

the mermaid) made a tenuous case for the use of all four of our gospels as canonical authorities in the *Epistula Apostolorum* (Epistle of the Apostles), which he dates to the 140s. If correct, this would be our earliest evidence of a four gospel canon. I'll bet you didn't know that. We didn't either! Some of us had never read the text of the *Epistula Apostolorum*. You can read it and many other early texts for yourself on the web (www.earlychristianwritings.com/apostolorum.html), if you don't have a printed edition of the New Testament Apocrypha.

Da Vinci Returns

Over two years ago in *BSB 29* I encouraged churches to prepare for discussion groups in response to Dan Brown's runaway bestseller, *The Da Vinci Code*. Well, the movie version is not far away now, and in preparation for the confusion that may continue, we are delighted to be able to report that a robust response and resource will be appearing in the Grove biblical series before the film is released. Watch this space!

Goliath's Name?

For those who missed the newspaper articles, at the traditional site of ancient Gath an archaeologist has found a shard of pottery dating from about 900 BC bearing names that he identifies as Goliath. See <http://tinyurl.com/dquze> for a full discussion.

A Palindrome to Ponder

One of my students pointed me to this palindrome (it reads the same from either end) in Greek which encircles a local baptismal font (and many others in Christendom). How's your Greek? (Hint: the second word is not found in the NT, but it does feature in the LXX):

ΝΙΨΟΝΑΝΟΜΗΜΑΤΑΜΗΜΟΝΑΝΟΨΙΝ

For a translation, turn to the back page.

Book Reviews

Henza, Matthias (ed), *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005). Surely not another book on the Dead Sea Scrolls! Oh yes and there are many more to come as scholars explore in increasing depth the vast number of fragments that are now freely available for study. Many of these studies are so technical that they are uninteresting to non-specialists, but sometimes they touch on an area which is relevant to more general readers. This is one of those studies.

In our attempts to understand the Bible, it can sometimes be a little bemusing to encounter the way that Jesus uses the Hebrew scriptures. He certainly does not engage in detailed textual, literary and historical criticism. Instead he weaves the words of scriptures into his everyday life and speech. It is not always easy to decide what to make of this but it can be helpful to understand this approach against the

background of other Jewish use of scriptures from the same or a similar period. This is where the Dead Sea Scrolls become helpful.

Although the community's rules and eschatological expectations are by far the most famous part of the collection of scrolls, one of the most important finds at Qumran is the large number of versions of the biblical texts and interpretations of those texts. This book contains a number of reflections upon this part of the find.

Some of the articles like 'Biblical Interpretation in the "Pseudo-Ezekiel" Fragments (4Q383-391) from Cave Four' fall into the technical category to which I referred earlier, but others provide more accessible reflections on the topic of biblical interpretation. Of particular note is the article 'Between Bible and Rewritten Bible' by Michael Segal, which explores the tendency in the Dead sea scrolls to interpret the biblical texts by rewriting them. None of these articles will give you direct help in interpreting the New Testament but they will challenge and stimulate you to reflect further upon how we interpret the Bible today.

Paula Gooder, The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham

Hargreaves, J.H.M., *A Guide to Psalms* (2nd ed; London: S.P.C.K, 2005). This SPCK international study guide looks at the book of the Psalms, so central to Christian spirituality, prayer and worship, but now sadly (perhaps disastrously) abandoned by many churches. Hargreaves solves the problem of the quantity of Psalms by choosing twenty for more detailed comment, then relating the specific Psalm to similar ones along the way. There are several general notes discussing the use of the psalms in temple worship, as sung (including music for six varied settings), the formation of the Psalter, their use in the New Testament. A final note suggests Psalms suitable for various themes and occasions. After the discussion of a Psalm there are extensive study and discussion suggestions, which will make the volume very useful for corporate Bible study or home groups. A delightful aspect of the series is its regular use of anecdotes from different parts of the world. In certain respects, however, I felt that this was an opportunity lost. It is a relatively minor revision of an earlier guide published in 1973, and the emphasis on a historical approach now has a somewhat dated feel. There is little apparent influence on the text of the books cited in the bibliography. I particularly missed a more vivid engagement with the poetry and imagery of the Psalms, and a discussion of the theological and pastoral significance of the way in which the Psalter has been shaped. Nevertheless, this is an attractive and clearly written book that would be a helpful introduction to the Psalms, for individuals or for groups.

Philip Jenson, Ridley Hall

Competition Reminder

In BSB 36 we challenged readers to write the story of the whole Bible in 750 words, promising that the winner would be published in BSB. After my appeal in our last issue, we've had a flurry of new entries; because we don't have room to print the winner in this issue there's still time to get your entry in!

Humour

James Blandford-Baker put me onto a source of Christian humour (www.praise.com/jokes) which includes the following 'biblical theme songs'. Surely you can do better than these...

Noah: 'Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head'

Adam and Eve: 'Strangers in Paradise'

Lazarus: 'The Second Time Around'

Esther: 'I Feel Pretty'

Job: 'I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues'

Moses: 'The Wanderer'

Jezebel: 'The Lady is a Tramp'

Samson: 'Hair'

Salome: 'I Could Have Danced All Night'

Daniel: 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight'

Joshua: 'Good Vibrations'

Peter: 'I'm Sorry'

Esau: 'Born To Be Wild'

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: 'Great Balls of Fire!'

The Three Kings: 'When You Wish Upon a Star'

Jonah: 'Got a Whale of a Tale'

Elijah: 'Up, Up, and Away'

Methuselah: 'Stayin' Alive'

Nebuchadnezzar: 'Crazy'

Translation Matters

John Proctor offers these reflections on a Christmas text:

Shoot the Innkeeper? Every nativity play needs an innkeeper. If there is no room at the inn, someone has to tell Mary and Joseph so, and send them away with a flea (not to mention an Aramaic oath or two) in their ear. As Christmas draws near, the innkeeper is a forerunner of the pantomime villain. What a heartless individual, to turn a pregnant mum away at dead of night!

But the gospel accounts do not mention this man. St Luke, helped by King James, seems to lead you along that trail. If there was 'no room in the inn' (Lk 2.7), there must have been a keeper. But is there an inn in the Greek text?

The word translated 'inn' in Lk 2.7 is *kataluma*. In Lk 22.11 the same term refers to a borrowed or hired dining room. In Lk 19.7 the cognate verb *kataluo* refers to Jesus' visit to Zacchaeus, and in Lk 9.12 to the possibility of finding hospitality in a remote village. The meaning is rather general, more about lodging or shelter than about a particular kind of business or facility. In Luke 10.34f the word for inn is quite different (*pandocheion*) and the keeper is a *pandocheus*.

Perhaps a better account comes in John Nolland's Word commentary. When we read that the baby had to be put in a manger, because there was no room in the *kataluma*, this explanation works best in a tight peasant home, where animals and

people were quartered under one roof. The care of a brand-new baby required a bit of space, which was easier to find in the stalls than among a crowd of tired human bodies. Perhaps there wasn't even an inn, let alone a keeper.

Which modern translations countenance this explanation? Of the eighteen or so I consulted, about five. Most recent (if not most elegant) is the New Jerusalem, 'no room for them in the living-space'.

Michael Wray writes in response to Ruth Seed's point in our last issue,

As another lay preacher with vestigial Greek, I sympathise with Ruth Seed and her 'sinners'. At such times, I recall a remark from a postgrad theology: 'Every translation is a commentary.' In other words, editorial intrusion is unavoidable, and we must just be aware that it is going on, and is sometimes very necessary. I was recently annoyed by the NIV rendering of John 7:13; 'But no-one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.' But surely those in fear are themselves Jews. So what are the translators to do? Expand 'Jews' to 'Jewish authorities' (TEV)? Or go the whole hog, eliminate the Jewishness, and refer to 'leaders' only (CEV)? When does an editorial decision become a decision too far?

*In our last issue, Jeremy Pierce gently roasted Ian Paul for his comments in BSB 36 on the translation of the Greek word *authenthein* in 1 Tim 2.12. Ian is not one to remain silent:*

I am pleased and fascinated that my original observations on issues in translation (written in some haste) have elicited so much comment! In reply to Jeremy Pierce's particular challenge I grant that I may have made a generalisation in my enthusiasm. But his comment highlights much more serious concerns concerning 1 Tim 2.12:

1. It is well known that *authenthein* is *hapax* in the NT (ie occurring only here). There is a perfectly good alternative for 'to have authority' which is *exousiazain*. Given that the latter occurs everywhere else in the NT, the burden of proof lies with those who would argue that these two are simply synonyms, with no negative connotation in *authenthein*. It would be odd for a major commentary to miss this.

2. Guthrie (Tyndale), Dibelius/Conzelmann (Hermeneia), and C K Barrett (New Clarendon) as well as Fee (NICNT) argue for something other than the straightforward 'have authority'. This is good and varied company to keep!

3. One of the 'extremely important' commentaries that Jeremy cites is that of George W Knight III (NIGTC). Knight asserts that *authenthein* shows 'no inherent negative sense' and cites his 1984 article in *New Testament Studies* in support of this (p 141). He also mentions an article in response by L E Wilshire four years later—but what he does not mention is that Wilshire's article comprehensively undermines Knight's own position. Wilshire demonstrates that Knight has not taken account of many of the instances of the word, that the history of meaning is complex but that the dominant meaning across different usages includes a sense of violence, and that as a result Knight's main conclusions need to be substantially re-thought. (He himself expresses it rather modestly: three of Knight's conclusions 'need to be modified', including the statement that 'the odious idea of murder is not integral to the basic meaning of the word,' (NTS 34 [88] p 120). Knight is the one here who appears unfamiliar with the literature on this issue.

4. This perhaps points to the most serious concern. I was taught that the best commentaries will look at all the major options, weigh them, then come to a reasoned conclusion in such a way as to allow the reader to make up her own mind on the matter. If Knight's discussion of this important term is indicative, there is a worrying lack of open consideration of the options in influential commentaries.

If there is a 'genuine debate here', as Jeremy says, then it is all the more reason to expect to find some recognition of this in translations, perhaps in the form of a footnote or variant reading. The only reason for avoiding this would appear to be ideological—to want to avoid giving the impression that there are serious questions here. I don't think I would be so suspicious of this were it not for the recent treatment of the Inclusive NIV in America.

Perhaps this is why this whole question of translation has aroused so much interest in *BSB*. In our post-Christendom context, translation work can be seen to be as much driven by ideological concerns as theological, whether that ideology is as 'virtuous' as a belief in a particular way to make scripture accessible, or as questionable as the desire to present biblical theology as a secure citadel of certainty into which the faithful can withdraw, safe from the changes and chances of this world.

Computer Corner

- I've already mentioned the excellent collection of material on early Christian texts available on the web (www.earlychristianwritings.com), but need to add a caveat. It's a terrific resource to have English translations of so many obscure writings, but as elsewhere, don't simply accept every view expressed there about the dating, origins, significance etc of what you find.
- Students of the New Testament who don't have Accordance or other parsing software can now find help identifying Greek forms (www.greekbible.com).

The palindrome reads literally, 'Wash sins, not just face'!

Grove Biblical Series

This month's booklet is *Truth with a Mission: Reading All Scripture Missiologically* by Chris Wright. As clear and engaging as ever, Chris demonstrates that mission is not just a feature of the Bible—it's what the Bible is all about.

Contributions to *BSB* should be sent to: The Editor, *Biblical Studies Bulletin*, at the Grove address below (or via email to: mbt2@cam.ac.uk). Unsolicited material is welcome, but it cannot be returned.

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