Father and the Holy Spirit in heavenly sovereignty." Such a declaration is without warrant.

[230] So argue Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 3:687.

[231] Kupp, 215.

strangers/opponents (e.g. 8:19) explicitly call Jesus teacher or rabbi.[232] This objection is rendered mute when we recall that not only is Jesus constantly teaching in the gospel, but Jesus explicitly identifies himself the "one teacher" of the disciples (23:8, 10).

The Matthaean Jesus not only identifies himself as the one teacher of the disciples, but repeatedly he claims a supreme authority for his teaching. Jesus's claim to have been given all authority (πᾶσα ἐξουσία) in heaven and on earth here in 28:18 is directly connected to the authority of his teaching. Earlier in the gospel, in Matthew 24:35, Jesus declares, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Most *epochally* primed readings barely pause before ascribing incarnational overtones to these statements. To once again quote Hays as a representative voice,

> If we ask ourselves who might legitimately say such a thing, once again there can be only one answer: we find ourselves face to face with the God of the Old Testament... Christian interpreters lulled by familiarity with Matthew's Gospel may not fully appreciate the theological boldness of the christological assertations made at every turn by Matthew. But there can be no doubt that the word spoken by Jesus in Matthew 24:35 can be true only if it really is "the word of our God," only if the speaker who says "my words shall not pass away" is in fact the God of Israel, God with us.[233]

But is it really this clear? It seems to me that a more accurate description would be to say that Christian interpreters have been lulled by *incarnational* and *epochal* thinking such that they fail to appreciate other possibilities. The Matthaean Jesus speaks Torah, and as Immanuel, his life is itself witness to the enduring validity of the words of Torah. Jesus' words are those which were given on Sinai and thus his claim that they will outlast heaven and earth is nowhere close to being an unambiguous identification of Jesus with the God of Israel.

Here we find the other part of the inclusio from the opening, Jesus will indeed save his people from their sins but it is through obedience to his teaching that such salvation will come about (cf. 7:24-27).[234] As I have already discussed, Matthew's view of salvation is not synonomous with atonement and it cannot be seen as limited to his passion. This is not the place for an extended discussion but Matthew's treatment of the crucifixition and resurrection of Jesus make the most sense when situated within the larger context of Torah teaching. Jesus resurrection validates his teaching and serves as a sign that his words are enduring.

The role of the Matthaean Jesus as teacher is extended in Matthew's commisioning scene, where Jesus' followers are instructed to go and "teach." This command to teach is unique to Matthew and reflects the Torah-centric nature of the gospel.[235] Notice that the

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[232] See Bauer, 35.

[233] Hays, 169-70.

[234] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1119.

[235] In Luke's commissioning scene the disciples are told that "that repentance and forgiveness of sins" are "to be proclaimed in his name to all nations" (see Luke 24.44-49). Jesus in the longer ending of Mark instructs the disciples to "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned" (see Mark 16.14-18). In neither account however are they instructed to become teachers.

content of their teaching is to be that which Jesus has *commanded* (ἐνετειλάμην) them. Throughout Matthew, the cognate noun, ἐντολὴν, is also used in reference to the *commandments* given by God through Moses (cf. 5.19; 15.3; 19.17; 22.36-40).[236]

Unlike in John, in 28:16-20 Matthew's Jesus does not hand off his mission to his disciples so that they may continue in his absence. Jesus does not delegate the authority he has been given. Some have suggested that Jesus "incarnates that divine authority in their midst" and thus his follower's mission depends on the continued presence of Jesus in their midst. [237] But what is the nature of this presence? Kupp says, "theirs will be a derived commission; the disciples will always draw their authority and empowerment from Jesus' own universal, post-resurrection authority among their gatherings."[238] For Matthew it seems that this authority is not a mystical or spiritual experience, but the presence created by his teaching and commandments. As in 18:20, Jesus' authority will continue to be located in his teaching, not in his community or in some spiritual presence.

3.4.2 The Leaving that is no Leaving

Jesus' promise to never leave his disciples mirrors an interesting structural aspect in the narrative flow of Matthew's gospel. Matthew is unique among the synoptic gospel accounts in that Matthew never depicts Jesus as leaving.[239] The Matthaean Jesus breathes no spirit upon his disciples, he does not ascend to heaven, he does not promise them another guide/teacher. His gift to them is the teaching that he has commanded them and then the gospel ends. Matthew does not describe what *becomes* of the risen Jesus.[240] In some sense Jesus and Torah blur into "everything that I have commanded you." Insofar as his disciples continue in the process of teaching and making disciples, Jesus promised he will be with them.

Speaking of 28:20b, Kupp makes an important observation when he notes, "Matthew appears to have revisited quite deliberately the Sinai paradigm here, where the giving of the law, the formation of community and the presence of YHWH came together."[241] We have already noted the presence of Sinai *nachleben* in Jesus' promised presence in 18:20 and here again it appears. The recurrence of Sinai pushes us back to Torah as the more plausible reading, not a promise of continual spiritual presence or as a claim to divinity.[242]

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[236] See France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1118, especially fn. 45.

[237] so argues Kupp, 105.

[238] Ibid.

[239] In the shorter ending of Mark, Jesus' disciples are confronted with an empty tomb. An angel tells his followers, "He has been raised; he is not here (οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε)" (Mark 16:6). In the Lukan account, the risen Jesus leads his followers to Bethany where he blesses them before Luke records, "he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven (ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν)" (Luke 24:51).

[240] W. Marxsen, *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth* (SCM Press., 1970), 165.

[241] Kupp, 216.

[242] e.g. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 49, interprets the promise to imply an ongoing spiritual presence of Jesus.

The presence of Deuteronomy in Matthew's *bricolage* also provides us with guidance as how to best understand the promise of an ongoing presence of Jesus. Looking to the future, Moses in Deuteronomy 28:58 charges Israel to obey, "all the words of this law that are written in this book." Jesus also looking to the future, commands his disciples in Matthew 28:20 to go make disciples teaching them to obey, "everything that I have commanded you." In Deuteronomy 31:26, Moses orders the children of Israel to put the book of the law next to the Ark of the Covenant as a witness. This law was to be read every seven years in the presence of all Israel (Deut. 31:10-13). The language employed in Deuteronomy 31:10-13 is a clear echo of the Sinai event suggesting that every generation in perpetuity would experience the giving of the Torah (e.g. God's presence among them) for themselves.[243] Jesus then declares the if his disciples obey his command to go and teach that he himself will be with them always (Matthew 28:20).

Many commentators while noting the parallels between Deuteronomy and Matthew have nonetheless missed the significance of the parallels by wrongly assuming that Jesus has replaced the Torah as nexus between God and the people.[244] In these readings, it is variously suggested that Jesus is assuming the role of Moses (e.g. departing authoritative teacher) *and/or* that of God (continuing divine presence).[245] A simpler reading is to recognize that the overlap between those two roles is Torah. It is precisely through the juxtaposition of these two roles that our *bricoleur* once again transfigures Torah in his figuration of Jesus.

Dunn gets it spot on when he says that the earliest formulations of Wisdom christology were expressing the claim that "*Jesus had revealed God* – not the Son of God, not the 'divine intermediary' Wisdom, but God."[246] This statement however need not be limited to Wisdom christology, but applies to the entirety of Matthew. Jesus as Torah transfigured reveals that God is with us. Jesus is not a stand-in for God, Jesus is not a pre-existent being, but as a transfiguration of Torah, the definitive teaching of God, he reveals God. Jesus was not a new Torah or a replacement Torah or the Torah now revealed. And as long as his teachings continued to be enacted among his followers they could be confident that he was still with them and thus God was with them.

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[243] Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1986), 380, cited in Anne M. O'Leary, *Matthew's Judaization of Mark: Examined in the Context of the Use of Sources in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 143.

[244] O'Leary makes this mistake as does Douglas R.A. Hare who when writing about the ongoing debate over the Jewishness of Matthew concludes with, "those on both sides of this debate can agree that for Matthean Christians Jesus has replaced the Torah as the key to a right relationship with the God of Israel." Hare, 277. Such a misstep is not new–it is recorded as early as the sixteenth century in the writings of Sebastian Münster who called Matthew a "new Torah". Pinchas E. Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1984, as noted by Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 50.

[245] e.g. Hays, 145., who sees Jesus as assuming both roles.

[246] Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 262.

In 28:16-20 the risen Jesus makes his earthly teaching the means for his ongoing presence.[247] Bauer has rightly noted that, "the existence of these five discourses underscores a major aspect of Jesus' presence with his community throughout history, that of speaking words of instruction and commandment. In terms of literary structure, therefore, the discourses function to underscore the climax of 28.16-20."[248] The climax of Matthew's five-fold Torah-form stucture is not a spiritual Jesus eternally present with his followers. Matthew wraps the five-fold Torah-form gospel with a Torah-transfigured Jesus. There is no place to go, there is only Torah.

Matthew need not depict Jesus depicted as leaving because the gospel has always been about making Jesus fully present. Having built Jesus out of Torah, Matthew can now end his gospel by charging the disciples to continue in Jesus' teaching. Jesus, the Torah-transfigured, has become the space in which his followers will now reside so long as they continue in his teaching. To speak of Jesus leaving would make no sense within this paradigm and so Matthew doesn't.

3.5 Assemblage

In 4 Ezra, in his seventh and final vision, we find Ezra the scribe offering up the following prayer,

> For the world lies in darkness, and its inhabitants are without light. For your Law has been burned, and so no one knows the things which have been done or will be done by you. If then I have found favor before you, send the Holy Spirit to me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in your Law, that men may be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live. (4 Ezra 14:20-22)[249]

The setting for this petition in one in which the Torah has been destroyed–burned with fire in the failed revolt of 70CE–and the now world lies in darkness. Ezra is not requesting the holy spirit to enable him to better interpret, but to re-write the books of the Hebrew Bible which had been destroyed. For the writer of 4 Ezra, it is only through the return of Torah that "those who wish to live in the last days may live." The holy spirit then is the enabling power that allows Torah to return to the world.

4 Ezra is not unique in this concept that Torah can and sometimes needs to be re-inscribed. Jewish literature of the Second Temple period contains multiple accounts of the Torah being given new form. The giving of Torah to Moses at Sinai was not universally understood within the Second Temple period to be a one-off event. As Hindy Najman has pointed out, for the author of Jubilees, "When Moses transcribed a revelation of heavenly tablets at Sinai, he was repeating a scene that had already occurred numerous times...

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[247] Barth, 135-36.; Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, 1, 122-3. Strangely, Luz also tries to argue that the earthly Jesus is presented in 1:18-25 as the exalted messiah who will be known for this divine 'withness.'

[248] Bauer, 133. Unfortunately Bauer continues, "There [in 28:16-20] the exalted Christ is pictured as continually present with his community 'to the end of the age', speaking words of instruction, encouragement, and commandment."

[249] Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 554.

Moses was not unique; he was one of many bookish heroes charged with the transcription of heavenly tablets."[250] Importantly, as I noted in the previous chapter, the various forms Torah existing in the Second Temple period were not always seen to be in competition with one another.

In the writings of Philo, for whom the Torah was everything, we find an interesting move in that for Philo the patriarchs are themselves in some sense the divine Law (*De Abrahamo*, 4-5).[251] The difference here is that the exemplars to whom he wishes to call attention, namely the patriarchs, lived before the giving of the Mosaic law so for Philo the patriarchs had to embody the unwritten law. This however should not be seen as competition with the Mosaic Torah.

This same malleability and mutability with respect to the form of the Torah likewise exists within the rabbinic tradition. Abraham Joshua Heschel notes that while the Torah was believed to be eternal, it assumes different forms in various eons.[252] In Eden it had a spiritual form, but when man left Eden the Torah assumed a material form. Heschel says that in order for the Torah to, "enter the world of history" it must assume a form that this world can bear.[253] Even for the rabbis, the form of the Torah given to Moses on Sinai was not final. Not only was there an oral Torah accompaniying the written form but Torah in its fulness remains hidden and will only be fully revealed in the messianic age.[254]

In Matthew, like 4 Ezra, we read of a people without Torah. They have lost their way and deviated from the path. Their guides have led them astray and they are in need of saving. Then the angel speaks to Joseph, declaring that by the work of the holy spirit, a son would be born. This son would save his people from their sins and his people would come to call the child Immanuel in recognition of the surety of the word that he would bring. As Torah-transfigured, this Jesus, of whom the angel speaks, is not so much the effector of salvation as he is its bringer.[255] Built of Torah himself, Jesus is the one teacher who can lead the people back to Torah and thereby salvation.

To read the story of Jesus in Matthew is to read Torah-transfigured. Matthew, we must remember, is not a systematic theologian. There is no single controlling motiff or image as key to Matthew's interpretation of Jesus.[256] What we have is an assemblage of mismatched materials that were at hand.

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[250] Najman, 388.

[251] Cited in Jean Daniélou, *Philo of Alexandria*, trans. James Colbert (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2014), 60-61.

[252] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1955), 262.

[253] Ibid., 263.

[254] Ibid., 262-64. citing *Shevuot,* 5a; Rashi, *Commentary* on *The Song of Songs* 1:2. See also *Tanhuma*, Balak, 14; *Numbers Rabba,* 20, 20.

[255] As Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," 365. notes, "one may also ask whether the Matthean construal of Jesus would be able to deal salvifically with the Pauline construal of the human condition – especially if the Matthean Jesus is the bringer but not the effecter of salvation."

[256] Allison.; Hays, 139.

One way to conceptualize the various recapitulations of Israel, Moses, etc. that are found in Matthew is to recognize that these stories were likewise told in the Torah, but the Torah is not Moses. Similarly, in Jesus the story of Israel and Moses is told afresh, but Jesus is not a new Israel or a new Moses, he is the Torah-transfigured. On the one hand, Matthew does not give Jesus the title "Torah" so the link seems to be missed[257] but on the other hand the title dominance is so strong that writers will invent new titles "the New Moses" when Matthew is content with Jesus. [258]

What this brief examination has shown is not a new totalizing view of Matthew. Merely the interpretive space that opens up by stepping back from an epochal reading. Understanding the character of the bricoleur, should caution us against reading Matthew as a Torah fundamentalist.[259] Matthew's sophisticated reading of Torah is much more than an add Jesus and stir recipe.[260] Matthew adds a fresh twist on the possible stances first century Jews might have taken with respect to the Torah.

3.5.1 Veneration

The poliferation in form with respect to Torah in the Second Temple period brings me to one final overlap within Second Temple literature that has led to some confusion regarding the Matthaean figuration of Jesus. A key argument made by the high christology folks deals with the apparent worship or veneration of Jesus in the New Testament. For instance, we find the following statement in the Oxford Online Bibliographies entry for "Worship in the New Testament and Earliest Christianity,"

> "Along with ancient Judaism, early Christians also were to worship solely the one God of biblical tradition and to refuse to worship the various other deities of the Roman world. At an astonishingly early point, however, believers also treated the risen/ascended Jesus as rightful recipient of corporate and private devotion with God, thereby also distinguishing themselves from the Jewish tradition."[261]

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[257] As Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," 369. notes, "concentrating on titles can lead one to miss the christology which is in the text."

[258] For a good discussion of the limitations associated with a "title-dominated" study of christology see Keck. As Keck notes, this obsession, "reflects an inadequate view of language, because it assumes that meaning resides in words like 'Lord'." Ibid., 368-70.

[259] While I disagree with some elements in his article, e.g. his insistence that Matthew's Christology "far outstrips other forms of Jewish messianism," Douglas Hare does provide some necessary balance to ongoing attempts at reducing Matthew's perspectives on the observance of Torah to one that exhibits no significant difference from say that of the Pharisees aside from a belief in Jesus. As Hare rightly notes, fidelity to Torah in the Second Temple period did not preclude innovation and interpretation. On the contrary, "affirmations of the sanctity of Scripture were accompanied by many departures in practice in all forms of first-century Judaism known to us." Hare, 270.

[260] Here I can't help but think of Margaret Conkey's description of some reductionist forms feminism which she described as being akin to an "add women and stir" perspective.

[261] Larry Hurtado, "Worship in the New Testament and Earliest Christianity," in *Oxford Bibliographies Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

These high christology folks then associate this worship as evidence of his divine status.[262] While this is not the place to engage the larger question of Jesus' divine status vis-à-vis the entire New Testament, I do want to propose an alternative model for understanding worship and veneration directed towards Jesus in Matthew.

The proliferation of form with respect to the Torah in the Second Temple period reflects the increasing role of Torah in mediating the divine presence to the people. In the Torah, God's people not only find divine instruction, but also divine presence.[263] This increasing importance affects a shift towards veneration of the Torah that can already be seen in the biblical texts themselves. In Nehemiah 8 we find a most interesting scene. Nehemiah describes a gathering of all the people before Ezra the scribe (עֶזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר) so that he may read the Torah in their presence (vv. 1-2). When Ezra opens the scroll, signficantly, all the people stand (v. 5). Ezra then blesses God and the people respond by saying "amen" while lifting their hands before bowing and worshipping God with the faces pressed to the ground (v. 6). Yehezkel Kaufmann describes the scene as follows,

> The Law is read daily during the festival (Tabernacles); it is as though the light of the Shekinah breaks forth with the reading. Herewith, a significant cultic development: the Torah as the embodiment (*hagšāmâ*) of the word of God, of His spirit, the symbol of sanctity and the sublime, the source of all that is holy on earth, the book of the Torah as a cultic object.[264]

What is important here is not a straightforward identification of Torah with God, no such identification exists, but there is a functional overlap in the orientation/stance of the people towards Torah and towards God.

The most dramatic example of this overlap can be found in Psalm 119 where the psalmist repeatedly uses expressions that are ordinarily reserved for God to express a devotion to Torah.[265] Consider the following:

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[262] Scholars differ in how the define Jesus' status but most high Christology adherents view the worship of Jesus as an affirmation by the New Testament writers of Jesus' divinity. Larry Hurtado and Richard Bauckham are two of the leading scholars in the high Christology club. For further study see Hurtado's foundational work, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015). Also his, *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) ; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). For earlier works see Bauckham's, "The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity," *NTS* 27 (1981). As well as Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. J.E. Steely (from the 1921 German fifth edition) (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

[263] See Gorman.; also Kupp, 216.

[264] Yeḥezkel Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel, Vol. 4: From the Babylonian Captivity to the End of Prophecy*, trans. C.W. Efroymson (New York: Ktav, 1977), 391.

[265] For a full discussion of the following instances see Greenberg.; Y. Amir, "Psalm 119 Als Zeugnis Eines Protorabbinischen Judentums," *Studien zum Antiken Judentum, Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums* 18, no. 2 (1985) ; Jeffrey Tigay, "The Torah Scroll and God's Presence," in *Built by Wisdom, Established by Understanding: Essays on Biblical and near Eastern Literature in Honor of Adele Berlin*, ed. Maxine L. Grossman (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2013); also Shai Held,

(Psalm 119:19) אַל־תַּסְתֵּר מִמֶּנִּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ
(cf. Psalm 27:9) אַל־תַּסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנִּי

Here we have God's *commandments* where we would normally expect God's *face* (e.g. his presence).

(Psalm 119:30) דֶּרֶךְ־אֱמוּנָה בָּחָרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ שִׁוִּיתִי
(cf. Psalm 16:8) שִׁוִּיתִי יְהוָה לְנֶגְדִּי תָּמִיד כִּי מִימִינִי בַּל־אֶמּוֹט

Now the psalmist sets God's *ordinances* before him where elsewhere one can read that it is the *Lord* who is forever set before the psalmist.

(Psalm 119:31) דָּבַקְתִּי בְעֵדְוֹתֶיךָ יְהוָה
(cf. Psalm 63:9) דָּבְקָה נַפְשִׁי אַחֲרֶיךָ
(cf. Deut. 10:20) אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּירָא אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד וּבוֹ תִדְבָּק

This is the only occurrence in the Hebrew bible where we read of someone *clinging* to the *decrees* of the Lord. The commandment in Deuteronomy is to cling to the *Lord your God*, likewise the description in Psalm 63:9 is that the psalmist clings to God.[266]

(Psalm 119:42) וְאֶעֱנֶה חֹרְפִי דָבָר
(cf. Psalm 31:15) וַאֲנִי עָלֶיךָ בָטַחְתִּי יְהוָה

The Psalmist trusts in God's word where elsewhere one trusts in God.

(Psalm 119:48) וְאֶשָּׂא־כַפַּי אֶל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָהָבְתִּי וְאָשִׂיחָה בְחֻקֶּיךָ
(cf. Psalm 63:5) כֵּן אֲבָרֶכְךָ בְחַיָּי בְּשִׁמְךָ אֶשָּׂא כַפָּי
(cf. Lam. 2:19) לִבֵּךְ נֹכַח פְּנֵי אֲדֹנָי שְׂאִי אֵלָיו כַּפַּיִךְ עַל־נֶפֶשׁ עֹוְלָלַיִךְ

The image of the psalmsit lifting his/her hands towards the commandments of the Lord, commandments which the psalmist loves, would have been a startling image to those who associated the lifting of one's hands with prayer and supplication to God.

Torah is the psalmist's joy and delight (vv. 14, 16, 24, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 162, and 174), light (v. 105), wealth (vv. 72, 162), and life (vv. 25, 50).[267] The psalmist takes all of Israel's key images – temple, covenant, creation, exodus, and messiah – and subsumes within Torah.[268] In an important summary of Psalm 119, Greenberg says,

> Religious sentiment, religious emotion–love, delight, clinging to–are now focused on the Torah, the Teaching, but God is not therewith displaced; on the contrary, the entire psalm is addressed to God. "You" in the psalm is God, and "your Torah," "your precepts," "your commandments," are praised. The Torah does not come between the psalmist and God; it serves to link them. God's Torah, his commandments, rules, precepts, testimonies, words–all these are available on earth

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"Between God and Torah: Judaism's Gambles," Mechon Hadar http://mechonhadar.s3.amazonaws.com/mh_torah_source_sheets/CJLIParashatToldot5775.pdf.

[266] Greenberg, 21.

[267] Freedman and Welch, 88-89.

[268] Ibid., 90-91. Freedman goes so far as to claim, "Psalm 119 gives *tôrâ* virtually the status of a divine hypostasis, like wisdom (*hokmâ*) in Proverbs 8. Psalm 119 and Proverbs 8 share vocabulary and theology. Neither *tôrâ* nor *hokmâ* can be serated from Yahweh, who created them; yet each embodies an essential aspect of Yahweh that nevertheless can be addressed, invoked, and appealed to itself as the object of devotion. Each has the power to order and bless the worshiper's life." Tigay, 330, suggests that Freedman's claim that the psalm expresses the *apotheosis* of Torah is "perhaps an overstatement."

> to the religious Israelites, enabling them to at all times feel contact with God. God's presence is assured within the human community through his Torah that he has bestowed upon Israel.[269]

Greenberg rightly points out that this devotion and even veneration of Torah does not displace God but actually serves to link Torah and God.

The relevance for Psalm 119 to our discussion goes even deeper when we note the influence from both the Deuteronomic tradition (including Jeremiah) and the sapiential tradition (e.g. also reflected in the writings of Ben Sira, *Sirach*).[270] This mix is especially interesting given that as I have noted above, Matthew likewise exhibits influences from both traditions. Levenson argues that Psalm 119 follows the tradition of repentence (Deuteronomic), not one of atonement and expiation (Priestly). As he notes, the psalm "stresses recommitment to the commandments (e.g., v 59) but never mentions the cult or the priesthood."[271] Setting aside an epochal framing reveals that Matthew is likewise oriented towards repentance and not towards expiation or atonement.

Psalm 119 provides us with a plausible scriptural setting for a non-incarnational understanding in which the Matthaean Jesus could come to be venerated and even explicitly described in terms normally reserved for God.[272] The worship and adoration of Jesus, the Torah-transfigured, in Matthew is not the smoking gun that incarnationalist readings suppose. Fruthermore, Jesus is not a replacement for God. Matthew's Jesus does not come between Israel and God; he serves to link them–as the tranfigured Torah he makes God present, thus Matthew writes, they will name him "God is with us."[273]

We ought not forget that Matthew never calls Jesus God.[274] With respect to Matthew, Bultmann's observation still rings true, "it may be said that in [Jesus] God is

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[269] Greenberg, 21-22.

[270] Levenson, 567-68.

[271] Ibid., 564.

[272] Levenson explicitly rejects a simple identification, but he does see the author of psalm 119 as being something close to what we know as Pharisees See ibid., 570.

[273] This veneration of Torah took many forms in the Second Temple period. Daniélou argued that the Torah was regarded as a "divine reality existing before the world; and the roll which contained it was to become in the Synagogue the object of a genuine cultus: the Law is so to speak the visible sacrament of the presence of the divine Word. For the Jew the Torah is the true incarnation, as the Koran was to be for the Moslem." Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. John A. Baker, 3 vols., vol. 1, The Development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicea (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1964), 163. See also Joseph Bonsirven, *Le Judaïsme Palestinien Au Temps De Jésus-Christ* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1934), 250.; Strack and Billerbeck, 2:353-56; Goodenough, 58.

[274] Contra the rise of the high christology club, it still remains true that the New Testament rarely speaks explicitly of Jesus as God. See the still relevant works of Bultmann, "The Christological Confession of the World Council of Churches'." and Vincent Taylor, "Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?," *The Expository Times* 73, no. 4 (1962). A nice response to the above can be found in Raymond E. Brown, "Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?," *Theological Studies* 26, no. 4 (1965). For further discussion, see Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A.M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1959), 306-14; Raymond E. Brown, *Jesus, God*

encountered. The formula 'Christ is God' is false in every sense in which God is understood as an entity which can be objectivized, whether it is understood in an Arian or Nicene, an Orthodox or a Liberal sense. It is correct, if 'God' is understood as the event of God's acting."[275] Or as Dunn so succintly puts it, "There is no real indication that Matthew had attained a concept of incarnation, had come to think of Christ as a pre-existent being who became incarnate in Mary's womb or in Christ's ministry (as incarnate Wisdom). . . the thought of Christ's pre-existence or a doctrine of incarnation had not yet occurred to him."[276] For Matthew, God is indeed *encountered* in Jesus insofar as Torah is the means by which God makes himself known/present.

3.5.2 Transfigurable

Throughout this chapter, I have vigourously resisted incarnational connotations in describing the Matthaean figuration of Jesus. Incarnation, from the Latin verb *incarno*, literally means *to-make-into-flesh*. The term comes from the opening of John's gospel, *"et Verbum caro factum est"* (John 1:14, Latin Vulgate) and reflects a very particular figuration of Jesus.

That being said, the aim of this present chapter is not to debunk *incarnation* as a valid New Testament figuration of Jesus. It is my claim however that this present reading of Matthew's Torah-forming figuration of Jesus not be confused with the various conceptions of *incarnation* pervasive in New Testament studies.

Neither am I suggesting that *incarnation* is not a proper Second Temple Jewish concept. On the contrary, if we are to take John's gospel serious then we must acknowledge that incarnation was a viable concept for Jews of the Second Temple period. Not only does the concept occur in John's gospel, but permutations of the concept appear throughout Second Temple Jewish literature.

In the *Prayer of Joseph*, the patriarch Jacob is described as the incarnation of the angel Israel.[277] Gabriele Boccaccini has argued that the poem found in Similitudes 42

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and Man: Modern Biblical Reflections (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co, 1967), 1-38. More recently, Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 216.

[275] Bultmann, "The Christological Confession of the World Council of Churches'," 287. Bultmann prefaces this comment by insisting that Jesus is the "Eschatological Event" but Bultmann's observation holds true even without adopting an eschatological reading of the New Testament.

[276] Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 257. See also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 31, n. 17.

[277] Arthur Darby Nock writes,

> Attention may indeed be drawn to the *Prayer of Joseph*, notable fragments of which are preserved in Origen (E. Schürer, *Gesch. Jüd. Volk.* 3.359 f.; M.R. James, *Lost Apocrypha of the O.T.* 21 ff.) In this Jacob is represented as saying, 'I Jacob, that speak to you am also Israel, an angel of God and a ruling spirit, and Abraham and Isaac were created in advance before all other works. . . I am the first begotten of every living thing that is given life by God. . . Uriel the angel of God came forth and said that I had gone down on earth and tabernacled among men. . . And I told him his name and his

should be seen as an attack on the tradition of the Torah as the earthly embodiment of heavenly wisdom that is found in Sirach and 1 Baruch.[278] Boccaccini's argument is important because if he is correct, and it seems that he is, then it suggests that Second Temple Jews were in fact arguing about the various forms Torah might take, including personification if not incarnation.

Descriptions of the Torah interceding for Israel appear in at least two places in rabbinic literature. In a midrash on Exodus, after describing the fear felt by the Israelites at Sinai, R. Levi is recorded saying, "But the Torah interceded for them with God, saying 'Does a king, when he gives his daughter in marriage slay the sons of his house? All the world rejoices and Thy sons are dying!' At once their souls were restored, as it says, 'the Torah of the Lord is perfect, it restores the soul' (Ps. 19:7)."[279] Describing the Torah in this intercessory role also appears in a midrash on Lamentations. Here the Torah is called upon to bear witness against Israel at the destruction of the Temple, but refuses to do so because of Abraham, who is recorded as saying to the Torah, "My daughter, were not my children the only ones that received thee, when thou wast rejected by other nations?"[280]

As these descriptions clearly demonstrate, Torah continues to be shaped and formed, reformed and transformed by the people who live within its field. Within Second Temple Jewish literature there are multiple builds of Torah that overlap, contradict, undermine, feed, subsume, and inhabit the same debris field.[281] It is in this rhizomatic

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> rank among the sons of God, saying, "Art thou not Uriel, the eight from me, while I am Israel, an archangel of the power of the Lord?"' This predicates of Jacob-Israel something quite different from the ideal preexistence of the Law, the Name of the Messiah, etc. (G.F. Moore, *Judaism* I. 526; 2. 344). Jacob is a heavenly being in human shape and with a memory of what he knew before his incarnation, like Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. Arthur Darby Nock, "'Son of God' in Pauline and Hellenistic Thought," in *Arthur Darby Nock: Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 931-32.

For further discussion of Jacob as incarnation in rabbinic and mystical Jewish texts see Elliot Wolfson, "Demut Ya'akov Hakuka Bekisé Hakavod," in M. Oron and A. Goldreich, eds. *Masuot–Ephraim Gottlieb Memorial Volume* (Tel Aviv: University of Tel Aviv, 1994) pp. 131-185.; also Yair Lorberbaum, "*Imago Dei:* Rabbinic Literature, Maimonides, and Nahmanides," Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1997 [in Hebrew], pp. 182-184, and n. 130.

[278] Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism*, 146. For a more extended treatment of this claim see "The Preexistence of the Torah: A Commonplace in Second Temple Judaism, or a Later Rabbinic Development?," *Henoch* 17 (1995): 329-50. Alon Goshen-Gottstein, "Judaism and Incarnational Theologies: Mapping out the Parameters of Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 39, no. 3-4 (2002): 231.

[279] *Exod.R.,* 29:4. Cited in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1938), 677.

[280] *Lam.R.,* Introduction, I. See also *Lev.R.,* 19 and paralles. Cited in Solomon Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (Macmillan, 1909), 129.

[281] As one moves into the rabbinic period, the concept seems to settle on Torah and Torah eventually becomes virutally the only possibility for *incarnational* language in rabbinic literature. Goshen-Gottstein goes so far as to suggest that we might even say, "that the

assemblage called Second Temple Jewish literature, that Matthew is fully embedded. As I discuss in my opening, given the materials at hand, we should not be surprised that Matthew's Jesus looks a lot like the Torah. To push even further, this familiarity goes beyond the surface and extends to the framework from which the Matthaean figuration is built. As a follower of Jesus, Matthew does not describe Jesus in Torah terms, nor does he search Torah for proof. For Matthew, the figure of Jesus must by built of Torah.

This image of Jesus being built from Torah has a certain directionality that must be aknowledged. Incarnational language often carries a connotation of filling from without (usually from above).[282] Throughout our discussion we have seen how various scholars use descriptions along the lines of the divine being present in Jesus or that God comes near to the people in Jesus. The directionality of these claims is effectivley that of incarnation and ultimatley they are ontological in nature.[283]

There is however, another directionality at work in Matthew. Jesus as Torah-transfigured is just as much or more a claim that Jesus is built into Torah as it is that Torah comes to be present in Jesus. This directionality is fundamentally different from incarnational framings and is more easily recognized as being functional not ontological. Importantly, in saying that Jesus is built into Torah, I am not suggesting that an ideal form of Torah exists. Quite the opposite in fact, as I have discussed above and in the previous chapters, Torah in the Second Temple period is itself a fluid or even gaseous assemblage in constant motion. Every build transforms Torah, but not in an *epochal* progression, because the builds are not going anywhere in this rhizomatic assemblage.

Again, a shift in directionality must be noted. Pouring Torah into Jesus, incarnation, suggests a subordination that effectivley makes Jesus the boundary conditions for Torah. Nothing could be further from the Torah-forming world of Matthew. Building Jesus from Torah does in fact transfigure Torah insofar as the *bricoleur* is not aiming to build Torah *per se,* but Torah as building material nonethless exercises agency in the composition.

Again, I must stress, I am not here suggesting a new theme or theology for Matthew, only that we must recognize the prominent role of Torah in Matthew's figuration of Jesus. This is not just a matter of Jesus as the best interpreter of Torah, but that the figure of Jesus himself is Torah-transfigured.

It is important to note that this should not be seen as some sort of missing-link between the scriptures of Israel and Johannine logos christology or the later creeds of the church (e.g. Chalcedon). Matthew does not offer us a glimpse into a transitional phase in Christological development. It is one stance among many. Matthew's Jesus is just one of many builds. In fact, Matthew's understanding of Jesus as Torah-transfigured may be a blockage to other first century understandings of incarnation. In Jesus, it is not divinity per se that incarnates, but Torah is transfigured. Through this tranfiguration, the reader is

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incarnational sense that Christianity attributes to Christ, Judaism assigns to the Torah." See Goshen-Gottstein, 229-30.

[282] Derived no doubt from what is the most famous of all incarnational passages, John's declaration that, ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (John 1:14).

[283] As I referenced above, Davies and Allison do claim that Jesus' claim in 11:27, 29 makes him the "functional equivalent of Torah," but there they subordinate that description to an incarnational view in which Jesus is the "embodiment" of God's purpose etc. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 289-90.

assured that God continues to be present with his people just as he has since the giving of the Torah on Sinai.

3.5.3 It Walks

Here it is worth returning once again to Deleuze, who described the concept of an assemblage as follows,

> What is an assemblage? It is multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liasons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of a co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind.[284]

It is Deleuze's second emphasis that I wish to note in partcular with respect to the reading I have just offered. Importantly, it is the assemblage activity that establishes the relations between the various parts that our bricoleur has fitted together.[285] There is no preexisting pattern, no filial relationships, no lines of descent. The Matthaean figuration I have attempted to render visible in this chapter's reading is a contingent artifact. This is why the question of priming is of such significance.

The chief importance of this chapter lies in making visible the possibilities occasioned by an *off-epochal* priming. As my extensive footnotes demonstrate, much of the material proper in this section has been "noted" by commentators and scholars. What has been obscured by these *epochally* primed readings however is the figuration of Jesus as Torah-transfigured. Such a figuration is only visible when Torah becomes both the space in which Jesus is figured and the materials by which he is built. Matthew's deep and abiding commitment to Torah is the multiplicty that establishes the laisons, relations, and alliances between a heterogensous and contingent set of materials that gives form to the figuration of Jesus as Torah-tranfigured.[286] The unity of this figuration is not to be found in origins narratives or *epochal* breaches, it is only a unity of co-functioning.

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[284] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* [Différence et Repetition © 1968], trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 163.

[285] This emphasis in Deleuze's definition is noted and discussed at length in Manuel DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 2-3.

[286] While note the focus of this present study, it should be noted that understanding Jesus as Torah transfigured can have important positive ramifications for contemporary Jewish Christian relations. For example, "The characterization of Jesus as the personified Torah, which has the nature of as title, means positively that Jesus fulfills the Torah, that he was a son of the people of Israel who faithfully adhered to the Torah, and that the Torah became incarnate in him. Over and beyond this central positive content, however the title of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Torah also has considerable critical significance. It shows the problematic nature of a tradition in theology and the church that was and is in danger of saying a persistent or fundamental 'no' to Israel's Torah. This is not only the danger confronting the church of the Reformation with its slogan 'freedom from the law' and its proclamation of a Torah-free gospel. It is also the danger caused by a relative lack of relationship that separates Jesus and the Torah by saying: the Torah belongs to the Jews, Jesus to the Christians." Henrix, 134-35. Seeing Jesus as Torah-transfigured forces Christians to reassess Torah. If Jesus is Torah-

This reading has revealed that what and how *Matthew builds with Torah* is a much better framing than how *Matthew interprets the Old Testament*. Nothing in the reading of this chapter necessitates a breach, a new Torah, a new Moses, a new Exodus. All of these images and motifs are recycled and reused by our *bricoleur,* who because of his *Haltung* (Torah-forming and Torah-filling) figures Jesus as Torah-transfigured. Matthew is not replacing Jewish Israel with Christian Israel. Matthew is not replacing anything with anything. What is, has always been present. The scriptures of Israel have been fulfilled, not in the sense of superceded, but insofar as they have been properly reassembled into a functional unity by our *bricoleur* into the creation at hand.

It is the deep ruts of epochal thinking that lead that erudite scholars like the late Jacob Neusner, to insist on a rupture between Jesus and Moses. In his discussion of Jesus' claim to be Lord of the Sabbath, Neusner says, "Christ now stands on the mountain, he now takes the place of the Torah."[287] This supercessionist reading is unnecessary and forced. Jesus does not take the place of the Torah, the Torah doesn't have a place, it is the place for Matthew.[288]

Furthermore, this Matthaean theme that in Jesus as Torah-transfigured, the people find not only completion, but also God's presence is built from scripture itself. The notion of God with his people need not convey an incarnational aspect. Throughout Israel's history it was said that God was with them. When Balaam in Numbers 23 tells Balak that he cannot revoke the blessing of God upon Israel he also notes, that "the LORD their God is with them" (23:21). Then Balaam declares, "God who brings them out of Egypt, is like the horns of a wild ox for them. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel; now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, 'See what God has done!'" (23:22-23). In Deuteronomy 2, Moses recounts Israel's time in the wilderness and notes, "these forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing" (2:7). This stands in stark contrast to his description of their earlier disastrous attempt to attack the Amorites when they had been expressly told that "Do not go up and fight, for I am not in the midst of you; otherwise you will be defeated by your enemies" (1:42). In short, the

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transfigured then Torah is compassion, forgiveness, grace, and suffering. Contrary to the dominate Christian narrative, Jesus did not come to save his followers from the demands of Torah, he came to make known the nature of Torah. To reveal that its yoke is easy and its burden is light, that it is rest.

[287] Jacob Neusner, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 2000), 87. While Neusner may argue that "his torah" is distinct or even contrary to "Moses' Torah" there seems to be no evidence that Matthew would share this assessment. For Matthew, Jesus does not bring a new torah, rather he comes and speaks as Torah transfigured.

[288] Pope Benedict XVI explicitly dismisses traditional and/or supercessionist interpretations which frame the passage in terms of, "Jesus' liberal understanding of the Law [that] makes for a less burdensome life than 'Jewish legalism'," when he writes, "Jesus stands before us neither as a rebel nor as a liberal, but as the prophetic interpreter of the Torah." Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), 109, 26. Benedict correctly reads the Lord of the Sabbath passage as one in which, "Jesus understands himself as the Torah–as the word of God in person." Ibid., 110. This however is a different understanding than that of Neusner. The former is grounded in a linear movement or replacement, but the latter is figural and can be read within an *off-epochal* framing that allows both Torah and Jesus to occupy the same space and time.

traditional *pneumatological* and *incarnational* emphasis of the three divine presence passages, typically read with an *epochal* priming, resulting in a new manifestation of God in Jesus followed by a likewise new ongoing spiritual presence of Jesus is unwarranted.

Instead, the Matthaean figuration of Jesus takes shape within a Torah-formed space resulting in a Jesus who functionally transfigures Torah. Let me close this chapter returning to Gibbs,

> Thus there is no Torah *and* Gospel in Matthew, there is no New Law, there is no Torah plus a New Law, but there is rather the Good News that in Jesus the Torah, the demand of God's righteousness, is now totally and efficaciously present and that in him there is rest, for his yoke is easy and his burden is light (11, 30).[289]

It is important to note that this figuration in Matthew is not totalizing and it cannot be used as a controlling mechanism to organize and sort the rest of the assemblage.[290] In some sense it is a slippage and it remains to be demonstrated how conscious our *bricoleur* was of this fashioning. I take no position on whether or not Matthew actually intended to figure Jesus as Torah-transfigured or even if that term would have been comprehensible to him. Matthew very well may well have been surprised by the figure of Jesus made possible by his work.

Part of what makes this present reading so intriguing to me is the fact that if in fact this is what Matthew was up to, ultimatley his project fails. As I will discuss in the next chapter, the off-epochal form of both the Matthaean figuration of Jesus as well as the larger composition of the gospel itself are soon obscured by epochally oriented compositions (of chief significance, a stratum soon to be called the New Testament). In most readings, *God with us* and *the word was made flesh* are synonmous.

This reading has undoutably raised more questions than it has provided answers. There is much yet to explore but properly situating Matthew within the larger topology of Second Temple Jewish literature reveals that incarnation need not be the outcome of the repeated overlaps between the figuration of Jesus and the divine presence. Within both Second Temple literature and the later rabbis, these same overlaps are seen to exist between Torah and the divine presence. Given the Torah-form nature of his gospel, the suggestion that Matthew's figuration of Jesus might reflect this overlap is more than plausible.

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[289] Gibbs, 46.

[290] Henrix rightly notes that when Benedict XVI's uses phrases like "living Torah" or the "Torah became a person" he did not mean that "In Jesus Christ 'only' or 'nothing other than' the repetition of Israel's Torah is to be seen." Henrix, 134.

Chapter Four: A Transcendental Gospel It Is Not

As T.S. Elliot famously wrote, the result of all our exploration will be to arrive where we started, "and know the place for the first time."[1] While too much remains unfinished to proffer conclusions or an ending, through this *off-epochal* reading we have indeed arrived where we started, and have come to know Matthew, perhaps for the first time. Above all else, the *off-epochal* reading offered in this project has returned us to Matthew. By this I mean that my *off-epochal* reading is not a pathway to somewhere else, but it is fully present to and in Matthew. Whatever else it may be, this attempt at an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew has not been a transcendental exercise. Matthew is located firmly in Israel. As I earlier noted, this reading had made it quite clear that Matthew is very much κατὰ γράμμα. For Matthew it is the letter that gives life.[2]

As this present work has amply demonstrated, owing to their *epochal* priming, most contemporary scholarly readings of Matthew's gospel as New Testament, are in fact all some variation of an origin's narration. This doesn't necessarily make them wrong, but it does suggest that these readings more properly belong to categories such as *Wirkungsgeschichte* and/or *Rezeptionsgeschichte*. It is true that Matthew has become a foundational text for the Christian religion, but as we have seen, that is not the full story. Furthermore, much is lost when *epochal* framings and origin's narration are the privileged modes through which Matthew is taken up by scholars and theologians alike.

My aim throughout this present inquiry has not been the creation of a new paradigm or worldview for Matthaean studies. Rather, the readings offered here reflect my curiosity as to whether or not it is possible to read Matthew without recourse to an *epochal* priming and the multitude of arborescent metaphors that accompany such a priming. And if possible, what forms such a reading might take. My experimental concept of the *off-epochal* leads me to offer a tentative yes in answer to the first question.

With respect to the second question, my attempt at an *off-epochal* reading has led me to lightly trace two *rhizomatic* forms or flows relative to Matthew: the *Torah-form* gospel and a *Torah-transfigured* Jesus. These traces appear to be connected, but there is no clear line of development between the two. Both belong and give form to a shared rhizome, but they remain two intersecting and overlapping lines not a succession of points in a developing trajectory. While a series of three might have been expected, or even desired, three implies a sense of completion that I do not yet wish to claim. Thus, it would be incorrect to characterize these two flows as proof of a new coherent or comprehensive schema for Matthew.

4.1 Gestures

Put another way, these traces offered here in my reading are *gestures*, not an assembly of *point-to-point connectors.*[3] To borrow imagery from the Inuit of Igloolik, not

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[1] T.S. Elliot, "Little Gidding," in *Four Quartets* (New York: Mariner Books, 1968), 47.

[2] Here I am of course riffing off and inverting Paul's declaration in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that, τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτέννει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζῳοποιεῖ.

[3] For an insightful discussion of the modern fragmentation of gesture into a succession of points and dots see Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 74-75. See

only have we have gone out for a walk in the previous two chapters, but the reading itself is the trace, the movement.[4] For the Inuit, *traveling* is not, "a transitional activity between one place and another, but a way of being."[5] Likewise, in this exploration of Matthew, we have moved, or perhaps more precisely, we are movement, but we have not traveled elsewhere.[6] Tracing these two *rhizomatic* flows has nonetheless rendered visible, modes of relation both within Matthew itself and between Matthew and Second Temple Jewish literature, that have often been obscured by *epochal* readings and arborescent metaphors.

Let me briefly linger on four contours rendered in particularly vivid relief by my attempt at an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew. While only lightly pressed here in this work, these four contours merit both acknowledgement and further exploration. I should note that along these contours there are *knots of arborescence* that no doubt remain, just as there are *rhizomatic offshoots* even in the most tree-bound and arborescent of New Testament scholarship, but the following are nonetheless worth pausing to note.[7]

4.1.1 Temporality

In coming to know Matthew for the first time, temporality itself has been re-indexed. It is this realignment of temporality that is the most visible consequence of my *off-epochal* reading. In *epochal* readings, temporality is assumed as a primary vector (if not the primary vector). In my *off-epochal* reading, temporality is not abandoned but it no longer enjoys the privilege of primary vector. Things do happen, but as Mircea Eliade and others have clearly demonstrated, sequential activity need not imply movement *through* time.[8] In fact, quite the opposite has often been the case for much of human existence. Privileging an *epochal* form of temporality largely forecloses the possibility of one's

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especially chapter 3 "Up, Across and Along". Ingold rightly identifies this fragmentation in the shift awy from storytelling towards pre-composed plot driven narratives.

[4] Rudy Wiebe, *Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the Arctic* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1989), 15-16. Further discussed in Ingold, 75-76.

[5] Claudio Aporta, "Routes, Trails and Tracks: Trail Breaking among the Inuit of Igloolik," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 28, no. 2 (2004): 13. Cited in Ingold, 76.

[6] Let me quote a short passage from Ingold which I believe not only describes not only the modality of travel for Matthew's composition, but also that for the project that I have presently undertaken. Ingold writes,

> Wayfaring, I believe, is the most fundamental mode by which living beings, both human and non-human, inhabit the earth. By habitation I do not mean taking one's place in a world that has been prepared in advance for the populations that arrive to reside there. The inhabitant is rather one who participates from within in the very process of the world's continual coming into being and who, in laying a trail of life, contributes to its weave and texture. These lines are typically winding and irregular, yet comprehensively entangled into a close-knit tissue. . . They have no ultimate destination, no final point with which they are seeking to link up. Ingold, 85.

[7] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), 20.

[8] See Eliade. Discussed in Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature*, 56.

reading remaining present in the text. As I have shown in my reading of Matthew, time need not carry us beyond, but it can and does mark activity *within* a space. The *off-epochal* is an offsetting of temporality that allows for the problem-space to be recalibrated such that Matthew is fully present in and to Israel.

This present reading, especially my chapter on the *Torah-formed* gospel, has decentered *epoch* as the primary mode of engaging Matthew. While my reading has only touched upon the implications for re-indexing temporality, these preliminary excursions show promise. As my opening chapter documents, New Testament scholarship has been haunted by Hegelian framings for nearly two centuries. Any responsible reading of Matthew must openly acknowledge that *epoch* as a governing vector is an impositiion on the texture of the gospel itself. It may be argued that such an imposition may an appropriate framing, but it cannot be assumed.

4.1.2 Materiality

In addition to a re-indexing of temporality, my o*ff-epochal* reading of Matthew led me to a rather unexpected recovery of space. At the beginning of the project, as is evidenced by a lack of spatial language in chapter one, I had no indication that there was spatial aspect to Matthew's composition that had been obscured. It was precisely my *off-epochal* stance that revealed the obscuring of space in most reading of Matthew.

As space moved forward in the reading, heretofore unasked questions of materiality presented themselves. This was another unexpected part of the trace. Casting about for a suitable figuration for Matthew, *bricolage* proved to be a rather helpful concept. Not only did *bricolage* provide a basic *off-epochal* conceptual repertoire, but it also opened a pathway towards conceptualizing a non-teleological mode of relation between Matthew and his materials (both scripture and tradition). Reading Matthew as *bricolage* offers a conception of agency with respect to the assemblage that does not imply conscious intent on the part of the compositional materials, but nonetheless acknowledges the roles the materials play in giving form to the Gospel of Matthew. Such a reading introduces a counter-balance to overly deterministic conceptualizations of Matthew. The final form of Matthew cannot be reduced to terms of authorial intent and not just in its reception (e.g. a reader-response fashion). The contingency of form is built into the composition itself.

This suggests that compositional models of Matthew in which a final product is presupposed and where the task at hand is that of hunting for desired pieces required assembly the planned project, are deficient. As we have seen in this reading, the material conditions themselves preclude nice neat packages. Thus, I must disagree with observations like that of Richard Hays' who writes, "Matthew successfully organized the Jesus tradition in a form that made it clear, harmonious, and accessible."[9] Matthew fits and bends the material that is at hand as best he can, but this is far from the systematic, engineering like composition presupposed by the phrase, "successfully organized." Some of Matthew's making, like the repurposing of the virgin birth is rather devious, and delightfully so.

Openly acknowledging that Matthew must contend with the material properties of his materials prompts new questions that can be asked of the text, both with respect to form and to function. The force vectors for Matthew's materials point in all directions and defy

[9] Hays, 37.

simplistic attempts to subsume them within notions of progress, replacement, prediction, etc.

4.1.3 Second Temple Jewish Literature

This re-indexing of temporality and space/materiality come together to incontrovertibly establish Matthew's location within Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. While they may appear similar, the claims raised in my reading are in fact quite different from those of scholars like Anthony Saldarini who have long argued for a Jewish setting to Matthew's gospel. [10] My positioning of Matthew within the Second Temple period is one of attitude and stance (*Haltung*) not one of origin (either point or time). This is what it means to truly locate Matthew in Israel. Matthew is not a product of the Second Temple period. On the contrary, Matthew as *Haltung* makes visible *un mode de relation* that is both *productive* and *transformative* within that which constitutes the assemblage that is the Second Temple period. Matthew's *Haltung* is not defined by questions of leaving, sucession, or replacement.

For Matthew, Jesus is indeed a *kairos* within the Second Temple period, but this turning does not constitute a *breach* or *leaving* of any kind. An ethical contemporary reading of Matthew is one that finds a way to speak of change and shifts within the movement-space of the Second Temple Period without recourse to procrustean Hegelian framings. As this work has demonstrated, the Jesus *kairos* in Matthew is a turning in space not so much a turning in time. It's a reorientation or opening in space, not the opening of a new time. To borrow from Boyarin once more, "This is not to deny any creativity on the part of Jesus or his early followers, but only to suggest strongly that such creativity is most richly and compellingly read with the Jewish textual and intertextual world, the echo chamber of a Jewish soundscape of the first century."[11] This *off-epochal* reading has offered a plausible mapping of Matthew that demonstrates just how such creativity would look and function in practice as a heterogeneous element in the Second Temple assemblage.

4.1.4 Torah

Torah is arguably the most visible shared movement-space in the Second Temple period. Understanding Matthew as *Haltung* within Second Temple Jewish literature frees us to reappraise the relationship of Matthew and Torah. It is precisely this relationship of Matthew and Torah that gives Matthew its distinctive flavor within Second Temple Jewish literature. As we have seen, Matthew does not mine Torah or use it in a foundational sense such that his gospel stands outside or beyond. This project has shown that Matthew as Second Temple Jewish literature fully inhabits Torah in a way that is both *productive* and *transformative*. These two recognitions are crucial to the future of Matthaean studies if it wishes to finally exorcise the anti-Judaic and supercessionist ghosts of the discipline.

As I note above, given the Torah-form composition of his gospel, describing Matthew as an active particpant in the ongoing "task of reorganizing Israel's religious

[10] See the landmark work of Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*.

[11] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, 160.

language"[12] fails to capture the complexity and multidirectional nature of Matthew's relation to Torah. Even though Matthew's gospel contains at least 60 explicit "quotations" from the scriptures of Israel with an addition 300 or more implicit "citations" or "allusions," it would likewise be a mistake to say that Matthew's task is one in which the scriptures of Israel are the assumed *starting point*.[13]

Both of these claims, made by thoughtful and careful readers, nonetheless fall short insofar as their *epochal* priming necessarily implies too much determinism beforehand or carry them beyond Torah. As my reading has well demonstrated, the scriptures of Israel are not the foundation or ground for Matthew, they are the space he, his gospel, and his Jesus all inhabit. Mathew's Torah-form gospel is neither the reorganization of religious language nor has it sprung from Torah. It is built of Torah which implies transformation and change from within. Foundationalist accounts must be abandoned if we are to fully appreciate the rich complexity and composition of the texts that we study.

Employing Second Temple Jewish Torah-forming processes, our *bricoleur* creates a habitable space within Torah for the life and teaching of Jesus. Furthermore, in seeking to locate Jesus fully within that Torah-form space, Matthew's figuration of Jesus is one built of Torah. Jesus is Torah-transfigured. This entanglement affected by the activity of *bricolage* is such that even as Torah forms both the materials and the boundary conditions for Matthew's figuration of Jesus, that figuration, taking place within the movement-space of Torah itself, results in a transfiguration of Torah.

4.2 Failure

For Matthew, Jesus' mission is not the end of Israel, but a reorientation towards Torah. It is in Torah that God is to be encountered and salvation is to be found. Matthew's repeated use of Sinai *nachleben* do not move us beyond but remind us that Torah is the place where God not only reveals himself to the world, but it is also where Israel is asked to assume the responsibility of bearing witness to this reality.[14] Presence, divine or otherwise, in Matthew is a function of Torah.

In the reading I have offered, Matthew's primary interests are not christological. An *off-epochal* stance primes us to read the Matthaean Jesus in terms of function not ontology.[15] By off-setting *epoch*, new possibilities and space are opening in this reading. Matthew's gospel has no *logos* christology, neither is Jesus conceptualized in incarnational

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[12] Hays, 36.

[13] Contra Lieu, 37. While I agree with the privileged place Lieu accords Israel's scriptures in Matthew's task, my analysis is not one of origins.

[14] Schechter, 132. offers the divine warning found in *Lev.R.,* 6:5, "If you will not make known my divinity (divine nature) to the nations of the world, even at the cost of your lives, you shall suffer for this iniquity" as evidence of this "terrible responsibility."

[15] As David Hill writes, "'The continuing presence of Christ with his own' is not a pointer to the evangelist's interests in ontology–is the New Testament anywhere interested in ontology?–but evidence of his assumption of Christ's divine *function* with reference to his people." David Hill, "The Gospel of Matthew (the New Century Bible Commentary)," *Grand Rapids: Eerdmans* (1972): 65. Hill unfortunately bases this claim largely upon his reading of three epochs in Matthew's Christology.

or pneumatological terms. Matthew's gospel is written for the sake of the members of his community, to teach them, aid in their understanding of *what it means to be Torah observant in light of Jesus' teaching*, and help them understand who they are within the larger Jewish assemblage that is the Second Temple period.

That Matthew becomes the opening book of the New Testament canon is in some sense a failure. It is a failure insofar as Matthew's *Immanuel* and the *Word-made-flesh* are blurred and subsumed into a *logos* christology. Matthew's Torah-form soteriology is likewise repurposed within a Lukan/Pauline atonement theory. I say that it is 'in a sense' a failure because it fails only insofar as we adopt an *engineering* or *epochal* perspective for the New Testament in general. From the perspective of the *bricoleur*, it is *fitting* that *Immanuel* and the *Word-made-flesh* can be so tightly joined together into a workable *logos* christology. This tension suggests that *bricolage* may be a more *apropos* way of conceptualizing not only the work of Matthew, but that of the New Testament in general. Here I should note that the figure of the *engineer* is more foil than substance. It is a necessary fiction, an idealized form, that helps render visible the figure of the *bricoleur* but is itself a mirage. There is only *bricolage*.

Epochally primed readings of Matthew are not a modern phenomena, the pressure to privelage *epoch* has been applied to the first gospel almost since its composition. The first attested labeling of the Hebrew scriptures as that which is *old*, in contrast to *new* scriptures is found in the works of Melito, the second century bishop of Sardis.[16] When Eusebius records Melito's listing of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures, the first such list among the extant Christian writings, he notes that Melito called the group of writings the "Old Covenant" (*palaia diatheke*). The Greek word for "covenant" (*diatheke*) was then translated by Jerome in the fifth century into the Latin Vulgate as *testamentum*. [17] This however is not the only mode in which Matthew was taken up.

Here it should be noted that Matthew's emphasis on Torah was not so quickly transcended as the later teachings of the Church might suggest. While ultimately relegated to *nachleben*, Torah was the space in which the Jewish followers of Jesus at Antioch lived and the obscuring of Matthew's figuration of Jesus as Torah-transfigured in early Christianity was not a rapid or forgone conclusion. Throughout the first four centuries of the common era we see still see lingering traces of Matthew's figuration of Jesus. E. L. Copeland has done an excellent job of detailing the presence of what may be called a Torah apologetic in the ante-nicene period. [18] This Torah apologetic offered a stark alternative to the ascendant *logos* christology. For example, the author of the second-century *Shepherd*

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[16] There are references to new and old testaments/covenants in the New Testament proper, but never in reference to the scriptures of Israel or Torah as a collection of sacred writings.

[17] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History, Volume I: Books 1-5*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, vol. 153, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 391-92.

[18] Edwin Luther Copeland, "Nomos as a Medium of Revelation, Paralleling Logos, in Ante-Nicene Christianity," *Studia Theologica* 27, no. 1 (1973). See also Ragnar Holte, "Logos Spermatikos: Christianity and Ancient Philosophy According to St Justin's Apologies," ibid.12, no. 2 (1958).

of Hermas explicitly calls Jesus "the Law of God that has been proclaimed to the ends of the earth."[19]

Let me be clear, I am not claiming to have indentified some sort of straight line or causal connection between Matthew and what might be called an undeveloped *nomos* christology that seemed to exist in the first few centuries of the common era, but some mode of relation no doubt does exist. The existence of this *nomos* christology (to any degree or form) should serve as an important reminder that the way things are is as much a product of accident and chance as master plan.

While not the focus of this present work, this also brings me to note that my *off-epochal* reading of Matthew suggests that it is time for scholars to revisit the mode and form of the New Testament proper. The question of just how it was possible to so tightly fit Matthew to a Pauline soteriology and a Johnannie *logos* christiology is one that merits serious consideration. As Marcion's second-century canon makes clear, the Torah-form nature of Matthew's gospel was so incompatible with Marcion's Pauline conception of the gospel (which included Luke) that he completley jettisoned the text.[20]

Standard literary models and explanations following from *epochally* primed readings of New Testament and other 'early Christian' texts cannot be left uninterrogated. New Testament scholarhsip would no doubt benefit from an exploration into the resistance that Matthew as a material condition exerts on the New Testament proper. This fitting of Matthew together with not only Mark, Luke and John, but also Paul, is not a seamless project. Given that images and identities constructed from archaeological remains and those constructed from literary texts often seem to bear little relationship to each other, how might our understanding of the New Testament shift were we to adopt a more material culture perspective to the texts?[21] Understanding Matthew as part of the material conditions for the New Testament is a different mode of approaching these texts.

In this reading I have looked narrowly at the way that Matthew has crafted a Torah-form gospel as well as transfigured Torah with respect to Jesus. This however is not the end of the story. This project has been a problematization not a solution. It has turned the given into a question. The question however remains to be answered. Much work is yet ahead. For example, Matthew's *off-epochal* treatment of Torah needs be placed in conversation with Josephus's view of Torah (e.g. see *Apion* 2:291-295) as much with Paul's.

4.6 Entanglement

Properly understood, this work is an invitation not a refutation. I am not attempting to remove Matthew from the New Testament and I feel no desire to take his gospel away from the Church. The invitation I extend is that of an additional reading, an *off-epochal*

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[19] The striking passage reads as follows, "Ἄκουε, φησί τὸ δένδρον τοῦτο τὸ μέγα τὸ σκεπάζον πεδία καὶ ὄρη καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, νόμος θεοῦ ἐστιν ὁ δοθεὶς εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον· ὁ δὲ νόμος οὗτος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν ὁ κηρυχθεὶς εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς· οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ τὴν σκέπην λαοὶ ὄντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ πιστεύσαντες εἰς αὐτόν" (Shep. 69:2).

[20] The actions of Marcion makes me to wonder if Matthew may owe its place in the canon to the ability of early Christians to re-read it via Paul? To the activity of *bricolage*?

[21] Lieu, 8. See also Kraabel; Schwartz, 119-29.

reading to accompany readings primed by other temporal modalities. My attempts a locating Matthew in Israel renders visible the Second Temple Jewish *ethos* of Matthew's gospel, while at the same time producing a more ethical contemporary scholarly reading of the First Gospel. My goal is not the overthrow of New Testament scholarship, but the hope of an additional way of seeing things. This reading is an attempt to more fully know the place from which I started, no more and no less.

In this present work I have focused on one aspect of origins narrative reflected in arborescent modes of analysis, that which deals with temporality. The *epoch* however is not the only manifestation of origin's narration in need of remediation. It is my hope that further work will continue the process of interrogation and remediation relative to origin's narration in the New Testament that I have begun here. For example, foundationalism is another aspect of origin's narration that must likewise be interrogated. As this project has made evident, remediation is possible. To say that Matthew is in motion, need not imply that there is a destination.

Further inquiry must also be undertaken relative to the ways in which the Matthaean form of Torah fits and relates to other modes and forms of Torah in the Second Temple period. Matthew must be acknowledged as co-forming the same shared movement-space as *Jubilees*, *Enoch* and the other constituents of Second Temple literature, not outside or against them. Such a reading is not only important for how we understand Matthew, but also for how we understand other Second Temple works (including those of the New Testament). The primary blockage made visible in this reading, that of the origin's narrative, is not limited to the study of Matthew, but is pervasive throughout New Testament and Second Temple Jewish studies alike. This *epochal* mode of narration, deploying kinship language, parting(s)-of-the-ways, arborescent and soil metaphors, all in an effort to establish points and gridlines must be rethought and perhaps even abandoned altogether.

The second order implications of this work are manifold. Scholars must remember that we as inquiring subjects are in motion just as the objects and objectives of our inquiry are in motion. As this reading has demonstrated in spades, the scholarly priming matters. It might surprise a person to learn that, "the singularity of the formula quotations, something that has been such a foundational *datum* for modern Matthean scholarship, is a feature that is entirely disregarded by [Justin Martyr,] Matthew's first interpreter."[22] Matthew as an *off-epochal* work raises all kinds of new questions relative to how we as scholars conceptualize the New Testament.

A full re-appraisal of Matthew as an *off-epochal Haltung* has merit and would in order. Jesus as a Jew is an insufficient bulwark against supercessionist or even anti-Judaism bias in New Testament scholarship. To once again borrow a helpful image from Margaret Conkey, responsible New Testament scholarship must be more than merely adding in *Jesus the Jew* and stirring. It is only when we fully situate both Jesus (life and teaching) and the narratives about him within the Torah-form space of the Second Temple period that we may say that we have done our due diligence.

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[22] J.R.C. Cousland, "Matthew's Earliest Interpreter: Justin Martyr on Matthew's Fulfilment Quotations," in Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels ed. Thomas R. Hatina (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 53.

Once again, adopting an *off-epochal* stance toward Matthew highlights the contingency in scholarly narrations of early Christianity. An *off-epochal* reading of Matthew as rhizome offers us the very real possibility of a non-algorithmic conceptualization of Matthew. As my reading has demonstrated, new function and use cannot be *prestated*, that is to say their emergence is non-Newtonian.[23] It is a false assumption that Matthew should end up being a gospel of a Christian church. No such thing is inevitable. The Matthean community lives very much inside the diaspora tradition of Second Temple Jewish literature. There is nothing "foreordained."

Granted, very little *material* in this present work would fall outside the existing bounds of contemporary scholarship regarding the New Testament or Early Christianity. This however is evidence for, not against, the merits of my reading. My analysis has not introduced new material, but it has shown that an *off-epochal* reading of Matthew shifts the register of analysis (e.g. away from plot lines towards processes of making and function). While this project is admittedly incomplete, it has accomplished more than merely rendering the origin's narrative visible as significant blockage in Matthaean studies. I have offered up *off-epochal* as one possible repair function and my readings have shown that such a repair mechanism has promise.[24] What other possible repair functions exist? What other primings can enrich our understanding of the gospel according to Matthew?

Finally, in this present work I admittedly argue for several things, all of which are probably not compatible or complementary with one another. As such it is difficult to know if the following work has succeeded or even how one would measure success in such matters. As to the question of whether or not Matthew, whoever that person or persons may have been, would agree with any of what I have written, I openly confess that I have no idea. As much as one would like to answer "the why" relative to each of Matthew's choices, on more than one occasion I must be content to acknowledge that it works.

In any case, the genre for this present work is probably best described as fiction (as defined by Foucault) and should be read as such.[25] To say that this present work has some consistent effort throughout, is simply to acknowledge that I have gladly taken up the following challenge offered by Deleuze and Guattari,

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[23] If we insist on drawing metaphors and analogies from the natural sciences then some interesting work in evolutionary theory suggests that we should also abandon algorithmic thinking. See the work of Stuart Kauffman, "Must God Be Dead? Reinventing the Sacred," *Theology and Science* 15, no. 3 (2017): 244. Also L. Gabora, "An Evolutionary Framework for Culture: Selectionism Versus Communal Exchange," *Physics of Life Reviews* 10, no. 2 (2013).

[24] My *off-epochal* reading enables a recalibration in the series *temporality:space:material*; properly understood now as a moving ratio within a three-dimensional rhizome.

[25] So Foucault says, "I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions. I do not mean to go so far as to say that fictions are beyond truth. It seems to me that it is possible to make fiction work inside truth, to induce truthful effects with a fictional discourse, and to operate in such a manner that the discourse of truth gives rise, "manufactures," something that does not yet exist, that is, "fictions" it. From a 1977 interview cited in Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 234. Timothy O'Leary, *Foucault and Fiction: The Experience Book* (New York: Continuum, 2009). notes that Foucault's use of fiction is more that of a verb than a noun. It works to both "create and transform an experience and a reality."

Write to the nth power, the n - 1 power, write with slogans: Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns the point into a line! Be quick, even when standing still! Line of chance, line of hips, line of flight. Don't bring out the General in you! Don't have just ideas, just have an idea (Godard). Have short-term ideas. Make maps, not photos or drawings. Be the Pink Panther and your loves will be like the wasp and the orchid, the cat and the baboon. As they say about old man river:

> He don't plant 'tatos
> Don't plant cotton
> Them that plants them is soon forgotten
> But old man river he just keeps rollin' along.[26]

[26] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 24-25.

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