Studies in the History of Exegesis

Edited by
MARK W. ELLIOTT,
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Mark W. Elliott is Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at Glasgow University and Professorial Fellow at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto.

Raleigh C. Heth is Presidential Fellow at the University of Notre Dame, pursing a PhD in the university's Theology Department.
orcid.org/0000-0002-7235-6749

Angela Zautcke is pursuing a dual degree program at the University of Notre Dame that includes a PhD in Theology and an MA in Classics.

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Preface

The vision of this volume and the series History of Biblical Exegesis (HBE) as a whole is not quite new. The Mohr Siebeck Verlag published the *Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese*, which ran from 1959 (when the first volume appeared) to 1998, amounting to 34 volumes. The long hiatus means that this new series is not simply reviving the former things. BGBE was a series of monographs, and this HBE is more open in genre (such as multi-authored volumes like the present one, editions, etc.). So while being mindful of that history, we are also thankful that the last generation has seen an upsurge of interest in the history of the bible and its interpretation. Just like the BGBE, however, the operative word for this new series remains 'Exegesis'. More recent initiatives have attempted to show how ideological standpoints have determined particular readings of the bible or at least how biblical interpretation and theological or ideological *parti pris* work together. Quite often in these recent studies of 'reception,' attention to the text and the attempt of historical exegetes to understand it in its range of plausible meanings gets lost. Of course, not every historical exegete or exegetical movement will act any differently, thus with bias, whatever their best intentions. Nevertheless, even where claims to false objectivity redound, one can find the historical exegetes attempting to show how the text says what these interpreters think it says. A close inspection calls into question the too-ready claim that all exegetical results are "foregone conclusions." (The present writer recalls his interest in Byzantine readings of James 4:13–17 being dismissed at another SBL session on the grounds that people who were 'in power' could have no spiritual insight into New Testament texts.) If recent books, which as biblical theologies purport to build on exegetical work can be called After *Exegesis* (*Feminist Biblical Theology in Honor of Carol A. Newsom,* eds. Patricia K. Tull and Jacqueline E. Lapsley [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015]), the idea is that feminist bible scholars should move beyond exegesis (as something which the editors say can be done with a variety of tools), towards the goal of a biblical theology. Yet all the chapters stick with creative feminist readings of discrete biblical texts: one might just about speak of a patchwork biblical theology made from the various chapters, yet little more. However, in the historical tradition of exegesis (a 'tradition of interpretation' implies a continuous yet developing hermeneutic applied to the textual meaning), there is a dialectical relationship between biblical theology and the exegesis of a text, especially as the latter discourse moves into proclamation and more broadly performance (e.g. sacred art and music, canon law) in churches.

So, history of exegesis it is. Also, a brief word in defence of a charge of 'elitism'. Most writers in the previous centuries (and to some extent still today) belonged to an elite, by virtue of being literate and lettered. It should not be thought that this was a disadvantage, not least when they are famous for being in the forefront (or the engine room) of the reform of church and society, as many of the better-known exegetes were. Yet they also represented the families, towns and societies which spawned them and to a large degree felt themselves accountable and under authority to the church of their people as well as to scripture. They taught lay people or at least taught their teachers. Those others who painted, versified and composed were arguably more 'elite' – was Bach less elite than Calov whose bible commentary he used? – just as is the case with the university academic today, who reads the standard accounts of the meaning of biblical and theological texts and feels called to go further, to work interstitially, to work the frontiers, to be creative. Of course, good exegesis is fresh exegesis, in whatever generation. Yet it often has power to go on inspiring and (almost, sometimes) persuade beyond its own time where it is somewhat 'faithful' to text and tradition.

This multi-authored volume expresses many projects in the history of exegesis. Some will be more small-scale, others a broader sweep or comparison. Exegesis is not to be found only in commentaries, although those will often be where the biblical theologian does his or her most careful work, anxious to keep the supply line to the historical sources as taut as possible. What follows comes out of SBL Annual Meeting "History of Interpretation" sessions between 2016 and 2018.

The first two essays, namely David Lincicum (with Mark W. Elliott and Michael Legaspi), "Does the Present Threaten the Past? Historiographical Reflections on the Problem of Teleology in Writing the History of Exegesis" and Eric Covington, "*Wirkungsgeschichte* and Trilateration: A Methodological Analogy for Understanding the Role of Reception-History in New Testament Exegesis," both offer a theoretical and methodological perspective born out of reflection on the state of our understanding of the nature and purpose of the study of Scripture (HB-OT and NT) throughout history. That by Lincicum comes out of some years of reflection on how Histories of Exegesis have offered much and sometimes delivered, but otherwise often have not. In some ways this is a 'literature' review which sets the stage for an implicit manifesto, viz, that history of exegesis (as distinct from reception-history) needs to be done more, more carefully, but also done with more confidence. For his part, Covington offers the interesting theory of text, history of interpretation, and current reader as a way to a rounded, careful yet theologically meaningful and instructive interpretation which is actually more likely to be 'accurate'. Exegesis includes interpretation but cares to follow the biblical text as it does so.

What then follows appears in some sort of chronological sequence. Arising out of a SBL "History of Interpretation" session that focused on the ongoing spur of Jewish exegesis to both Jewish, Christian, and other readings, Beth

A. Berkowitz, "Interpretation in the Anthropocene: Reading the Animal Family Laws of the Pentateuch Temple Scroll Mishnah," offers something that seems pleasingly familiar even in what might seem unfamiliar to the non-Jewish reader. This essay moves, after a consideration of a network of texts, especially Leviticus 22 and Exodus 22, to an account of their reception in the Temple scroll and Mishnah, and it gives one a flavour of the indispensability of understanding the trajectories and turning points in Late Antique Jewish interpretative history.

Some of the treatments that follow focus in on one scriptural passage. Simeon R. Burke, "The Hermeneutical Benefits of *Wirkungsgeschichte*: Patristic Applications of the Command to 'Render to Caesar and to God' as Case Study," relates how patristic, especially early patristic interpretations, can be privileged in that the interpreters breathe similar air or were party to traditions which complemented the biblical writing in question – here Matthew 22:20–22. Again a 'manageable' text is dealt with in Athanasios Despotis, "A Neglected Perspective on Matthew 28:18–20." This has been a key text for 'world mission', but it mattered for the Eastern Patristic interpreters in a distinctively different way. The Greek tradition of interpretation emphasised the mysteriousness of mission in that the content of it is initiation into a nuptial mystery. Taking a single text, Jn 9:34 and its reference to blood and water, Stefano Salemi, "The Wounded Christ of the Fourth Gospel: New Testament Interpretation in Alexandrian Tradition," specifically allows space for the interpretation of Clement, Origen and the *Pistis Sophia* as well as the later, Armenian Elissh, for whom there was symbolic value in giving the observer of the sacramental re-presentation of that which offers saving knowledge. For Dan Batovici, "Reception and Marginal Texts: Notes on the Reception of 1 Peter 5:1–4," arising out of his work for the *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* series, these few verses seem very appropriate to the job description of church leaders, but their employment is rather scarce: usually to emphasise the humility that should go with the office. They are important in and through what they represent, not least Christ's priesthood in the eucharist.

The volume then 'jumps' to the Reformation, due to a need in 2017 to honour Luther in the year of his Jubilee. Oda Wischmeyer, "Luther's Prefaces to the New Testament in Their Hermeneutical and Philological Dimension, Read from an Exegetical Perspective," usefully pays attention to what Luther said he thought he was doing as an exegete. Luther was consistently philological in his theology of the gospel (*evaggelion*). He was determined to evaluate texts strictly in terms of textual evidence rather than dogmatic principle. This meant *inter alia* that not all texts proposed Christ, nor should they be forced to. Accordingly, Mark W. Elliott, "Behind the Bible in the Reformation: Luther and Biblical Revelation," observes that there is a reflection on interpreting Luther interpreting Scripture in light of what concerned him in terms of the Christian life. Rather than decide whether Luther had some sort of 'Wordontology' to put

in place of a 'being-ontology', it is his actualism combined with his scholarship that aimed to stress the moments of reception of the external Word, in a way that ensured that the believer continues to be a 'debtor'.

Moving into the Early Modern period, Paul K.-K. Cho, "Biblical Samson, Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, and Modern Terrorism," offers a fascinating attempt to criticize the critique. Milton's presentation of Samson was to privilege the action of his final hours as the work of a freedom fighter. Cheryl Exum has seen Samson's 'suicide attack' as a disproportionate act of terrorism. However, Judges 16 viewed in Milton's way can be read as showing how the audience provoked the Lord's Anointed and how these were not innocent people but the worst of the tyrannical elite, while the leitmotif of 'peg' links Delilah to Jael, as Milton helps us see in his even-handed account. In terms of influence of philosophical thinkers on biblical hermeneutics, Jeffrey L. Morrow, "Methods of Interpreting Scripture and Nature: The Influence of the Baconian Method on Spinoza's Biblical Criticism," argues for the debt of Spinoza to the late Elizabethan natural philosopher, Francis Bacon. Just as the history of Nature became valued as a way into natural scientific study, the history of Scripture became crucial for understanding Scriptural texts, and this was indebted to Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum*. This is as important an influence on Spinoza, the father of biblical criticism, as those of Hobbes and Descartes. The aim was to interpret Scripture on its own terms and not impose foreign concepts on it, even though the Bible ended up looking even more like a political work in the image of its interpreter. Almost a counterpoint to Spinoza can be found in Brandon D. Crowe, "Reading the Acts of the Apostles with Francis Turretin: Continuity and Discontinuity." Here is an attempt to describe and analyse in its intellectual historical setting the exegetical work of a doctrinal theologian but also to move beyond this to dialogue with modern critical commentaries. The elder Turretin brings a continuity of law and Holy Spirit across the testaments, but Trinitarian theology also provides a challenge to modern emphasis on 'narrative' and action.

An attempt to cultivate a neglected area of study is essayed in Keith D. Stanglin, "Dutch Contributions to Modern Exegesis: The Case of the Remonstrants." A fusion of Erasmian humanism and Reformed theology with a lively interest in culture made the Arminian tradition not necessarily just a conduit to rationalistic interpretation of the Eighteenth Century but a thoughtful method that mixed principle with appreciation of linguistic nuance. Likewise a fascinating coming-together of general Reformed orthodoxy with humanist philosophical leanings is to be found in Steven Edward Harris, "Locke Reads the Bible for Himself – With Others: The Influence of Socinian Exegesis on Locke's Interpretation of Resurrection." Drawing on the Socinian Crell, albeit without acknowledgement, Locke was able to promote a doctrine of the resurrection that would be more philosophically than theologically orthodox. This is in the sense that what is risen is in many ways discontinuous with Jesus's lived-in body.

It was a delight to attend, chair, and participate in these SBL "History of Interpretation" sessions from 2016–18. We tried to engage a selection of younger and older scholars, with a representation of a number of traditions. We do not feel that the air of these sessions nor their final form as written articles in this volume has anything of the antiquarian or recondite. The pathway is an inductive one. More could be learned from a variety of sources, the better to prevent the sweeping 'The Catholic Reformation view of the Old Testament prophets was x', but also to afford a way of how to 'reverently hear' texts, even while seeing them as gateways into insight and truth that allows Scripture to be itself. In this light we very much look forward to going forward (in partnership with the delightfully helpful Mohr Siebeck Verlag, namely Elena Müller), towards a series of works which will expand this moving tent or tabernacle.

Mark W. Elliott

Table of Contents

Luther's Exegesis 500 Years On

Early Modern Concurrences and Tensions in Exegesis

Matters of Approach

Does the Present Threaten the Past?

Historiographical Reflections on the Problem of Teleology in Writing the History of Exegesis

David Lincicum
(with *Mark W. Elliott* and *Michael Legaspi*)

Can the history of biblical interpretation be written? Is there some kind of unity to the discipline of the history of interpretation? Or does it fragment endlessly into local case studies unable to be combined into some greater whole? This is a historiographical question that itself bundles together a number of subsidiary questions that need to be addressed by anyone undertaking a large-scale work in the history of interpretation. What should be the scope of such a history? Should it include Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, New Testament, or both? Undertaken by a single author with a unified perspective, or by a team of experts in various epochs and figures, but with the attendant threat to coherence? And what constitutes "interpretation" to begin with? Is the subject of the "history of interpretation", the substantive of which a narrative account is to be rendered, a consistent activity over time, or simply a loose assemblage of reading strategies with no perduring identity through the centuries? What does Tübingen have to do with Alexandria?

The question about what is under the microscope opens out into the task of this introductory essay. I hope to pose a question about the degree to which ideas about what constitutes "interpretation" have exercised a determinative influence in structuring some large-scale histories of interpretation. Those works on which I will comment have been selected precisely because they are excellent, and any criticisms I might make will, I hope, be understood as an act of critical gratitude, which is, after all, the most sincere type of academic thanksgiving.

In the past few decades, we have learned to draw a distinction between *Auslegungsgeschichte* and *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the history of interpretation and the history of effects. I understand the former to be a subset of the latter, but the line between an *Auslegung* and a *Wirkung* is not always easy to determine. It is, properly speaking, the former of these that is the concern of the history of interpretation, but the range of genres and texts that involve interpretation is much broader than, say, lemmatized philological commentaries or critical academic

monographs. Sermons, popular devotional writings, constructive theological or philosophical treatises, all arguably involve sustained acts of interpretation that would render them possible candidates for the history of interpretation. But as a general rule, as histories of interpretation move toward the present, the focus becomes more and more narrowly centered on the historical critical method and its roots, to the exclusion of other forms of interpretation now judged insufficiently scientific to be included.

This suggests, at least to me, that histories of interpretation tend to operate with a conception of what valid interpretation is, and then seek precursors to that in the tradition. Historians of interpretation will differ, as we shall see, on how explicitly this comes to the fore, but this suggests there is a major concern to be addressed here: what historiographers and historians of science have referred to as the problem of "presentist" or Whig history.

The most famous treatment of this historiographical thorn is Herbert Butterfield's. "It is part and parcel of the whig interpretation of history," he argued, "that it studies the past with reference to the present; and though there may be a sense in which this is unobjectionable if its implications are carefully considered, and there may be a sense in which it is inescapable, it has often been an obstruction to historical understanding because it has been taken to mean the study of the past with direct and perpetual reference to the present."[1] It is a theory whose utility is evident: after all, inquiry into the past without any reference to the present threatens to resolve into a fruitless antiquarianism. As Butterfield points out, this view "is really introduced for the purpose of facilitating the abridgment of history; and its effect is to provide us with a handy rule of thumb by which we can easily discover what was important in the past, for the simple reason that, by definition, we mean what is important 'from our point of view'."[2] Histories of interpretation are very evidently abridging in character, attempting to reduce the vast and diffuse traces of a sprawling exegetical past to some manageable narrative journey. But as Butterfield cautions: "There is a danger that abridgements may be based more or less consciously upon some selective principle."[3]

Butterfield spawned a long series of historiographers in his wake who decried the presentism of anachronistic judgments and pointed to the ideologically freighted teleology inherent in certain tendentious histories of everything from politics to science. But not all critics have been happy with the proliferation of accusations of Whiggism. In particular, some historians of science have noted that to proceed in a Rankean fashion in attempting to describe, say, geological investigations in England in the 1830s with no evaluative judgment or description

[1] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: Norton, 1965 [orig. 1931]), 11.

[2] Butterfield, *Whig Interpretation*, 24.

[3] Butterfield, *Whig Interpretation*, 101.

of the significance of such investigations in the progress of the discipline of geology, will only fail to supply answers to the questions that motivate historians of science in the first place. Ernst Mayr, for example, has contended "that Butterfield was ill advised in his literal transfer of the whig label from political history to history of science. It was based on the erroneous assumption that a sequence of theory changes in science is of the same nature as a sequence of political changes."[4] Or as David Alvargonzález suggests: "history in the field of techniques and technologies will always have an essentially Whig component because the achievements of the past are inevitably included in a progressive succession which continues up to the present."[5]

If we step back from this debate and ask about its application to the history of exegesis, we are faced with the question: is this history more like a series of shifting political views, which may come and go depending on societal circumstances, or more like a developing tradition of scientific inquiry, in which one discovery or theory may serve as the foundation for the next?

Closely related to this is the question of whether there is progress in the history of exegesis, or indeed in history more generally. Mandell Creighton had famously opined that, "we are bound to assume, as the scientific hypothesis on which history is to be written, a progress in human affairs."[6] On the other hand, R. G. Collingwood remarked that, "The idea of historical progress, then, if it refers to anything, refers to the coming into existence not merely of new actions or thoughts or situations belonging to the same specific type, but of new specific types. It therefore presupposes such specific novelties, and consists in the conception of these as improvements .... But from whose point of view is it an improvement?"[7] The heady optimism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has naturally long faded, but the native conviction of a teleological progression in history, of which we stand at the provisional end, is difficult to escape.

There are evidently different ways in which one's status as future from the vantage points of the subjects of one's historical research may play into the writing of a history of exegesis. To adopt and modify a typology first proposed by my colleague, the historian of science Evan Ragland,[8] one might speak of at least four stances:

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[4] Ernst Mayr, "When is Historiography Whiggish?" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51 (1990): 301–309, here 302.

[5] David Alvargonzález, "Is the History of Science Essentially Whiggish?," *History of Science* 51 (2013): 85–99, here 91.

[6] Mandell Creighton, "Introductory Note," in *The Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 1:4, quoted in E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Penguin, 1964 [1961]), 111, but erroneously ascribed to Lord Acton.

[7] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956 [1946]), 324–325.

[8] My thanks are due to Dr. Raglund for sharing his unpublished paper with me. See also

1. Future Presentism. Because we live later in time than the exegetes on whose work we reflect, we have unreflective access to information, discoveries, and historical circumstances unavailable to them. It is virtually impossible to think ourselves out of our historically effected consciousness but we can become aware of it and so think about the ways in which our futurity may impinge on the categories of interpretation and judgments we bring to bear in the historiographical task.
2. Unavoidable Teleology of Abridgment. All historical writing involves critical abridgement, which includes selecting topics or examples judged most relevant to a developing argument or line of research, while excluding all others. Because of the vastness of the exegetical tradition and the limitations of the individual historian, the problem of abridgement is particularly severe for the history of exegesis, and so we should pay careful attention to the architectural judgments involved in how histories of interpretation are structured, including what they include and what they pass over, and what role this may play in prejudicing the results in one direction or another.
3. Genealogical Self-Understanding. Histories of technical disciplines like science or historical criticism may take as their specific questions how the regnant approaches in their own day came to arise in the history of the discipline. This approach asks a genealogical question of the exegetical tradition and so is naturally invested in discovering precursors to current practice, though the risks of distorting positions or judging them according to standards inoperative in their own day begins to increase in genealogical approaches.
4. Progressive Teleology. Finally, we find a stronger form in which the exegetical tradition is depicted as tending ineluctably toward some telos, which is, usually after much struggle with traditional orthodoxies, triumphantly achieved. This strongly teleological approach takes a partisan view of the tradition by depicting it as the march of a progress in knowledge in particular.

With these rough sensitivities to the varieties of presentist or teleological concern in place, we turn now to consider briefly in turn a number of significant histories of biblical interpretation to gauge how they negotiate these matters. It is worth stressing that I am only attempting to call attention to the stances in play on this question, rather than passing judgment on the projects as a whole.

Hasok Chang, "We Have Never Been Whiggish (About Phlogiston)," *Centaurus* 51 (2009): 239–264.

1. Stephen Neill's *Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861–1961*[9]

Bishop Stephen Neill's lively account of the interpretation of the New Testament over the course of a fateful hundred years proceeds from the threat to orthodoxy in the early nineteenth century to the establishment of a sane, British criticism by the middle of the twentieth. In his telling, figures in the history of New Testament exegesis spring to life, but his account throughout is marked by a strongly evaluative presentist tone. In speaking of Michaelis, Neill writes, "His own views were generally conservative; but, as we shall see again and again in this study, what matters is not so much the particular views that any scholar holds as the validity of the methods which he uses, and the integrity of his devotion to them."[10] The language chosen is striking: it is the "validity" of the methods used, and the "integrity" of the scholar's devotion to them, qualities that Neill no doubt finds himself adept at judging. But he goes further than this. In the concluding chapter to the original edition (understandably replaced by Tom Wright in his 1986 revision), Neill posed a series of questions:

> Is there any real progress? Is there any solid ground underfoot at all, or is all nothing more than the fruit of misplaced human ingenuity? Physical science goes on from strength to strength, through its endlessly cautious checking of data, its constant use of the principle of verifiability, its building on established results as the starting-point for progress in the future. Is there anything comparable in theology? Has it any claim at all to be regarded as scientific in method and achievement?[11]

He went on to enumerate twelve assured results, as marks of progress – which included, among other less objectionable matters, the view that "it is universally agreed that New Testament study must begin with the Epistles of Paul," that "there is no valid reason for thinking that [the Gospel of Mark] was written later than A.D. 70," and that Matthew and Luke used a written collection of the sayings of Jesus, i. e., Q, in addition to Mark. The fact that he could point to an assured minimum of critical results as proof of progress in the 1960s that today seem no longer so assured, arguably highlights elements of a progressive teleology in his presentation. Which is to say that the story Neill tells arrives with some muted tones of triumph at the results of his British contemporaries.

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[9] Stephen Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861–1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964). A revised edition was produced by Tom Wright: Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861–1986*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[10] *Interpretation of the New Testament,* original ed., p. 6, and rev. ed., p. 6. Cf. Neill's prefatory statement: "I have tried to feel the movement of thought over a century, to concentrate on a small number of writers rather than to expatiate over many, and at the risk of over-simplification to draw attention to what seems to me to be of permanent significance" (original ed., p. v).

[11] *Interpretation of the New Testament* (orig. ed.), 336.

2. W. G. Kümmel's *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems*[12]

Kümmel's work, a monument of erudition and a gateway for many to the history of interpretation, may serve as a prime example of the unavoidable teleology of abridgement in service of a genealogical self-understanding. Although the title of his work might indicate a broader scope, he speaks explicitly of ancient and medieval interpretation as *Vorgeschichte* ("prehistory"), noting in the first sentence of the book that "It is impossible to speak of a scientific view of the New Testament until the New Testament became the object of investigation as an independent body of literature with historical interest, as a collection of writings that could be considered apart from the Old Testament and without dogmatic or creedal basis."[13] Kümmel's interests are admittedly in the "scientific" understanding of the New Testament, and it is the critical historical science of the late Enlightenment that supplies his points of orientation. With a few notable exceptions – particularly C. H. Dodd, Maurice Goguel, Edwin Hatch, J. B. Lightfoot, and a handful of others – the cast of characters is significantly German-speaking and Protestant in character. The organization of the story also proceeds in a self-consciously genealogical manner: the subtitle specifies that this treats "the history of the investigation of [the New Testament's] problems," and Kümmel's preface is remarkably clear about the aims of the book: it "does not present the entire history of New Testament study, but limits itself deliberately to the delineation of the lines of inquiry and the methods which have proved to be of permanent significance or to anticipate future developments."[14] While one might reasonably ask how one should determine "permanent significance," it is certainly fair for Kümmel to approach the history of critical questions arising in the study of the New Testament in a selective and genealogical manner (focusing on what "anticipate[s] future developments").

3. Henning Graf Reventlow's *History of Biblical Interpretation*[15]

The German title of Reventlow's work, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung*, is a nearer indication of his approach than the broader English title. His work, however, for all its striking erudition and fascinating introduction of figures not usually

[12] London: SCM, 1973; ET of *Das neue Testament: Geschichte der Erforschung seiner Probleme* trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1970).

[13] *New Testament*, 13.

[14] *New Testament*, 7.

[15] *The History of Biblical Interpretation*, 4 vols., trans. Leo G. Purdue and James O. Duke (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2009–2010).

featuring in histories of exegesis, presents another example of a highly selective abridgement of the historical tradition. Indeed, he does admit that the chronological periodization he chooses is only applicable in a limited sense.[16] But there is a telling trajectory as his history proceeds. He excludes not just the Eastern traditions in Coptic, Syriac, Armenian and other such languages, but even the Byzantine Greek tradition, citing as justification the fact that "advances of knowledge in understanding the Bible took place chiefly in the western part of the former Roman Empire from the early Middle Ages on."[17] After the Middle Ages, the figures become increasingly Germanic. In fact, the most recent Anglophone interpreter treated at any length is the Deist John Toland, born 1670. This may in part be due to the biographical nature of his presentation, but it is hard to escape the impression that he is privileging the Western, and particularly the German, tradition by an a priori judgment about the strength of its accomplishment which teleologically shapes his presentation to that end. Even more clearly than in Kümmel, we find the strong influence of genealogical self-understanding, where the "self" is here understood as modern German academic biblical interpretation, whose roots are then sought by traversing the tradition from back to front.

4. William Baird's *History of New Testament Research*[18]

Baird's monumental account of the history and development of research on the New Testament is staggeringly well-researched. He proceeds mostly biographically but occasionally thematically to present and briefly evaluate the major movements and contributions of New Testament *Wissenschaft* from the late eighteenth century to Hans Dieter Betz. The periodization is self-consciously chosen. He writes in the introduction to his first volume that he will focus on the "study of the New Testament from the period of the Enlightenment through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. This historical segment has an integrity of its own. It encompasses the era of the modern world – the era in which the scientific method of inquiry has been applied to all fields of learning."[19] The brief survey of the early church, the Middle Ages, and the Reformation that follows, seeks for evidence of precursorship, adumbrations in embryonic form of the historical critical consciousness. He focuses in his project on "research",

[16] See, e.g., *History of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:1–2.
[17] Ibid., 2:1–2.
[18] Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992–2013.
[19] *History of New Testament Research,* 1:xiii. In the preface to the final volume of the series, however, we do find this acknowledgement: "The title *History of New Testament Research* is an overstatement. This is a history of NT research in *some* places by *some* scholars" (3:2, italics original).

though it is conceived in "broad terms, that is, as the whole field of the study of the NT,"[20] focusing particularly on "those scholars whose work is most influential in the ongoing development of NT research."[21] In contradistinction to Kümmel, Baird wants not simply to offer a problem-oriented approach, but to offer a broader coverage of the field. So, this seems to be motivated, in part at least, by genealogical self-understanding. Baird does present some evaluation, though he is up-front about this. For example, he suggests of some conservative scholars, that "presuppositions determine their results."[22] In this sense, Baird is explicitly and in a chastened fashion attempting to apply present sensibilities to the evaluation of historical work, as a means of assessing the permanent gain from past scholarship. While there is necessarily significant abridgment, the scope of Baird's work allows him to offer a broad selection of interpreters whom he judges to be important for the development of New Testament research.

5. Magne Sæbø's *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*[23]

The major project that is probably least susceptible to the charge of anachronism or presentism is Sæbø's massive three volumes in five parts surveying the long history of interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Even here, with 4,000 dense pages, one can point to victims of abridgment: the volumes curiously miss "Gnostic" exegesis, the reception of the Bible among "pagan" authors, Byzantine study of the Bible, and developments within Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the contributors respect the particularities of each given figure or movement, and so the volumes as a whole have a strongly non-teleological feel to them. Conversely, one sometimes feels a lack of coherence, or at least the reader is left to sketch the lines of development between the various learned sketches – though Sæbø himself traces briefly some such lines at the beginning and end of some of the volumes. His introductory essay identifies various historiographical challenges facing the historian of exegesis, showing himself aware of various historiographical choices that confront the historian of exegesis, including the distinction between the impact of the Bible in broad terms and the history of exegesis in particular, the relationship between part and whole, the rationale for periodizations, and the

[20] *History of New Testament Research* 1:xix.
[21] *History of New Testament Research* 1:xx.
[22] *History of New Testament Research* 2:395.
[23] 5 parts in 3 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996–2014. The other major multivolume recent treatment which could be considered is the four-volume *New Cambridge History of the Bible*, which includes more treatment of versions and the Bible as text rather than only as interpreted – apart from the question of the scope of the volumes (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament vs. the entire Christian canon).

Index of References

Hebrew Bible

New Testament

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Qumran

Philo and Josephus

Rabbinic Texts

Early Christian Authors

Index of Modern Authors

Index of Subjects