

LOUISE JOY LAWRENCE

An Ethnography of the
Gospel of Matthew

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Mohr Siebeck

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165



Louise Joy Lawrence

An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew

A Critical Assessment
of the Use of the Honour and Shame Model
in New Testament Studies

Mohr Siebeck

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For Mum and Dad

“ . . . how can you repay what they have given to you?”
—Sirach 7:28

Preface

The move to use cross-cultural anthropology in New Testament Studies has been one of the most important developments of this generation. The cultural gap that exists between the interpreted and the interpreter has at last taken centre stage, and the profound differences between cultural values in one place and another has been given due recognition. To understand the ‘other’ not as a ‘native’ or ‘stranger’ but as a fellow human being, born into a different social situation, also provides salutary reading for understanding cultural differences in our contemporary situation. Not least, since the world was rocked by the events of September 11th 2001. To understand the value and ‘honour’ of another is central if we are to understand the assumptions that underlie and inform their actions. The study of people (ethnography) and their values may therefore hold promise for development far beyond the parameters of this particular study, and the social-scientific programme that informs it.

This book constitutes, as most books do, the end of a long, varied, at times difficult, but ultimately rewarding journey. Many who have implicitly contributed to the project are not named here, but as space allows, only those who have directly helped me in my work. Gratitude must first be expressed to Mohr Siebeck Publishing House for acceptance of my book and their efficient guidance in bringing it to print. In particular, I would like to thank Prof. Dr Jörg Frey and Dr Henning Ziebritzki for their invaluable recommendations and advice. I am also grateful to the respective editors of *Theology in Scotland* and *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* for permission to use sections of articles I published in their journals as the basis for parts of this volume.

This book is a slightly revised version of my doctoral thesis, submitted to the University of Exeter, United Kingdom, in 2002. I am indebted to the University of Exeter for financing my project with a Postgraduate Research Scholarship, and to my supervisor, Dr David Horrell, for his astute direction. It has been a delight and privilege to work with him and I am honoured to count him as my friend. I am also thankful to the examiners of the thesis, Dr Edward Adams and Dr Donald Murray for their positive reception of my project and their constructive pointers for editing. Thanks are also due to Dr Mario Aguilar for his constant encouragement and reading my work “as an anthropologist” and Dr Fern Clarke who gave constructive feedback on an earlier draft of this work. Prof. David Catchpole first sparked my fascination

with New Testament Studies and his continued interest in my work has also been greatly valued.

I have benefited from many discussions with my colleagues over the last three years at St Andrews University, Faculty of Divinity. Prof. Ronald Piper, Prof. Richard Bauckham and Dr Bruce Longenecker have all been stimulating New Testament sparring partners. Also thanks to Prof. Philip Esler who (whilst I'm not sure may agree with me on many points) exudes infectious enthusiasm for social-scientific criticism and heartens everyone, including myself, working in this area.

Thanks are also due to those who know me best, Poul Guttessen and Sharon Jebb Smith – two of life's most delightful people – for their unstinting support. Also to Dan Morgan for his *joie de vivre* and Dr Nathan MacDonald, Dr Robert Blackwood and Stephanie Smith for their friendship. The entire community of St Mary's College, Faculty of Divinity, should also be thanked. They welcomed me into their ranks and provided an inspiring and vibrant environment in which to work and grow. I am also grateful to my family who, across the years, have watched with interest this project unfold, most particularly Anne and Derek Fleet, Fred and Jean Gibson, Tracey, Jonathan and Thomas Lewis, Pat and Arthur Prowse, Judith, John, Hannah and Sam Yeo.

Most of all I would like to pay special tribute to my Mum and Dad, not least for proof reading the manuscript. Without their love, humour and unstinting belief in me, I would never have dreamt I could begin, leave alone endure the adventure that has culminated in this book. They know more than anyone what this project has meant to me. They should also know that I could not have done it without them. It is fitting therefore that with love and humble thanks for everything, I fondly dedicate *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew* to them.

Lent 2003

Louise Joy Lawrence

Table of Contents

Preface.....	vii
Abbreviations	xiii

Part One

Introduction	1
<i>Chapter 1. Honour, Shame and Biblical Interpretation: The Story So Far</i>	7
1.1 Honour and Shame in Biblical Studies	8
1.1.1 Bruce Malina: Modelling the Mediterranean World	8
1.1.2 Vernon K. Robbins: The Social and Cultural Texture of Texts	13
1.1.3 David deSilva: Honour Discourse.....	13
1.1.4 Timothy S. Laniak: A Socio-Literary Reading	16
1.1.5 Barth Campbell: Classical Rhetorical Reading	17
1.1.6 Jerome Neyrey: Anthropological and Ancient Historical Reading	19
1.2 Cumulative Insights	21
1.3 Cumulative Weaknesses: A Three-fold Critique.	22
1.3.1 Problems with Research Methodology	22
1.3.1.1 The Use of Models.....	22
1.3.1.2 Literary Nature of the Evidence	25
1.3.2 Problems of an Outdated View of Culture	25
1.3.3 Problems of Reification	28
1.3.3.1 Reification of Terms and Ideas	28
1.3.3.1.1 Honour Precedence and Honour Virtue	29
1.3.3.2 Reification of the Mediterranean	30
1.3.3.3 Reification of Individuals	33
1.4 Summary and Conclusions	34
<i>Chapter 2. Literary Ethnography: Towards a Modified Approach.....</i>	37
2.1 Problems with Research Methodology: Constructive Modifications	37
2.1.1 Ethnography	37
2.1.2 Anthropological Readings of Literary Texts.....	43
2.2 Problems of ‘Culture’: Proposed Modifications	51
2.2.1 Mikhail Bakhtin	52
2.2.2 Heteroglossia.....	53
2.2.3 Dialogism.....	54
2.3 Literary Ethnography: Summarising the Direction of Study	56
<i>Chapter 3. Matthew’s World: Field, Informants and Dialogic Dimensions</i>	60
3.1 The World Seen ‘Through’ the Text.....	61
3.2 The World Seen ‘In’ the Text	67
3.2.1 ‘World’ Construction	67

3.3 The Field and Informants of Matthew's Constructed World.....	69
3.3.1 The Field.....	69
3.3.2 The Informants.....	71
3.4. Dialogic Dimensions of Matthew's Constructed World.....	79
3.4.1 Intertextual Dialogism.....	79
3.4.2 Intratextual Dialogism.....	80
3.4.3 Social Dialogism.....	81
3.5 Graeco-Roman Philosophical Traditions.....	83
3.5.1 Cynicism	84
3.5.2 Stoicism	86
3.5.3 Epicureanism.....	88
3.6 Honour – A Multi-Faceted Value: Honour Virtue and Honour Precedence.....	89
3.7 The Non-Elite	92
3.8 Hellenistic Judaism	94
3.8.1 Philo.....	95
3.8.2 Josephus	97
3.9 Other Jewish Voices (Apocalyptic, Rabbinic and Qumran Literature)	99
3.10 Jewish Inscriptions	102
3.11 Septuagintal and Other Scriptural Evidence	103
3.12 Summary and Conclusions	108

Part Two

Introduction: An Ethnographic Itinerary	110
<i>Chapter 4. Power: Investigating the Anti-Introspective Mediterranean Self.....</i>	113
4.1 Honour and Shame Model: Power and the Anti-Introspective Mediterranean Self.....	115
4.2 Data Collection	117
4.2.1 Herod and the Slaughter of the Innocents (2:1–23).....	119
4.2.2 Herod the Tetrarch and the Request of Herodias' Daughter (14:1–12)..	122
4.2.3 Pilate the Governor (27:11–26).....	126
4.3 Theoretical and Comparative Sources	129
4.3.1 Anthropological Perspectives on Power and Anti-Introspection.....	129
4.3.2 Mediterranean Ethnography	133
4.3.3 Social Ecology	135
4.3.3.1 Graeco-Roman	135
4.3.3.2 Jewish	138
4.4 Ethnographic Reading	140
<i>Chapter 5. Religious Practice : Investigating Agonistic Interaction and Challenge-Riposte.....</i>	142
5.1 Honour and Shame Model: Religious Practice, Agonistic Interaction and Challenge-Riposte	143
5.2 Data Collection	145
5.2.1 The Antitheses (5:17–48).....	147
5.2.2 Defining Authentic Religious Practice and Prayer (6:1–21)	152

5.2.3 Eating with Tax Collectors and Sinners (9:10–13)	155
5.2.4 Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (12:1–8)	158
5.2.5 Curing on the Sabbath (12:9–14)	159
5.2.6 The Healing of a Blind Mute and More Questions of Authority (12:22–37)	161
5.2.7 Breaking Tradition and the Commandments of God (15:1–20)	163
5.3 Theoretical and Comparative Sources	166
5.3.1 Anthropological Perspectives on Religious Practice, Agonistic Interaction and Challenge-Riposte	166
5.3.2 Mediterranean Ethnography	169
5.3.3 Social Ecology	171
5.3.3.1 Graeco-Roman	171
5.3.3.2 Jewish	175
5.4 Ethnographic Reading	178
<i>Chapter 6. Exchange: Investigating Limited Good</i>	181
6.1 Honour and Shame Model: Exchange and Limited Good	182
6.2 Data Collection	186
6.2.1 The Beatitudes (5:1–12)	189
6.2.2 Miracles and Divine Beneficence	194
6.2.3 The Parable of the King Settling Accounts (18:23–35)	195
6.2.4 The Rich Young Man (19:16–26)	198
6.2.5 The Parable of Labourers in Vineyard (20:1–16)	200
6.2.6 Caring for the Least of the Brethren (25:31–46)	203
6.3 Theoretical and Comparative Sources	206
6.3.1 Anthropological Perspectives on Exchange and Limited Good	206
6.3.2 Mediterranean Ethnography	209
6.3.3 Social Ecology	213
6.3.3.1 Graeco-Roman	213
6.3.3.2 Jewish	216
6.4 Ethnographic Reading	220
<i>Chapter 7. Kinship: Investigating Dyadic Personality and Collectivist Culture</i>	222
7.1 Honour and Shame Model: Kinship, Dyadic Personality and Collectivist Culture	223
7.2 Data Collection	226
7.2.1 Kinship Terms	227
7.2.1.1 Parental Terms	228
7.2.1.2 Progenitor Terms	230
7.2.1.3 Sibling Terms	231
7.2.2 The Genealogy (1:1–17)	232
7.2.3 The Baptism (3:1–17)	237
7.2.4 The Call Narrative (4:18–22)	239
7.2.5 Burying One's Father (8:21–22)	241
7.2.6 Doing the Will of the Father (12:46–50)	242
7.2.7 A Prophet Without Honour in his Hometown (13:54–58)	244
7.2.8 Peter's Recognition of Jesus' Identity and Authority (16:13–26)	246
7.3 Theoretical and Comparative Sources	249

7.3.1 Anthropological Perspectives on Kinship, Dyadic Personality and Collectivist Culture	249
7.3.2 Mediterranean Ethnography	250
7.3.3 Social Ecology	253
7.3.3.1 Graeco-Roman	253
7.3.3.2 Jewish	256
7.4 Ethnographic Reading	258
<i>Chapter 8. Gender and Social Stratification: Investigating the Sexual Division of Labour</i>	260
8.1 Honour and Shame Model: Gender, Social Stratification and the Sexual Division of Labour	261
8.2 Data Collection	266
8.2.1 Women	268
8.2.2 Mary and Joseph (1:18–19)	269
8.2.3 The Leader of the Synagogue and a Woman with a Haemorrhage (9:18–26)	269
8.2.4 The Canaanite Woman (15:21–28)	271
8.2.5 The Question Regarding Divorce (19:3–12)	274
8.2.6 The Mother of the Sons of Zebedee’s Request (20:20–28)	276
8.2.7 The Woman with the Ointment (26:6–13)	277
8.2.8 Women at the Cross (27:55–56) and the Tomb (27:61, 28:1–10)	279
8.3 Theoretical and Comparative Sources	280
8.3.1 Anthropological Perspectives on Gender, Social Stratification and the Sexual Division of Labour	280
8.3.2 Mediterranean Ethnography	282
8.3.3 Social Ecology	286
8.3.3.1 Graeco-Roman	286
8.3.3.2 Jewish	291
8.4 Ethnographic Reading	293
<i>Chapter 9. Perceptions and Prospects</i>	295
<i>Appendix One. Selection of Narrative Situations for Ethnographic Study in Matthew’s World</i>	305
<i>Appendix Two. Informant Speech in Matthew’s Constructed World</i>	308
Bibliography	319
Index of Authors	363
Index of References	370
Index of Subjects	389

Abbreviations

Standard abbreviations for biblical and Pseudepigraphal books, Dead Sea Scrolls and Mishnah are used in the main text and footnotes. These are based on the *SBL Handbook of Style*. In addition to these the following abbreviations are also used.

Primary Sources

Apuleius	
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
Aristotle	
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	<i>Ethica Nichomachea</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politica</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
Augustine	
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessionum</i>
Cato	
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De Agricultura</i>
Cicero	
<i>Ep. ad. Fam.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Familiares</i>
<i>Off.</i>	<i>De Officiis</i>
<i>Rosc. com</i>	<i>Pro Rosica Comoedo</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>De Republica</i>
Dio Cassius	
<i>Hist.</i>	Roman History
Dio Chrysostom	
<i>Disc.</i>	Discourses
Diogenes Laertius	
<i>Diog. Laert.</i>	Lives of Eminent Philosophers
Epictetus	
<i>Diat.</i>	<i>Diatribai</i>
<i>Disc.</i>	<i>Discourses</i>
Herodotus	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i>

Homer		
Il.	<i>Iliad</i>	
Od.		<i>Odyssea</i>
Horace		
Ep.	<i>Epodes</i>	
Sat.		<i>Satirae</i>
Isocrates		
Antid.	<i>Antidosis</i>	
Demon.		<i>Ad Demonicum</i>
Josephus		
Vita.	<i>Vita</i>	
C. Ap.	<i>Contra Apionem</i>	
A. J.	<i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>	
B. J.	<i>Bellum judaicum</i>	
Juvenal		
Sat.		<i>Satirae</i>
Lucian		
Vit. Auct.		<i>Vitarum auctio</i>
Marcus Aurelius		
Med.		Meditations
Ovid		
Metam.		Metamorphoses
Petronius		
Sat.		<i>Satyricon</i>
Philo		
Abr.	<i>De Abrahamo</i>	
Agr.	<i>De Agricultura</i>	
Cher.	<i>De cherubim</i>	
Contem.	<i>De vita contemplativa</i>	
Deus.	<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>	
Decal.	<i>De Decalogo</i>	
Hypoth.	<i>Hypothetica</i>	
Leg. Alleg.	<i>Legum Allegoriae</i>	
Migr.	<i>De migrationae Abrahami</i>	
Praem.	<i>De Praemiis et Poenis</i>	
Prob.	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>	
Spec.	<i>De specialibus legibus</i>	
Virt.	<i>De virtutibus</i>	
Vit. Mos.	<i>De vita Mosis</i>	

Plato

<i>Gorg.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	<i>Sophista</i>
<i>Theat.</i>	Theaetetus

Pliny the Younger

<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
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Plutarch

<i>Ti. C. Gracch.</i>	Tiberius Gracchus
<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralia</i>
<i>Tranq. an.</i>	<i>De tranquillitate animi</i>
<i>Quaest. Conv.</i>	<i>Quaestionum convivalum</i>

Seneca

<i>Ben.</i>	<i>De Beneficiis</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae Morales</i>
<i>Med.</i>	<i>Medea</i>

Tacitus

<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogus de oratoribus</i>
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Tertullian

<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologeticus</i>
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Virgil

<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>
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Xenophon

<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologia Socrates</i>
<i>Ages.</i>	<i>Agesilaus</i>
<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Memorabilia</i>

Other Abbreviations used in Text and Bibliography

<i>AA</i>	American Anthropologist
<i>AAA</i>	American Anthropological Association
<i>ABD</i>	Anchor Bible Dictionary
<i>ABQ</i>	American Baptist Quarterly
<i>AEA</i>	Annual Review of Anthropology
<i>AHB</i>	Ancient History Bulletin
<i>AmEthn</i>	American Ethnologist
<i>AncSoc</i>	Ancient Society
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung.</i> Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972-
<i>AP</i>	American Psychologist
<i>AQ</i>	Anthropological Quarterly
<i>Ar</i>	Arion

<i>ARA</i>	Annual Review of Anthropology
<i>Are</i>	Arethusa
<i>ASE</i>	Annali di Storia dell'Esegei
<i>AT</i>	Anthropology Today
<i>ATR</i>	Anglican Theological Review
<i>AW</i>	Ancient World
<i>BAGD</i>	Bauer, W. Arndt, W. F. Gingrich, F. W. & Danker, F. W. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago, 1979 edn.
<i>BDTCST</i>	<i>Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth Century Social Thought</i> . Edited by W. Outhwaite and T. Bottomore. Oxford: Blackwells, 1993
<i>BEvT</i>	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	Biblica
<i>BibInt</i>	Biblical Interpretation
<i>BMCR</i>	Bryn Mawr Classical Review
<i>BTB</i>	Biblical Theology Bulletin
<i>CA</i>	Current Anthropology
<i>CBQ</i>	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
<i>CI</i>	Classics Ireland
<i>CIL</i>	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
<i>CIS</i>	Contributions to Indian Sociology
<i>CPSS</i>	Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science
<i>CSHS</i>	Comparative Studies in History and Society
<i>CTM</i>	Currents in Theology in Mission
<i>DJG</i>	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> . Edited by J. B. Green <i>et al.</i> Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1992
<i>DNTB</i>	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> . Edited by C. Evans and S. Porter. Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 2000
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and his Letters</i> . Edited by G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin and D. Reid. Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1993
<i>EA</i>	Electronic Antiquity: Communicating the Classics
<i>EB</i>	Estudios Bíblicos
<i>ECA</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology</i> . Edited by D. Levinson and M. Ember. London: Macmillan, 1996. 4 vols
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider. Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1990
<i>EEC</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Early Christianity</i> . Edited by E. Ferguson. 2 nd Ed. New York, 1990
<i>EKKNT</i>	Evangelisch katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>Elementa</i>	Elementa, Journal of Slavic Studies and Comparative Cultural Semiotics
<i>EMC</i>	Echos du Monde Classique
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem, 1972
<i>ER</i>	Epworth Review
<i>ESCA</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology</i> . Edited by A. Barnard and J. Spencer. London: Routledge, 1996
<i>ET</i>	Expository Times
<i>Eth</i>	Ethnos
<i>Ethno</i>	Ethnology
<i>EvQ</i>	Evangelical Quarterly

<i>ExpTim</i>	Expository Times
<i>For</i>	Forum
<i>HCNT</i>	<i>Hellenistic Commentary on the New Testament</i> . Edited by M. Boring, K. Berger and C. Colpe. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995
<i>HDB</i>	Harvard Divinity Bulletin
<i>HO</i>	Human Organisation
<i>HThR</i>	Harvard Theological Review
<i>HTKNT</i>	Herders theologischer kommentar zu Neuen Testament
<i>ICS</i>	Illinois Classical Studies
<i>IDBSup</i>	Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume
<i>IEJ</i>	Israel Exploration Journal
<i>IESS</i>	<i>International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences</i> . Edited by D. Sills. New York: Free Press, 1968–1979. 18 vols
<i>ILS</i>	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae
<i>Int</i>	Interpretation
<i>JAAR</i>	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
<i>JAF</i>	Journal of American Folklore
<i>JAR</i>	Journal of Anthropological Research
<i>JBC</i>	Jerome Biblical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	Journal of Biblical Literature
<i>JCCP</i>	Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology
<i>JECS</i>	Journal of Early Christian Studies
<i>JETS</i>	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
<i>JHI</i>	Journal of the History of Ideas
<i>JHS</i>	Journal of Homeric Studies
<i>JIH</i>	Journal of Interdisciplinary History
<i>JMGS</i>	Journal of Modern Greek Studies
<i>JMS</i>	Journal of Mediterranean Studies
<i>JPsychAn</i>	Journal of Psychological Anthropology
<i>JQR</i>	Jewish Quarterly Review
<i>JR</i>	Journal of Religion
<i>JRH</i>	Journal of Religious History
<i>JRP</i>	Journal of Research in Personality
<i>JRS</i>	Journal of Roman Studies
<i>JSI</i>	Journal of Social Issues
<i>JSJ</i>	Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSNT</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
<i>JSPsy</i>	Journal of Social Psychology
<i>JTS</i>	Journal of Theological Studies
<i>JTSA</i>	Journal of Theology of South Africa
<i>Jud</i>	Judaica
<i>LBD</i>	Lutterworth Bible Dictionary. Edited by W. E. Mills. Lutterworth Press, 1997
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>List</i>	Listening

<i>LS</i>	Long, A. A. and Sedley, D. N. (eds), <i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i> , 2 vols; Volume 1, Translations of the principal sources with philosophical commentary; Volume 2, Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, H. G., Scott, R. & Jones, H. S. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9 th ed. Oxford, 1996
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>Med</i>	Medellin
<i>MESstud.Ass.</i>	Middle Eastern Studies Association
<i>MJT</i>	McMaster Journal of Theology
<i>Neot</i>	Neotestamentica
<i>NIB</i>	New Interpreters Bible
<i>NLH</i>	New Literary History
<i>NovT</i>	Novum Testamentum
<i>NovTSup</i>	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NRSV</i>	New Revised Standard Version
<i>NWDB</i>	New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by H. S. Gehman. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.
<i>NYAcadSc</i>	New York Academy of Science
<i>OCCL</i>	<i>Oxford Companion to Classical Literature</i> . Edited by M. C. Howatson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989
<i>PP</i>	Past and Present
<i>Prot</i>	Protestantesimo
<i>PSPB</i>	Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
<i>QR</i>	Quarterly Review
<i>RAC</i>	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
<i>RAIGBI</i>	Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland
<i>RB</i>	Rivista Biblica
<i>RC</i>	Race and Class
<i>Rel</i>	Religion
<i>RelSRev</i>	Religious Studies Review
<i>ResB</i>	Resena Biblica
<i>RFJPC</i>	Redfeather Journal of Postmodern Criminology
<i>RQ</i>	Restoration Quarterly
<i>RR</i>	Review of Religion
<i>RSR</i>	Religious Studies Review
<i>SA</i>	Sociologie et anthropologie
<i>SBLDS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SBLSP</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
<i>SBS</i>	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
<i>Script</i>	Scriptura
<i>SEJC</i>	Studies in Early Judaism and Christianity
<i>Sem</i>	Semeia
<i>SF</i>	Sociological Focus
<i>SJT</i>	Scottish Journal of Theology
<i>SlavR</i>	Slavic Review
<i>SNTSMS</i>	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SQA</i>	Synopsis Quatuor Evangeliorum. Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1984.
<i>SR</i>	Sociology of Religion

<i>SSES</i>	Society for Study of Early Christianity
<i>StTheo</i>	Studia Theologica
<i>StudBib</i>	Studia Biblica
<i>Style</i>	Style
<i>SVTQ</i>	St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.</i> Edited by G. Kittel. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1946–76. 10 vols
<i>Theol</i>	Theologica
<i>ThScot</i>	Theology in Scotland
<i>TLNT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the New Testament.</i> By C. Spicq Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994
<i>Trans.</i>	Translation
<i>TT</i>	Theology Today
<i>TTJ</i>	Trinity Theological Journal
<i>UBS</i>	United Bible Societies
<i>USQR</i>	Union Seminary Quarterly Review
<i>VT</i>	Vetus Testamentum
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>ZNW</i>	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
<i>ZTK</i>	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

Part One

Introduction

To do something interdisciplinary it is not enough to choose a subject (a theme) and gather around it two or three sciences. Interdisciplinarity consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one.

—Roland Barthes, *Jeune Chercheurs*

In recent years social-scientific methods have impacted New Testament Studies in a number of ways.¹ One of the most influential wings of this interdisciplinary movement has been promoted by Bruce Malina's cross-cultural modelling project.² Malina's central contention is that cross-cultural insights constructed from anthropological studies of Mediterranean communities can help North American and European exegetes to appreciate the strange culture of the ancient (and modern) Mediterranean.

Following Malina's lead, many other scholars have since accepted his complement of models as encapsulating normative characteristics of the ancient Mediterranean world. The values of honour and shame are seen as core value concerns of Mediterranean people. Other models commonly utilised include an anti-introspective conception of the self. This model contends that public manifestation of the self, rather than private conscience, is appreciated and developed. The agonistic or competitive environment of the Mediterranean world is also accentuated and the correlate model of limited good is acknowledged as the major cognitive orientation of such cultures. A model of dyadic personality is used to contrast the individualism of our North American and European traditions with the collective traditions of the Mediterranean. Also, the sexual division of labour that entails different roles and values for the respective sexes is emphasised. Taken together, Malina claimed these models provided a coherent and integrated cultural script with

¹ For an overview of methods see Horrell 1999; Tidball 1983; Osiek and Balch 1992; Holmberg 1990; Elliott 1993; Scroggs 1983; Van Aarde and Van Staden 1991; Joubert 1991.

² Malina 1981; 1986a; 1993a.

which one could navigate and understand the high-context³ texts constituting the New Testament.

Malina's magnum opus, *The New Testament World*, was re-released in 2001 for a third time since its original publication over twenty years ago (1981). Lightly edited (with two additional chapters) this edition confirms that the models originally constructed continue to enjoy normative status⁴ for those working within this area.⁵ The self-declared aim of those using the models remains, in alignment with Malina's original vision, to understand "how and why people thought, behaved, and spoke the way they did" and "how and why these modes of action and communication made sense within the cultural parameters of the ancient Mediterranean".⁶ Malina is without doubt, an innovative, creative and courageous scholar who has changed the map of New Testament scholarship. He boldly went into new disciplinary fields that few had ventured into and definitively questioned the long-held assumption that cultural difference was something to which lip service was paid but which practically had little impact on exegesis. His book, though relatively short, made a compelling and effective case and the dialogue initiated between biblical studies and cross-cultural anthropology has since birthed a number of creative research projects, including my own.

Whilst Malina's project is a 'great' amongst New Testament developments of this generation, it has not, in recent years, been without its critics. Whilst few question the central assumption of acknowledgement of cross-cultural difference through use of anthropology and literary sources of the time, many have felt increasingly uncomfortable with some of the broad brush methods that appear, to some, to be endemic to the methodology proposed. For this reason, I seek here to constructively engage with Malina's cross-cultural modelling project with reference to a single text, Matthew. I also investigate an avenue of research that links reading of literary texts with current insights

³ High context societies constitute situations where "people have been socialized into widely shared ways of perceiving and acting; therefore, much can be assumed." (Malina 2001b, 2).

⁴ Herzog has recently stated that "Bruce Malina is more than an isolated scholar, he is a leading voice in a movement in biblical studies" (Herzog 2001, x). "The Bible of the Malina School" is a rather pejorative term used for Malina's work in a critical review of those seeking to make constructive use of Malina's insights (Bauckham 1998b, 250).

⁵ This is confirmed in the recent publication of a Festschrift for Malina (Pilch 2001). I would not wish to submit that all scholars using Malina's models do so in exactly the same form he originally proposed (important developments have been made by some in their application). Nevertheless, it is true to say that the central elements of the models have had enduring status in New Testament Studies.

⁶ Elliott 1993, 67.

from anthropology (literary ethnography). I wholeheartedly affirm the use of anthropology to overcome cultural difference in biblical interpretation and thus view those positively utilising social-scientific insights from anthropology as allies of my cause. However, I am also aware that the very important contributions made in this area risk being overlooked if constant development and innovation in response to critique does not occur.

The study is presented in two parts. Part I sets out first to examine six selected applications of the honour and shame ‘model’ (and its related dimensions) and second, to construct the methodological foundations for the following ethnographic study. It is shown that honour and shame as currently defined can be verified in places but the actual methodology of model application can make it difficult to account for variation or flexibility within these values.⁷ Anthropology has of course always held empirical and theoretical dimensions in tandem. Fieldwork is often predicated upon a theoretical basis or the testing of an abstracted generalisation. If this were not the case, all anthropological research would necessarily be relative and specific, with no hope of drawing constructive conclusions as regards cultural difference. However the stress in biblical studies on the utility of these generalised abstractions often means the individual aspects of different texts and cultures can be overlooked. When the text seems opposed to the abstracted model, it often leads the interpreter to label it counter-cultural — a conclusion recently reached in relation to Matthew’s Gospel.⁸

As a supplement to the use of models (general abstractions), an ethnographic research methodology (empirically based) will be delineated. It is of course reiterated here that the people of the Bible cannot be studied by the participation method of most traditional fieldwork but are only accessible, however imperfectly, through the medium of texts. The recent literary turn in anthropology has proved central in this respect. In contrast to the symbolic anthropology enterprise typified by Clifford Geertz which sought to read cultures metaphorically as texts,⁹ a wing of anthropology which now seeks to peep over the native’s shoulder and read indigenous literature to gain insider pictures of individuals is outlined. Through such texts, the anthropologist can often gauge diversity within communities (not least by literature’s ability to comment and portray hidden, internal thoughts), development of social memory and fluidity in social patterns.

⁷ Gerald Downing’s recent comment that “it has been all too easy for social anthropologists’ models to be imposed on the ancient sources, rather than deployed heuristically as research tools” (2000, 13) is, it seems, in part correct.

⁸ Neyrey 1998a, 227.

⁹ Geertz 1973, 452.

Whilst literary and social-scientific approaches have, in some instances, been rather passively coupled in biblical studies (the abstracted model is often ‘applied’ to the particular literary world studied) I will contend that both approaches should be actively engaged. To this end, Mikhail Bakhtin, a theorist used widely in both literary and social-scientific circles has proved particularly valuable.¹⁰ Attuned to the construction and production of culture in particular interactions, Bakhtin highlights the importance of diverse social voices (*heteroglossia*) representing different status and ideological groups and the complex responses of utterances to another (*dialogism*) in specific interactions. His perspective prioritises the identification of plural value systems inherent within the social scale and gives credence to the fact that individuals often live in a nexus of multiple social value options simultaneously. Bakhtin’s notion of society (in which literary texts have an important part to play) is therefore marked by fluidity, diversity, individual choice and open-ended interactions. Whilst acknowledging ‘general’ characteristics of a society (formulated by abstractions) the micro-level instances of social exchange should also feature in exegesis and be allowed to accordingly impact on future abstraction.

Part I finally documents features of Matthew’s literary world (its field, informants and dialogic dimensions). This includes a brief listing of characters (informants) both elite and non-elite and their contribution to the speech within the gospel. It is seen from this that Matthew’s world affords a significant amount of its script to non-elite characters, and this opens up the possibility that this world will be one in which different values will be potentially observable. I also introduce the social dialogism of the first century context by citing diverse ancient voices at this point. These voices constituting the social ecology of the time (including selected philosophical traditions of the ancient world, ancient historical data relating to the non-elite and the religious traditions of Judaism) do not seem to subscribe to the abstracted honour and shame model as currently defined. It is proposed that the designation of all cited evidence as counter-cultural may overlook in Bakhtinian terms, the inherent diversity and dialogic nature of concepts such as honour, shame and virtue.

Part II begins ethnography proper. Each of the chapter divisions in Part II is respectively representative of five major interests in ethnography: Power, Religious Practice, Exchange, Kinship, Gender and Social Stratification. These ethnographic themes have been coupled for critical evaluation with dimensions of the honour and shame model. These couplings are as follows:

¹⁰ Bakhtin 1968; 1981; 1984; 1986; 1990.

<i>Ethnographic Interest</i>	<i>Mediterranean Model</i>
Power	Anti-Introspective Mediterranean Self
Religious Practice	Agonistic Interaction and Challenge-Riposte
Exchange	Limited Good
Kinship	Dyadic Personality and Collectivist Culture
Gender and Social Stratification	Sexual Division of Labour

Taking Bakhtin's notion seriously, that culture is observable and constructed through particular interactions, the gospel narrative situations have been accordingly segregated in reference to each theme (see Appendix 1). This comprises an important methodological development in this study. In contrast to a schematic reading of the gospel through the lens of Mediterranean models, here in-depth readings of particular interactions presented within the gospel world are assessed on their own terms, before comparative material is brought to bear on research. Thus both micro (empirical) and macro (abstraction) levels of analysis are given due attention. My selection of passages is not meant to imply that these are only important in reference to the theme or model under review. Rather the physical limitations of the project do not allow for detailed investigation of all the narrative situations in reference to all the themes.

Each chapter in Part II follows the same ethnographic scheme. First, an elucidation of the dimension of the honour and shame model under review and an explanation of why it has been coupled with a particular ethnographic theme. Second, data collection from character interactions in Matthew's world will seek to confirm or question the model by a close reading of the text. Third, theoretical and comparative sources, involving the citation of relevant ethnographic and ancient evidence, will seek to provide other voices with which to compare the reading of Matthew's constructed world and critically evaluate the model under review. Finally, the ethnographic reading will be discussed and tabulated.

Whilst this book's tone may at times seem critical of the model proposed and defended by various social-scientific critics, it is true to say that the vision of my project has always been to further the cause of the use of anthropological insights in New Testament interpretation. I continue to accept that Malina's mandate of recognising cross-cultural difference through constructive use of anthropology remains one of the most powerful ways for

exegetes to experience a ‘cultural shock’ in interpretation.¹¹ I also affirm the use of generalised abstractions, but modify their use by giving supreme importance to specific data acquired by empirical research. This may in turn qualify or change generalised theories.

Ultimately this study offers, as all ethnographic reports do, a presentation of what must be termed only fragmentary truth.¹² It takes its agenda from an engagement with cross-cultural modelling and the perspective it draws is dictated by this position. It is also acknowledged that Matthew’s constructed world can only inform my *thick reading*¹³ in its literary form; the researcher is bound to the text itself and the specific construction of reality that emerges from it.

Nevertheless, the interaction between disciplines seeks to render this project legitimately interdisciplinary – emulating and respecting the research traditions of those with which it works. It is hoped that the following discussion will also hold promise for anyone who wishes to creatively engage diverse disciplinary resources for the task in hand. As Malina did over twenty years ago, the spirit of this book also urges others to reject choosing a theme and uncritically gathering around it two or three sciences. It rather encourages them to produce creative readings that could be usefully read in a number of disciplinary contexts and in so doing, also create “an object that ultimately belongs to no one”.

¹¹ The fact that I have sought to develop an ethnographic method that incorporates contemporary anthropological analysis and Mediterranean fieldwork confirms this.

¹² Clifford and Marcus 1986, 42.

¹³ A play on Geertz’s term “thick description”, an endeavour in which anthropologists attempt to describe the webs of symbolic meaning that constitute a particular culture (1973, 3–30). Whilst the term encapsulates the direction of this project (a reading of Matthew’s literary world), subsequent discussion does not endorse the whole spirit of Geertz’s symbolic project, nor its penchant for neat and holistic pictures of cultural forms and life.

Chapter 1

Honour, Shame and Biblical Interpretation: The Story So Far...

Owing to the pioneering research of Bruce Malina and other members of *The Context Group*¹ who have adopted and variously employed his insights, honour and shame have been firmly placed on the biblical scholar's agenda.² At one time such concerns seemed peripheral,³ but Malina's project encouraged, even demanded attention to be paid to cross-cultural difference.⁴ A case for the applicability of cross-cultural models in general, and honour and shame in particular, has been made by a chorus of scholars who now seek to use or accept these values as representative models of both authors and readers of the biblical texts they seek to interpret.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and document representative applications of the honour and shame model within biblical interpretation, and to illustrate the various differences between methodologies in the sample. As a largely North American development, constructive use of the models produced has been mainly confined to English speaking scholarship.⁵ Accordingly six scholars' approaches have been selected for this task. First, Bruce Malina's pioneering modelling of the Mediterranean world; second,

¹ These are a group of scholars, making constructive use of cross-cultural models in exegesis. There has been a special meeting for 'Social Science and New Testament Interpretation' at the *Society of Biblical Literature* meetings since 1983. The journal *Semeia* devoted an entire issue in 1996 to honour and shame (*Sem* 68).

² The immediate focus of the Context Group is macrosociological. Namely, it seeks to construct models of general dynamics of circum-Mediterranean society, and posits 'scenario models' which provide a mediating point for the contemporary exegete.

³ W. R. Smith (1889) did refer to the value of honour in his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* and J. Pedersen considered 'honour', 'shame' and 'name' as important elements of the ancient Israelite cultural milieu (1963, 213–44). Despite these significant exceptions however, biblical exegesis in general, and New Testament interpretation in particular, remained largely unaffected by such interests.

⁴ An important stimulus in this area was Pitt-Rivers' reading of Genesis (1977a).

⁵ English texts have however been translated into a number of languages. Those publishing new research on cultural anthropology and the New Testament, in languages other than in English include Guijarro 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996a; 1996b; 1998; Moxnes 1994; Pesce 1990; 1994a; 1994b.

Vernon K. Robbins' social and cultural texture of texts; third, David deSilva's honour discourse; fourth, Timothy Laniak's socio-literary reading; fifth, Barth Campbell's classical rhetorical reading; and sixth, Jerome Neyrey's anthropological and ancient historical reading. The various strengths and weaknesses of each will be considered, before cumulative conclusions regarding the utility of the range of projects are documented. A threefold critique of the methodologies will then be offered. This comprises problems regarding (i) Research Methodology, (ii) Outdated Views of Culture and (iii) Reification. On account of these weaknesses, it will be argued that a revised perspective from which to consider 'cultural values' presented within biblical texts is needed.

1.1 Honour and Shame in Biblical Studies

1.1.1 Bruce Malina: Modelling the Mediterranean World

Bruce Malina forged the enterprise to utilise cultural anthropology in biblical interpretation and established honour and shame as pivotal core values⁶ in the world of the early Christians. His 1981 work *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (reissued in 1993 and 2001) has become the subsequent benchmark for all such discussion within biblical studies. Malina highlighted anthropology's sensitivity to anachronism (the representation of something as existing other than at its proper time) and ethnocentrism (interpreting other cultures from one's own perspective), and consequent assistance in allowing the strangeness of the Mediterranean world to surface.⁷ His guiding premise was that a deep gulf, initiated at the time of the Industrial Revolution, separated Western (post)-modernity from the Mediterranean ancient world. He submitted that this divide could only be crossed with the aid of appropriate cross-cultural comparisons, where the differences between the social context of the interpreter and the interpreted became apparent.

His methodological endeavour to overcome the incommensurability between the cultures of the interpreter (biblical scholar) and interpreted (the people originally producing and reading the biblical texts) was accomplished by abstraction and model use. Given that the New Testament was fashioned in the eastern Mediterranean, Malina based his models on the study of advanced agrarian societies from that area. Such models dealt with stable elements

⁶ Pivotal values are those expected in all human interactions, Malina and Pilch 1993, xix.

⁷ Malina 1993a.

of the region that have, he asserted, endured from ancient times.⁸ Mediterranean anthropology is accessible to the interpreter and is assumed to correlate at least in part with ancient Mediterranean contexts and situations. This abstraction in turn provides the raw material for the construction of a model that seeks to define cultural characteristics of the ancient Mediterranean world. The process can be figuratively presented as follows:

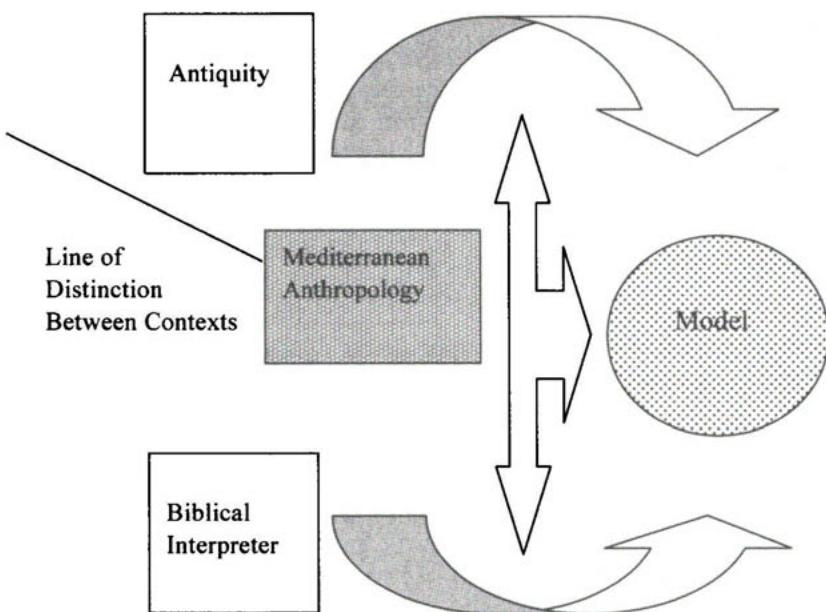


Fig 1. Malina's Abstraction and Modelling

Applying this methodology to John Peristiany's 1965 edited work, *Honor and Shame: The Values of a Mediterranean Society*,⁹ Malina encountered honour

⁸ Malina postulated *desiderata* for a good social scientific model for biblical interpretation. These can be summarised as follows: (i) Similarities should be established so that legitimate abstraction can take place. (ii) The model should be abstracted from situations and experiences that can be compared with what we know of the biblical world. (iii) The features of the model should be agreeable to practitioners of social-scientific disciplines (1983a, 22).

⁹ Peristiany 1965.

and shame as “The two poles of social evaluation . . . the reflection of the social personality in the mirror of social ideals.”¹⁰ Whilst Peristiany *et al.* did not seek to provide a unified model or indeed be explicitly comparative¹¹ their work became the main wellspring from which Malina’s original conception of honour was constructed. Honour denoted the socially approved and expected attitudes and behaviour in areas where power, sexual status and religion intersect. Accordingly, honour comprised two basic and balancing elements: the assertion of worth and the acknowledgement of that worth by others. Malina also identified two main sources of honour. First, ascribed honour referring to status which comes from birth and second, acquired honour referring to esteem earned by an individual or group by deeds of heroism or verbal challenge.¹² In a structural functionalist vein Malina submitted that the purpose of honour was “to serve as a sort of social rating which entitled people to interact in specific ways with his or her equals, superiors, and subordinates according to the prescribed cultural cues of the society”.¹³ Since shame was dependent on views of the group, it was claimed to function as a measure of social sanction in the kin based collective social structure of the Mediterranean.

Also presented in Malina’s volume were models that were integrally linked to the pivotal model of honour and shame. These related models (briefly listed in the introduction) are summarised as follows:

Anti-Introspective Self: As honour is predominantly dependent on the opinions and estimations of others, people within an honour culture are outwardly (publicly) orientated rather than internally orientated (shame-based rather than guilt-based).¹⁴ As a result, people afford little significance to individual consciousness and thought.

Agonistic Interaction and Challenge-Riposte: Cultures that hold honour as their core value, are inherently competitive (agonistic).¹⁵ Accordingly, males defending their honour in public engage in a social confrontation known as challenge-riposte, in which an evaluating audience accords honour to one or other of the participants. Challenges can be both positive (gift giving) and negative (insults) but in all instances demand some sort of response on the part of the person challenged.

¹⁰ Peristiany 1965, 21.

¹¹ Davies states, “It is a constant theme that Mediterraneanists have failed in their plain duty to be comparative and to produce even the most tentative proposition concerning concomitant variations.” (1977, 5).

¹² Malina 1993a, 33–34.

¹³ Malina 1981, 47.

¹⁴ Malina 2001a, 58; Malina and Neyrey 1996.

¹⁵ Malina 2001a, 33.

Index of Authors

- Abu-Lughod, L. 27, 48, 51, 170, 251, 280
Acheson, J. 207
Adams, E. 27, 45, 68, 86, 94
Adkins, A. W. H. 83, 172
Afsaruddin, A. 285
Aguilar, M. 49, 50, 54, 298
Aldernick, L. J. 254
Alexander, L. 64
Alfody, G. 73, 188
Allison, D. C. 66, 79, 121, 145
Anderson, J. C. 72, 80, 195, 279
Araji, S. K. 31
Ardener, E. 280, 293
Argyle, A. W. 122
Asano-Tamanoi, M. 31, 171
Atkinson, P. 47
Auffrech, W. E. 232
Aune, D. E. 233
Bakhtin, M. 4, 5, 37, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55,
56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 68, 70, 72, 73,
77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 92, 108, 112,
114, 115, 121, 123, 141, 142, 157,
168, 194, 202, 273, 296, 297, 298,
299
Bakhtin, M., Medvedev, P. N. 55, 115
Balch, D. L. 290
Banani, A., Vrynois, S. 249
Banfield, E. 226, 236, 251, 252, 255, 256,
257, 259, 300, 301
Barclay, J. 94, 256
Bar-Ilan, M. 162
Barkow, J. H. 131, 132
Barley N. 45
Barnard, A. J. 23, 25, 52, 130.
Barnard, A. J., Good, A. 222, 223
Barnard, A. J., Spencer, J. 25
Barrett, S. R. 47
Bartchy, S. S. 264
Barthes, R. 1
Barton, C. A. 89, 90, 93
Barton, S. 64, 65, 97, 99, 227, 235, 240,
243, 254
Baslez, M. F. 173
Batey, R. 153
Batten, A. 287
Bauckham, R. 2, 64, 65, 82, 296
Bauer, D. R. 178
Bauman, R., Briggs, C. 168
Bear, F. W. 234
Bechtel, L. 104.
Befu, L. 182
Beidelman, J. 131, 282
Bell, M., Gardiner, M. 56
Benedict, J. 207
Bennet, J. 207
Benson, P. 45
Bergant, D. 45
Berger, P. L. 27, 31, 67, 68
Berkowitz, S. 251
Betz, H. D. 152
Blok, A. 28
Blomberg, C. L. 217
Bockmuehl, M. 31, 32, 34, 155, 242
Boismard, M. E. 67
Bolchazy, L. J. 173
Bond, H. 126, 127, 128
Bonhoeffer, A. F., Stephen, W. O. 87
Boring, M. E. 154
Bornkamm, G. 61
Borsch, F. H. 270
Botha, P. J. 24
Bourdieu, P. 26, 36, 39, 129, 170, 223,
284, 285.
Bourke, V., Kelkel, J. A. 137
Bourque, S. C. 130
Brady, I. 47
Brandes, S. 29, 171
Brant, J. A. 125
Braund, S. H. 214
Brown, P. 92, 93, 94

- Bruce, F. F. 70
 Brueggemann, W. 79, 80, 138, 193, 199,
 217, 274
 Bruner, E. M., Gorfain, P. 54
 Bultmann, R. 148, 158, 240
 Burridge, R. A. 20, 56, 64
 Cairns, D. L. 136, 137
 Campbell, B. L. 8, 17, 18, 23, 28
 Campbell, J. K. 28, 134, 169, 251, 252
 Carney, T. 23, 182
 Carson, D. A. 127, 128
 Carter, W. 56, 63, 68, 113, 128, 199, 202,
 228, 274, 275, 279
 Cartledge, P. 31
 Casselberry, S., Valavanes, N. 283
 Catchpole, D. R. 189
 Charlesworth, J. H. 83, 176
 Chatman, S. 20
 Chester, A. 200
 Chilton, B. D. 145
 Chock, P. 15, 22
 Christ, M. R. 173
 Clark, K., Holquist, M. 53
 Clarke, F. 74, 205, 237
 Clay, C. B. 46
 Clifford, J. 6, 26, 41
 Coates, R. 55
 Cohen, A. 22, 51
 Cohen, D. 38, 39, 42, 94, 136, 171, 172,
 173, 289, 290
 Cohen, E. S. 33, 260
 Coleman, J. A. 43
 Collins, J. 237
 Comaroff, J. 130, 233
 Connerton, P. 143
 Connolly, J. 287
 Corley, K. 62, 267, 279
 Cornwall, A., Lindisfarne, N. 285
 Craeffert, P. F. 23
 Craig, K. M. 55
 Craven, J. 291
 Creighton, M. R. 132, 133
 Cronin, C. 252, 284
 Crosby, M. H. 63, 113, 187, 191, 220,
 221, 227, 266
 Crossan, J. D. 74
 Croy, C. N. 176
 Crusemann, F. 187
 Cutileiro, J. 170
 D'Arms, J. 215
 Daniel, E. V. 54, 249
 Daube, D. 149, 158, 159
 Davies, W. D., Allison, D. C. 62, 70, 119,
 154, 157, 158, 160, 164, 165, 189,
 203, 241, 276
 Davies, M., Sanders, E. P. 67
 Davies, W. D. 10, 62, 63, 149, 188, 235
 Davilla, J. 44
 Davis, J. 32, 209
 De Boer, M. C. 72
 De Geradon, B. 116
 Delaney, C. 42, 283
 Derrett, J. D. M. 163, 218
 deSilva, D. A. 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,
 21, 28, 106, 184, 211, 296
 De Ste Croix, G. E. M. 200
 Destro, A., Pesce, M. 265
 Di Bella, M. P. 210
 Di Lella, A. 107
 Di Vito, R. 139
 Dihle, A. 255
 Dixon, S. 276
 Dodds, E. R. 136, 172
 Donahue, J. R. 217
 Donaldson, T. L. 195
 Dorst, J. 45
 Douglas, M. 43
 Dover, K. J. 286
 Downing, F. G. 3, 28, 138, 217, 248, 272,
 273
 Droege, A. J. 240
 Du Boulay, J. 134, 135, 169, 211, 285
 Du Boulay, J., Williams, R. 208, 211
 Dubisch, J. 282, 283
 Duling, D. 74, 236
 Dumont, L. 249
 Dunn, J. D. G. 230
 Duranti, A. 42
 Duranti, A., Goodman, C. 168
 Duvigaund, J. 262
 Eagleton, T. 28
 Edwards, C. 264
 Edwards, R. A. 247
 Eickelman, C. 170
 Eisenstadt, S. 130, 212
 Eisenstadt, S., Roninger, L. 202, 212
 Elliott, J. H. 1, 2, 21, 45, 201, 202.
 Elster, J. 206
 Emerson, C. 114
 Eriksen, T. H. 65

- Esler, P. F. 38, 39, 42, 43, 55, 68, 83, 225, 226, 291
Fabian, J. 114
Fantham, E. 287
Faraone, C. A. 171
Fay, B. 40
Feld, S. 47
Feldman, L. H. 175
Ferguson, E. 87, 88, 102, 103
Ferguson, J. 151, 253
Fernea, E. 47
Fiensy, D. A. 74
Finley, M. I. 172
Finnegan, R. 51
Fiorenza, S. E. 232, 277
Fischer, M. 22, 26
Fishelov, D. 72
Fisher, N. R. E. 174
Fitzgerald, J. T. 91
Foley, H. P. 288
Forbes, C. 87
Fortna, R. T. 202
Foster, G. 182, 183, 185, 187, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 219
Foucault, M. 26, 129
Fowler, R. 45, 68
Fox, R. G. 34, 222
France, R. T. 67, 121
Frankemolle, H. 235
Freyne, S. 188
Friberg, T., Friberg, B. 123, 163
Friedl, E. 133
Furniss, G., Gunner, L. 51
Gager, J. G. 33, 68
Gardener, M. 142
Garland, D. 62, 235
Garnsey, P., Saller, R. 73, 253
Garrett, S. 12, 24, 37
Geertz, C. 3, 6, 44, 252
Gellner, E. 211, 264
Giardina, A. 211, 264
Gilmore, D. D. 30, 31, 42, 170, 171, 184, 212, 252, 283
Gilsenan, M. 134, 135, 170, 212
Giovanni, M. J. 284
Glancy, J. 197
Glazener, N. 53
Goffman, E. 39, 56, 285
Goiten, S. D. 249
Gold, A. 27
Goldthorpe, J. H., Hope, K. 130
Gomme, A. W. 288
Goode, W. J. 130
Goodman, M. 33, 200
Gottwald, N. 217, 232
Goulder, M. D. 70
Gouldner, A. W. 171
Gowler, D. B. 13, 201
Green, B. 55
Gregory, R. 23, 208, 209
Griffin, C. C. M. 32
Guelich, R. 189
Guijarro, S. 7
Gulliver, P. H. 168
Gundry, R. 70, 188, 241
Habel, N. 240
Habinek, T. 93
Hagedorn, A. C., Neyrey, J. H. 185, 186
Hagner, D. A. 70, 189, 190, 196, 230, 233, 237, 238, 245, 278
Hammersley, M. 47
Hammond, P. C. 122
Hanson, K. C. 123, 192, 193
Hanson, K. C., Oakman, D. E. 212, 233
Hanson, P. 105
Hardman, C. 251
Hare, D. 274
Harrelson, W. 104
Harrington, D. 62, 154
Harris, O. 281
Harrison, J. 215
Harrison, S. 65, 66
Hartog, F. 40
Hastrup, K. 26
Hatch, E. 93
Heisey, N. R. 303
Hengel, M. 20, 63, 242
Herman, G. 173, 174
Herzfeld, M. 28, 30, 134, 170, 171, 209, 211, 212, 252, 266, 285, 303
Herzog, W. R. 2, 72, 201, 202
Hill, J. M. 47, 72
Hirschon, R. 134
Hobbawm, E., Rude, G. 49
Hoehner, H. 124
Holmberg, B. 1
Holy, L. 222
Horrell, D. G. 1, 22, 27, 38, 39, 40, 68, 303
Horsley, R. A. 33, 146, 151

- Howatson, M. C. 92, 171
 Howell, D. R. 178
 Hubner, H. 149
 Hummell, R. 62
 Humphries-Brooks, S. 127, 140, 266, 267
 Hunter, V. 173
 Hymes, D. 41
 Ingold, T. 27
 Inwood, B. 87
 Iser, W. 49
 Iszaevisch, A. 252
 Jacobs-Malina, D. 287
 Jeremias, J. 156, 162, 193, 200, 202
 Jobes, K. 17
 Johnson, L., Lipsett-Riviera, S. 31
 Johnson, M. D. 232
 Johnston, D. 48
 Jones, I. 69, 166
 Joshel, S. R., Murnaghan, S. 287
 Joubert, S. J. 1
 Kahler, C. 72
 Kaplan, D., Saller, B. 207, 208
 Kearney, M. 207, 208
 Keay, R. 117
 Kee, H. C. 31, 68
 Keener, C. S. 20, 125, 126, 148, 199, 234,
 245, 274, 275
 Keesing, R. M. 24, 26, 27
 Kennedy, J. G. 206
 Kerby, A. 48
 Kertzer, D. 166
 Khare, R. 249
 Kilpatrick, G. D. 63, 272
 Kingsbury, J. D. 62, 63, 70, 146, 188,
 240, 246
 Kinneging, A. A. M. 91, 92, 213, 214,
 264
 Klauck, H. J. 254
 Klutz, T. 65
 Knotterus, J. D. 46
 Kondo, D. 27, 129
 Kopas, J. 270
 Kosch, D. 148
 Kristeva, J. 54
 Kroeker, A. L. 187
 Kugler, R. A. 175
 Kuhn, W. 49
 Lambrecht, J. 152
 Lancaster, W. 251
 Lande, C. H. 184
 Lane, W. 194
 Lange, N. de 32
 Laniak, T. S. 8, 16, 17, 18, 23, 28
 Lawrence, L. J. 143
 Leach, E. 25
 Lendon, J. E. 90, 136, 172
 Lenski, G. 74, 146, 182, 261
 Lentz, J. C. 264
 Levine, A. J. 62, 73, 178, 203, 234, 235,
 270, 271, 272, 273, 297
 Levinson, J. D. 233
 Levi-Strauss, C. 49
 Lewis, O. 207
 Lewkowicz, B. 34
 Lienhardt, G. 131, 251
 Lieu, J. 205
 Lindisfarne, N. 34, 283
 Linetski, V. 52
 Lison-Tolosana, C. 252
 Little, D. Twiss, S. 196
 Lloyd, H. M. 132
 Lohr, C. 70
 Loizos, P., Papataxiarchis, E. 284
 Loizos, P. 251
 Love, S. 74, 262, 267, 268
 Luckmann, T. 27, 67, 68
 Lukes, S. 249
 Lutz, C., Abu-Lughod, L. 51
 Luz, U. 20, 62, 63, 123, 145, 146, 149,
 152, 164, 193, 235, 239
 Maccoby, H. 156
 MacDonald, M. Y. 68, 279
 Mack, B. L. 79
 MacMullen, R. 90, 136, 213
 Malherbe, A. 84, 85, 254
 Malina, B. J. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,
 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 28,
 29, 32, 39, 83, 108, 109, 110, 114,
 115, 116, 117, 122, 123, 125, 127,
 131, 136, 140, 143, 144, 146, 148,
 152, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161,
 167, 178, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186,
 190, 196, 197, 199, 211, 218, 219,
 224, 225, 226, 232, 237, 238, 241,
 243, 244, 245, 258, 259, 261, 262,
 263, 269, 275, 276, 277, 283, 299,
 300, 301, 302
 Malina, B. J., Neyrey, J. H. 10, 11, 23,
 161
 Malina, B. J., Pilch, J. 8

- Malina, B. J., Rohrbaugh, R. L. 11, 12, 116, 123, 125, 127, 146, 148, 152, 156, 158, 159, 160, 183, 184, 190, 197, 199, 232, 237, 241, 243, 244, 245, 269, 275, 276, 277
Mandelbaum, D. G. 24
Marcus, G. E., Fischer, M. J. 22, 26
Marcus, G. E. 6, 26, 41
Marshall-Green, M. 286
Martyn, J. 62
Mason, S. 98
Matthiae, K. 122
Mauss, M. 182
McAleer Dieling, K. 31
McCauley, R. N., Lawson, E. T. 39
McCracken, D. 52, 55, 81
McDonald, J. I. 81, 105
McGinn, T. A. J. 32
McGrane, B. 114, 303
McKay, H. 114
McKenzie, J. S. 122
McKnight, S. 253
McNamara, M. 100
Mealand, D. 217
Mealand, L. 188
Meeks, W. 40, 68, 73, 82, 95, 231, 261, 289
Meggett, J. 27, 55, 73, 74, 75, 78, 102, 296
Meier, J. P. 63, 149, 164, 189
Meneley, A. 283
Menninger, R. E. 146
Merenlahti, P. 55
Merenlahti, P., Hakola, R. 43
Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. 41
Miller, C. W. 55
Mines, M. 249
Mohrlang, R. 151
Moo, D. J. 159
Morris, P. 115
Morson, G., Emerson, C. 56, 114
Mott, S. 105
Moxnes, H. 7, 30, 233
Myers, C. 43
Narayan, K. 45
Nau, A. J. 247
Neale, D. A. 156
Needham, R. 222
Netting, R. 212
Neusner, J. 83, 145
Neyrey, J. H. 3, 8, 19, 20, 21, 28, 34, 60, 72, 80, 83, 97, 98, 130, 144, 145, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 161, 170, 185, 186, 192, 224, 225, 226, 227, 232, 239, 243, 261, 262, 301
Nussbaum, M. C. 49
O'Day, G. R. 272
Oksenberg-Rorty, A. 136
Olyan, S. M. 104
Ortner, S., Whitehead, H. 266
Ortner, S. 26
Orton, D. E. 62
Osborn, E. 151
Osiek, C., Balch, D. L. 1, 224, 225, 290
Overholt, T. W. 138
Overing, J. 223, 296
Overman, J. A. 62, 67, 235, 275
Pain, R. 167
Pantel, P. S. 281
Patte, D. 62, 67, 70, 127, 241, 275
Patterson, O. 275
Pederson, J. 7
Pelling, C. 137
Peristiany, J. G. 9, 10, 31, 169, 210
Perkins, J. 43, 44
Perowne, S. 122
Perrin, N. 237
Pesce, D. 7
Peters, E. L. 28, 284
Petersen, N. 44
Petit, M. 20
Phillips, T. E. 217
Piker, S. 208
Pilch, J. J. 2, 124, 125
Pina-Cabral, J. D. 31, 283
Pine, S. 282
Pinto, D. 251
Pitt-Rivers, J. 7, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 61, 84, 107, 133, 140, 141, 143, 155, 166, 169, 170, 171, 184, 192, 193, 207, 209, 210, 211, 297, 299
Plattner, S. 116
Pohlenz, M. 86
Pollnac, R. B., Carmo, F. 212
Pomeroy, S. B. 288, 289
Powell, M. A. 119
Poyatos, E. 47
Pratt, M. L. 47
Przybylski, B. 150, 151, 238
Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 25

- Raheja, G. 27
 Rajak, T. 20
 Rapport, N. 45, 46, 47, 131, 141, 296
 Rawson, B. 253
 Raybeck, D. 162
 Reed, W. L. 56
 Reed-Danahay D. E. 48
 Reeves, E. 215
 Reimann, H. 46
 Reiser, M. 256
 Rhoads, D. 43
 Riches, J. K. 67, 190
 Ringe, S. 271
 Robbins, V. K. 8, 13, 25, 44, 45
 Roberts, K. A. 19
 Robinson, R. B. 232
 Rodman, M. C. 71
 Rohrbaugh, R. L. 12, 30, 74, 144
 Rosaldo, M., Lamphere, L. 130, 273, 281,
 282
 Rosaldo, M. 130
 Rosenthal, E. S. 102
 Roth, S. 218
 Rubel, P., Rosman, A. 40
 Russell, D. S. 99
 Said, E. 26
 Saldarini, A. J. 26, 62, 74, 145, 165
 Sand, A. 146
 Sanders, E. P. 67, 155, 156
 Sandmel, S. 70
 Sandnes, K. O. 230, 231
 Sanjek, R. 40, 41, 295
 Sant Cassia, P. 134, 285
 Saunders, G. R. 283
 Saussure, F. de 52
 Savage, T. 90
 Schafer, K. 231
 Schapera, I. 46, 47
 Scheff, T. 41, 46
 Schmidt, T. 218
 Schnakenburg, R. 151
 Schneider, J., Schneider, P. 252
 Schneider, D. 26, 223
 Schneider, G. 113
 Schneider, J. 261
 Schonegger, D. 28, 29
 Schottroff, D. 202
 Schrage, W. 150
 Schryer, F. J. 207
 Schwab, G. 46
 Schwartz, S. 249, 250, 251, 300
 Scott, J. P., Fredericson, E. 167
 Scroggs, R. 1, 24
 Segal, A. 146
 Segal, D., Handler, R. 47
 Selvidge, M. S. 270
 Senior, D. 62
 Shanin, T. 187
 Sharpe, J. 49
 Shelton, J. A. 214, 215
 Shillington, G. 201
 Shore, C. 47, 60
 Shuler, P. L. 19, 20
 Schweder, R. A. 27
 Sigal, P. 274
 Sim, D. C. 63, 73, 230
 Simmel, G. 182
 Skoyles, J. R. 256
 Smith, R. H. 233
 Smith, W. R. 7, 93
 Snodgrass, K. 145
 Sokefeld, M. 51, 131
 Sokolovski, S., Tishkov, V. 233
 Sowayan, S. 48
 Stam, R. 53
 Stanton, G. 20, 62, 64, 146, 147
 Stark, R. 63
 Stegemann, E. W., Stegemann, W. 73, 75,
 95
 Stemberger, G. 155
 Stendahl, K. 63, 79, 116
 Stern, S. 33
 Stewart, C. 40, 134
 Stewart, J. 45
 Stocking, G. W. 52
 Stone, I. F. 255
 Stramara, D. F. 117
 Strathern, M. 284
 Strecker, G. 62, 247
 Street, B. 47
 Streeter, B. H. 63
 Swain, L. 264
 Swidler, L. 274
 Syreeni, K. 43
 Tasker, R. V. G. 149
 Tedlock, B. 45
 Tedlock, D. 52
 Tedlock, D., Manheim, B. 52
 Theissen, G. 146, 151, 159, 194, 227, 271
 Thiemann, R. F. 278

- Thompson, E. P. 49, 146
Thurow, L. 183
Thysman, R. 68
Tidball, D. 1
Tompkins, J. 67
Tonkin, I. 50, 298
Treggiari, S. 32, 75
Triandis, H. C. 226, 249
Ulonska, H. 146
Uspensky, B. 70
Valentine, D. E., Daniel, J., *et al.* 45
Van Aarde, A. G., Van Staden, P. 1, 24
Van der Horst, P. W. 102
Van Dusen, R. A. 280
Van Henten, J. W. 102, 291
Van Segbroek, F. 79
Van Tilborg, S. 62
Verhey, A. 105
Vermes, G. 165
Vernant, J. 171
Veyne, P. 102
Via, D. O. 196
Vittinghoff, F. 20, 73
Vledder, E. J. 70, 74, 146
Vledder, E. J., Van Aarde, A. G. 74
Von Rad, G. 106
Wahlde, U. C. 146
Wainwright, E. 271
Walby, S. 285
Wallace-Hadrill, A. 286, 287, 289
Waterbury, J. 184, 211, 212
Watson, L., Watson-Franke, M. B. 47
Weaver, D. J. 113, 120, 127, 264
Weber, H. R. 218
Weber, M. 44, 130, 260
Weber, T. H. 106
Weiner, A. 182
Weintraub, J. 285
Weiss, H. 162
West, G. O., Dube, M. W. 303
Whitaker, M. 27
White, L. M. 63, 152
Whitehead, N. 47
Wiktorin, U. 209, 280, 281
Williams, B. 137
Wilson, R. 232
Wimberley, H., Savichinsky, J. 233
Winner, I. P. 252
Winterbourne 137
Wire, A. 63, 266
Wolf, M. 27
Wyatt-Brown, B. 31
Wyman, I. 15, 22
Zanker, G. 172
Zeller, D. 95

Index of References

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis

1:31	216	16:20	216
2:2	158	19:3	189
2:4	234	20:2	233
5:1	234	20:12	103, 164, 291
5:4–32	232	20:14	218
6:9	149	20:17	155, 291
10:19	272	22:21	177, 218
12:1–3	235	23:5	151
12:10	16	23:9	257, 177
12:12–20	291	28:2	103
17:5	233	29:7	278
18:1–8	177	31:13–14	158
20:5	192	32:13	233
22:2	239	35:2	158
24:4–13	233		
27:5	291		
31:34–35	291	Leviticus	
39:7–18	291	7:23	257
45:13	103	10:3	16
48:13–20	204	10:11	257
		11:45	105
		18:5	100

Exodus

1:15	291	19:3	291
2:10	291	19:10–34	177
3:8	272	19:13	217
4:22	229	19:17	155
5:13	237	19:18	151, 200, 257
12:1–20	45	19:32	257
12:38	16	19:33–34	257
15:3	175	19:34	103
16:3, 4	216	20:21	124
		21:20	275

<i>Leviticus (continued)</i>		<i>Judges</i>	
22:10–14	257	1:14–15	291
24:22	177	4:4	291
25:15	200	16:4–21	291
25:35–38	176	<i>Ruth</i>	
		4:18–22	232
<i>Numbers</i>			
1:2	257	<i>1 Samuel</i>	
12:7	242	2:30	10, 104, 105
35:16–28	257	14	292
		16:6	278
<i>Deuteronomy</i>		18:9	219
4:5–9	104	25	292
4:44	257	25:3–42	292
5:5–19	192		
5:14	264	<i>2 Samuel</i>	
5:15	218	5:13–16	232
5:16	103, 164	7:14	229
5:21	155	20:18	292
7:8–11	104	22:26	149
10:17–18	217		
10:18	264	<i>1 Kings</i>	
10:18–19	176, 177	1:11	291
13:4	199	5:3	175
13:12	150	8:61	149
14:1	257	10:1–12	217
15:2	200	14:1–14	272
15:7	231	14:5	292
15:9	202, 218	17:16	194
15:11	218, 278	19:19–21	240
18:13	149		
23:1	275	<i>2 Kings</i>	
23:8	257	4:8–37	292
24:14–15	217	4:18–37	272
26:12, 13	177	20:12–13	217
27:19	177, 218, 256	22:14–20	291
28:1–14	199, 217		
28:47–48	205	<i>1 Chronicles</i>	
32:6	229, 257	3:10–24	232
32:35	151	16:27	105
33:29	189	28:9	139

<i>2 Chronicles</i>				
20:7	233	51:6	292	
		51:8	138	
		51:10	138	
<i>Nehemiah</i>		62:5	138	
2:3	291	62:7	105	
<i>Job</i>		68:5	218	
2:8	279	72	237	
8:6	103	73:2–9	175	
8:22	292	73:3	175	
22:9	256	82:3	191	
22:5–11	194	84:12	189	
24:3	256	89:27–28	229	
24:10–11	205	89:39–42	104	
28:28	104	89:45–52	104	
29:14	104	91:15	104	
29:12–13	256	103:1	138	
31:18	256	103:13	257	
31:32	204	103:15	118	
34:14	153	105:6	233	
34:19	103	109:21, 22	218	
36:13	153	109:29	292	
		110:1	204	
<i>Psalms</i>		112:1–3	189	
1:1	193	118:5	118	
2:12	193	119:1–2	189	
9:17	156	119:38–39	104	
9:18	190	119: 77–80	104	
10:3	218	128:1–4	189	
19:12–14	139	133:2	278	
22:26	194	137:1	279	
24:3–6	192	139:1–2, 23–24	139	
31:11	258	139:1–7	104	
32:2–12	189	139:7	138	
32:11	151	146:7–8	105	
37:11	191			
37:11–22	218	<i>Proverbs</i>		
38:11	258	3:31	218	
41:9	258	4:8	103	
44:21	292	4:9	104	
46:10	233	5:21	105	
49:20	104	6:34	149	
51:3–4	139	8:10	218	

<i>Proverbs (continued)</i>				
8:18	217	28:15	138	
8:32–34	189	29:8	205	
9:1–5	177	29:13	155	
10:22	217	30:18	190	
13:23	217	32:20	190	
14:17–29	149	33:14–16	192	
14:21	104	35:1–10	195	
14:30	218	35:5–6	194	
14:31	103	40:3	237	
15:16	218	40:6–8	18	
15:27	218	41:8	233	
18:8	138	41:12–13	175	
21:1	175	41:17	218	
22:4	106	44:8	138	
23:6	202, 218	56:2	189	
23:6–8	177	56:3–5	275	
23:17	106	57:15	190	
24:19	175	58:2	175	
24:29	151	58:5–7	217	
26:4	138	58:6–7	177, 194	
27:20	219	58:7	102	
28:2	218, 219	61	191	
28:14	189	61:1	190	
28:22	202	63:16	229	
30:8–9	218	64:8	229	
31:10–31	291			
		<i>Jeremiah</i>		
<i>Ecclesiastes</i>		1:1	245	
5:10–11	106	3:4	257	
12:14	292	6:13	218	
		9:23–24	177	
<i>Isaiah</i>		11:1	245	
1:2	151	11:21–23	245	
1:23–25	218	12:6	245	
2:2–4	195	12:7	242	
2:4	175	12:10	200	
3:1–17	105	16:16	240	
3:16–24	218	17:9–10	139	
5:1–7	200	21:2, 4	175	
5:11–13	105	23:5	175	
19:2	231	23:16–22	138	

<i>Jeremiah (continued)</i>		<i>Amos</i>	
23:24	138	1:3	175
27:9–11	138	2:3	175
29: 31–32	138	2:6–7	151
30:19	16	4:1–2	240
31:7–12	195	4:1–3	105
31:9	229, 257	5:21–22	105
31:15	121	5:21–24	154
31:22	291	6:4	218
33:26	233		
45:9	175	<i>Micah</i>	
51:20	175	4:1–4	195
		4:2	242
<i>Lamentations</i>		4:3	175
1:1–2	191	6:6	104
4:4–9	205		
5:16	104	<i>Zephaniah</i>	
		3:12	191
<i>Ezekiel</i>			
7:19	218	<i>Zechariah</i>	
13:10	138	7:10	231
18:7	204	13:7	205
20:20	158		
29:3	240	<i>Malachi</i>	
		2:10	231
<i>Daniel</i>			
6:5	160	NEW TESTAMENT	
8:25	175		
12:2	198	<i>Matthew</i>	
		1:1	230, 235
<i>Hosea</i>		1:1–4	70
4:14	291	1:1–17	227
6:3–6	157	1:2–11	231
8:1	242	1:3	234
8:2–3	157	1:5	234
8:14	218	1:6	234
11:1	229, 257	1:16	70, 228
		1:17	228
<i>Joel</i>		1:18	76, 229, 234
2:28–29	291	1:18–25	121
3:4	272	1:19	120, 268, 269

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>			
1:20	230	3:9	228, 238, 239
1:21	235	3:13	71
1:21–25	230	3:13–17	237
1:22	80, 146	3:15	80, 150, 238
1:23	79, 80, 235,	3:17	230, 239
	302	3:33	237
1:33–45	187	4:1–11	129
2:1	71, 76, 123	4:3–6	230
2:1–3	71	4:4–5	71
2:1–16	71	4:5	187
2:1–23	119	4:8	71
2:2	76	4:10	120
2:11, 28	120	4:12–25	71
2:3	118, 119	4:13	71
2:3, 17	121	4:14	80
2:4	76	4:15	146, 239
2:5	66	4:15–16	79
2:6	118	4:17	80, 118
2:6–23	79	4:18	76
2:8	120	4:18–21	239, 240
2:8–21	231	4:18–22	227
2:8–13	121, 122	4:19	239, 240
2:11	71, 188	4:20	279
2:11–20	229	4:21–22	71
2:13	160	4:22	228, 240
2:13–21	269	4:23	62, 71, 80
2:15	230	4:23–24	77
2:15–23	80, 146	4:24	77, 123, 263
2:16	121	4:25	71
2:22	71, 76, 228	5:1	71, 76
2:22–23	121	5:1–12	188
2:23	71, 187	5:3	77, 190
2:44	237	5:3–6	189
3:1	71	5:3–10	71
3:1–11	238	5:5	204
3:1–12	237	5:6	191, 205
3:1–17	227	5:6, 10–20	150
3:2	80, 118, 237	5:7	157
3:5–13	71	5:8	118
3:7	76, 229, 238	5:8–28	118
3:7–10	238	5:9	230
		5:9–13	147

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>			
5:10–11	192	6:1–33	150
5:11–12	189	6:2	152
5:12	153, 192, 245	6:2–5	71, 80
5:12–20	146	6:2–16	146, 153
5:12–46	82	6:2–6	180
5:14	87	6:2–16	154
5:14–35	71, 187	6:4–18	82, 118, 228, 229
5:17	147, 80	6:9	229
5:17–18	79	6:10	113
5:17–48	146	6:11	194
5:19	265	6:12–15	197
5:20	71, 76, 151	9:19–21	152
5:21a–22	149	6:21	118
5:22–24	231	6:22	165
5:22–26	163	6:22–23	118
5:22–30	82	6:25–33	193
5:24	231	6:28	216
5:25	76	6:28–30	71
5:25–26	147	6:33	241
5:26–33	82	6:33–56	187
5:29	81, 245	7:1–5	163
5:29–30	118, 164, 247	7:3	231
5:31–37	124	7:3–5	231
5:32	147	7:5	153
5:33–34	87	7:7–12	193
5:34–37	125	7:9	230
5:35	71	7:9–10	194
5:42	193, 220	7:15	118, 152, 203
5:43	248	7:16–20	193
5:43–45	192	7:18, 27	237
5:43–48	147	7:21	71, 228, 241
5:44	229	7:22	117
5:45	228, 265	7:24	265
5:46	76, 263	7:28	69
5:47	231	7:28–29	76
5:48	229	7:29	76, 117
6:1	151	8:1–13	194
6:1–4	87	8:1–18	76
6:1–16	82	8:2	76, 120, 263
6:1–18	228, 302	8:3–15	243
6:1–21	146	8:4	129, 247

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>			
8:5–13	272	9:15	230
8:6	76, 77, 263	9:18	76, 120, 230, 270, 271
8:9	76	9:18–25	243
8:12	230	9:20	268, 271
8:14	76, 240	9:20–22	76, 263, 272
8:16	77, 194	9:21	271
8:16–34	77	9:22	230
8:17	79, 80, 146	9:23	271, 279
8:19	76	9:24–25	124
8:20	230, 246	9:27	236
8:21	76, 241, 259	9:27–28	77, 263
8:21–22	227	9:30	247
8:22	226, 241	9:32	77, 263
8:33–34	71, 187	9:34	118, 269
8:34	76	9:35	62, 71, 80, 244
9:1	63, 71, 268	9:35–36	194, 196
9:1–13	145	9:36	196
9:1–34	194	9:37	76
9:1–35	187	9:37–38	76
9:2	77	9:42	205
9:2–6	263	10:1	76
9:3	76	10:1–4	241
9:4	118	10:2–21	231
9:4–10	156	10:2–35	245
9:5–8	129	10:3	76, 263
9:6	230, 246	10:5–23	63, 71, 187
9:6–7	228	10:8	76, 77, 263
9:6–8	117	10:9	188
9:8–36	76, 124	10:10	76
9:9	236, 269, 271	10:16	203
9:9–13	147	10:17	62, 71, 80, 152, 244
9:10	271		
9:10–11	76, 77	10:18	76, 118
9:11	67, 158	10:18–39	192
9:11, 13	157	10:20–29	228–229
9:11–34	76	10:23	230, 246
9:12–35	77	10:24	76
9:13	157, 192	10:25	76
9:13–27	272	10:28	82
9:14	76	10:32	228
9:14–17	145, 243	10:35–37	229, 230, 265

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>			
10:37–38	14	12:9–25	161
10:41–42	82, 153	12:10	77, 160, 263
11:1	63, 69	12:11–12	203
11:1–20	187	12:14	167
11:2	243	12:15	129, 243, 278
11:4–5	194	12:15–36	163
11:5	76, 77, 190, 263	12:17	80, 157
11:6	164, 189	12:18	76, 144, 239, 278
11:8	76	12:18–21	79
11:8–18	228	12:19	71
11:11	267	12:20	166
11:11–14	245	12:22	77, 263
11:16	71, 228, 231	12:23	230, 236
11:19	76, 187, 230, 246	12:24	118, 269
11:20	76	12:25	71, 187
11:20–21	118	12:27	230
11:20–23	117	12:32	71
11:20–29	192	12:33–37	118
11:21–22	71, 272	12:33–38	238
11:23	82, 264	12:34	118, 238, 265
11:25	119, 229, 265	12:36	82
11:26	245	12:37	162
11:27	76, 228, 230	12:38	76, 146, 198
11:29	118, 191, 264	12:39	265
12:1	158	12:39–45	228
12:1–14	145	12:41	118
12:1–37	147	12:44	228
12:1–49	76	12:46	76, 243, 246
12:2	67, 163	12:46–50	245, 229, 231
12:2–38	76	12:47	259
12:3	66	12:49	229
12:5	158	12:50	166, 228, 231
12:5–10	159		232, 243
12:6	66	13:2	71
12:7	192	12:1–52	245
12:8	228	13:2–36	76
12:8–40	230, 246	13:5–58	227
12:9	67, 244	13:10–36	76
12:9–14	160, 165	113:15	118, 192
		13:15–19	118
		13:17	189

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>				
13:21	247	14:13–32	71	
13:21–57	164	14:14	196	
13:24–44	71	14:14–35	77	
13:27	76	14:15	71, 75	
13:32	65	14:15–25	71	
13:33	267	14:16	187	
13:34	67	14:18–21	213	
13:35	79, 146	14:20	191	
13:33–48	80	14:21	231	
13:36–43	71	14:21	267	
13:37	76	14:23	71, 268	
13:37–41	230, 246	14:26	118	
13:38	71, 230	14:28–29	76	
13:39–49	71	14:33	120, 230, 246	
13:43	229, 265	14:34	71	
13:52	76, 265, 79, 200, 244	15:1	71, 76, 146	
13:53	69	15:1–2	145	
13:53–58	245, 271	15:1–12	76	
13:54–58	117, 244, 246	15:1–20	147, 163	
13:55	76, 229, 230, 244	15:2	76	
13:55–56	231	15:2–37	76, 164	
13:56	231	15:4	229	
13:57	164, 245	15:4–8	229	
13:58	246	15:5–11	164	
14:1	71, 76	15:7	146, 153	
14:1–2	194	15:8–19	118	
14:2	76, 117, 123	15:9–20	164	
14:2–5	123	15:10–20	271	
14:3	76, 125, 231,	15:10–30	76	
14:4–5	124	15:12	164, 245	
14:5	188	15:12–18	271	
14:6	230	15:14–31	77, 263	
14:6–12	124	15:15	76	
14:8–11	76, 229	15:17	118	
14:9	125, 156	15:19	118	
14:11	76	15:19	266	
14:13	129, 187, 268	15:21	71	
14:13–19	76	15:21–28	271	
14:13–21	194	15:22	77, 230, 268	
		15:24	120, 273	
		15:25	120, 273	

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>				
15:25–39	71, 194	17:17	228	
15:30–31	77, 263	17:19	268	
15:32	129, 196	17:22	71	
15:33–37	191	17:24	188	
15:38	150, 231	17:24–27	62, 76, 145	
15:39	71	17:26	230	
16:1–12	76	17:27	164, 271	
16:3	146	18:1	76	
16:4	228, 265	18:1–16	205	
16:5–24	76	18:2	231	
16:6–12	152	18:2–34	82	
16:7–8	118	18:3	71, 121	
16:8	161, 278	18:3–5	231	
16:9–11	118	18:4	264, 265	
16:13	246	18:4–35	229	
16:13–26	227, 246	18:6	245, 265	
16:13–28	230	18:6–9	164	
16:14	246	18:8	77, 263	
16:16	230	18:10	205, 265	
16:16–23	76	18:10–19	228	
16:17	189	18:14	229	
16:18	247	18:14–35	196	
16:19	113	18:15–35	231	
16:20	129, 247	18:17	76, 263	
16:21	71, 76, 80, 119,	18:18	113	
	246.	18:20	235, 270	
16:21–23	259	18:21	76, 270	
16:23	164, 247	18:21–35	195	
16:24–26	202	18:22	270	
16:24–27	14	18:23	76, 195, 270	
16:25–27	192, 82, 228	18:23–25	188, 211	
17:1	76, 231, 268	18:24	188, 267	
17:1–20	71	18:25	188, 270	
17:5	230, 239	18:26	120	
17:6–19	76	18:31–33	197	
17:9–22	230	18:32	266	
17:10	76	18:33–35	157	
17:12	80	18:35	118	
17:14	76	19:1	69, 71	
17:15	76, 77, 230,	19:2	76	
	263	19:3	76, 267, 274	
		19:3–9	145	

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>			
19:3–30	198	20:22	277
19:4	66	20:23	228
19:8	49	20:24	231
19:9	274	20:25	76, 118, 269
19:10	274	20:25–26	118
19:10–25	76	20:27	76
19:13–15	199, 231	20:28	277
19:14	71	20:29–31	76
19:16–26	198	20:30	77, 192, 263
19:16–26	188	20:30–31	230
19:16–30	202	20:34	196
19:17–25	198	21:1–20	76
19:19	226, 229	21:1–10	71
19:21	77, 190	21:4	82
19:21–25	199	21:5	79, 146, 191,
19:23	71	230	
19:23–24	76	21:8–46	76
19:27	76	21:9	236
19:27	200	21:10–18	71, 187
19:27–30	200	21:11	71
19:27	272	21:13	77, 228
19:28	228, 230	21:14	77, 263
19:29	71, 191, 192, 198, 204, 226, 229, 231.	21:15	76, 231
20:1–16	200	21:15–45	76
20:1–8	153	21:21	71
20:1–9	76	21:23	76
20:1–16	188	21:24	117
20:1–26	211	21:25	118
20:1–16	188	21:31	228
20:1–26	211	21:31–43	76, 77, 263
20:7–14	201	21:32	150
20:8	76, 82	21:33	76
20:11	76	21:35	76
20:15	265	21:37–38	230
20:17	76, 268	21:38	204
20:17–18	71	21:43	67
20:17–19	276	21:45	76
20:18	76	22:2	76, 195
20:18–28	230	22:3	76
20:20	76, 120, 229	22:7	71, 187
20:20–23	259, 277	22:10	265
20:21	71, 230	22:12	201

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>			
22:15–33	145	23:35	230
22:15–41	76	23:36	228
22:16	76, 178, 180	23:37	71, 229
22:16–36	198	23:37–39	119
22:17	76	23:38	228
22:18	53, 146, 161	24:1–3	76
22:21	82	24:3	268
22:23	66	24:10	164, 245
22:23–34	76	24:18	71
22:24	267	24:29	117
22:25	231	24:30	117, 228
22:29	117	24:30–39	230
22:33	76	24:34	228
22:34–40	145	24:36	230
22:37	118	24:40	71
22:41	236	24:44	230
22:42–45	230	24:45	76, 265
23:1	76	24:48	118
23:2–3	62	24:51	146
23:2–29	57, 146	25:9–27	188
23:6–34	71	25:14	76
23:8	231	25:14–30	188
23:9	229, 238	25:26	266
23:11	71, 265	25:31	230
23:11–12	14	25:31–33	230
23:12	264	25:31–46	71, 188, 191,
23:13–33	82		203
23:13–29	146	25:34	71, 76, 191,
23:13–51	153		204, 228, 229
23:15	230	25:34–40	259
23:16–17	188	25:35	220
23:16–24	80	25:37	265
23:23	157, 238	25:37–39	204
23:25–28	118	25:40	205, 231
23:28	228	25:40–45	265
23:29–36	245	25:45	204
23:30–32	228	25:46	71, 198, 265
23:31	230	26:1	70
23:32–56	80	26:1–2	277
23:33	229, 238	26:3–5	277
23:34	71, 187, 244	26:3–44	76

<i>Matthew (continued)</i>				
26:3–57	76	27:15–19	126	
26:6	76, 263	27:15–23	126	
26:6–8	277	27:16–18	186	
26:6–13	272	27:16–21	77	
26:7	268	27:18–20	167	
26:8–56	76	27:19	76, 268	
26:9	190, 229	27:24	127	
26:9–11	77	27:25	119, 126	
26:10	278	27:27	76	
26:11	218	27:29–31	121	
26:12	278	27:32	76	
26:15	188	27:38–44	77	
26:18	71, 187	27:40–54	230	
26:24–64	230	27:41–53	71, 76, 187	
26:29	228	27:55	71	
26:31–33	164	27:55–56	272	
26:32	71	27:56	76, 229	
26:37	230	27:57	76, 187	
26:39, 42	229	27:58	82	
26:45	77, 157	27:64	76	
26:50	201	28:1	76	
26:51	76	28:4–11	76	
26:52–68	192	28:5–7	80	
26:56	79, 279	28:7	71	
26:57	71, 76	28:7–16	76	
26:58	76	28:9	120	
26:64	117, 230	28:10	231	
27:1–2	126	28:11	71, 76, 187	
27:1–62	76	28:12	76, 188	
27:1–41	76	28:12–15	188	
27:2	71, 76, 126	28:14	128	
27:2–27	118	28:15	62	
27:3–9	188	28:16	71, 235	
27:5	76	28:17	120	
27:7	71	28:18	117	
27:9–10	79, 80, 146, 229	28:19	230, 234	
27:11–14	126	28:20	71	
27:11–26	126	<i>Mark</i>		
27:12	160	2:24	158	
27:14	129	6:14–15	123	
		6:14–29	123	

<i>Mark (continued)</i>				
9:41	82		2:1–10	18
10:11–12	147		2:11–25	18
12:17	82		3:1–12	18
12:28–34	145		3:13–22	18
14:5	278		4:1–11	18
			4:12–19	18
			5:1–14	18
<i>Luke</i>				
2:15–20	119		APOCRYPHA	
4:20	82			
6:22	62		<i>2 Esdras</i>	
6:23–25	82		7:23–37	99
6:27–36	147			
6:29–30	147		<i>1 Maccabees</i>	
7:42	82		2:1–5	232
9:42	82			
10:7	82		<i>2 Maccabees</i>	
10:35	82		2:21	33
12:33–34	152		2:48	156
12:57–59	147		4:15	106
12:59	82		7:9	198
16:2	82			
16:18	147		<i>Sirach</i>	
19:8	82		1:11–14	106
20:5	82		3:17–24	106
			3:30	107
<i>John</i>			4:1–5	218
9:22	62		4:10	107
			4:29	163
<i>Acts of the Apostles</i>			5:13	106
1:19–26	63		6:1	106
			7:10	107
<i>2 Corinthians</i>			7:16–17	106
8:9	215		7:35	204
			9:16	106
<i>Philippians</i>			10:6–18	107
2:5–11	215		10:19	107
			10:19–24	106
<i>1 Peter</i>			10:22	107
1:3–12	18		10:23	103
1:13–25	18		11:1–6	106
1:24–25	18		11:6	107

<i>Sirach (continued)</i>		<i>4 Maccabees</i>	
13:4	218	15:3	198
18:30	107	17:15	176
19:3	107		
20:18	163	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	
27:22	107	4:6–20	154
28:26	107	5:16–17	218
30:20	275		
40:26–27	107	<i>Testament of Job</i>	
44:19	107	4:6	176
<i>Tobit</i>		<i>Testament of Judah</i>	
4:3	242	13:2	175
4:14–20	154		
4:16	204	DEAD SEA SCROLLS	
5:7–8	218		
6:14	242	<i>IQM</i>	
13:6	156	XIV:7	190
13:14–16	189	<i>IQS</i>	
		I:1–15	101
<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>		II:24–25	101
2:24	219	IV:6–8	102
4:1–2	176	X:17–18	102
4:2	176		
5:15	198	ANCIENT AUTHORS	
6:23	219		
		Apuleius	
		<i>Met.</i>	
PSEUDEPIGRAPHA		9.12	75
<i>1 Enoch</i>		Aristotle	
104:6	218	<i>Eth. nic.</i>	
100:9	163	4.3	84
58:2	189	1.8.9	172
		1162a	290
		<i>Metaph.</i>	
<i>2 Enoch</i>		4.16	50
42:6–14	189	<i>Pol.</i>	
		1.3.1	214
<i>Jubilees</i>		1.3.3–29	215
2:16–18	158	<i>Rhet.</i>	
23:23–24	156	1378b23–25	174

Cato		3.14.4–6	87
<i>Agr.</i>		3.22.24–38	86
119	176	4.1.175	87
		4.1.55	90
Cicero			
<i>Ep. ad. Fam.</i>		Herodotus	
3.13.1	89	<i>Hist.</i>	
<i>Off.</i>		1.35	127
1.63	91		
1.64	91	Homer	
<i>Rosc. com.</i>		<i>Il.</i>	
75	214	6.266–288	127
		18.514–515	287
<i>Rep.</i>		<i>Od.</i>	
6.23	153	17:484–87	173
Dio Cassius		Horace	
<i>Hist.</i>		<i>Ep.</i>	
69.6.3	273	104.30	90
		<i>Sat.</i>	
Dio Chrysostom		1.4.105; 133	92
<i>Disc.</i>			
4.24	91	Isocrates	
4.29	91	<i>Antid.</i>	
4.83–84	90	3.17	290
4.133	91	<i>Demon.</i>	
		1	215
Diogenes Laertius			
<i>Diog. Laert.</i>		Josephus	
6.54	85	<i>Vita</i>	
6.22–3	86	4.11	97
6.70	172	11	275
7.87	86	18	257
10.11	88	352–356	98
10.131	88	<i>C. Ap.</i>	
		2.14–295	98
Epictetus		2.293–294	98
<i>Diat.</i>			
3.22.45–47	85	<i>A. J.</i>	
33.5	87	1.7.2	217
<i>Disc.</i>		1.11.3	177
3.16.16		1.13.1–4	216
		1.222–236	99

<i>Josephus A. J. (continued)</i>		<i>Philo</i>	
2.10.7	257	<i>Abr.</i>	
2.212	121	27	96
3.188	97	107–167	177
3.4.1	217	67	257
3.15	176	<i>Agr.</i>	
6.3.3	217	119	176
6.11.2	217	<i>Cher.</i>	
6.13.5	217	101–105	95
7.1.4	177, 217	<i>Contem.</i>	
12.11.8	97	10–11	95
12.4.3	177	<i>Deus.</i>	
18.13.6	122	155–161	95
18.1.2	98	<i>Decal.</i>	
18.21	275	164	96
19.23.9	278	<i>Hypoth.</i>	
		11.1	96
<i>B. J.</i>		11:14	275
2.8.2–13	98	<i>Leg. Alleg.</i>	
2.120	275	97–103	149
		3–48	176
<i>Lucian</i>		<i>Migr.</i>	
<i>Vit Auct.</i>		18.104	217
9	85		
		<i>Praem.</i>	
<i>Lysias</i>		28–30	149
<i>For the Soldier</i>		40–66	149
9.4–5	173	<i>Prob.</i>	
		12–75	96
<i>Marcus Aurelius</i>		<i>Spec.</i>	
<i>Meditations</i>		2.53	95
7.67	90	2.198	216
		169–175	288
<i>Ovid</i>		<i>Virt.</i>	
<i>Metam.</i>		51	96
8.611–724	173	80	96
		181–182	218
<i>Petronius</i>		<i>Vit Mos.</i>	
<i>Sat.</i>		1.149	96
48	90	2.207	95
1.4.105	92	2.9	96

Plato		Seneca the Elder	
<i>Gorg.</i>		<i>Controversiae</i>	
526D–527A	84	2.1.17	215
<i>Soph.</i>		<i>Tacitus</i>	
21	173	<i>Dial.</i>	
<i>Theat.</i>		28:4–5	289
161	139		
Pliny the Younger		Tertullian	
<i>E. P.</i>		<i>Apologeticum</i>	
2.6.2.4	215	21.24	127
Plutarch		Virgil	
<i>Tib Gracch.</i>		<i>Aen.</i>	
160	255	2.718–20	127
<i>Mor.</i>		Xenophon	
681	214	<i>Apol.</i>	
<i>Tranq. An.</i>		24	137
476–477	137	<i>Ages.</i>	
<i>Quaest. Conv.</i>		2.5–6	290
57	214	<i>Mem.</i>	
Seneca		3.4.12	290
<i>Ep.</i>			
104.30	90		
<i>Med.</i>			
7.67	90		

Index of Subjects

- Aggression 20, 145, 148, 150, 152, 157–158, 160, 167, 171–173, 176–177
- Agonism 160, 167, 170, 258
- Almsgiving 107, 152, 218, 278, 302
- Anachronism 8
- Ancestors 93, 107, 213, 224, 232–234, 253
- Androcentric 232, 287
- Anthropology
 - cross-cultural 2, 296
 - feminist 27
 - historical 49
 - linguistic 168–169
 - social 25
 - socio-cultural 25
- Antitheses 147–149
- Apocalyptic 71, 99
- Athens 39, 172, 287–288
- Authority 14, 16, 104, 113–118, 126–127, 129–130, 133, 141, 156, 161, 164, 180, 184, 233, 240, 242, 246–247, 262, 268, 276, 282
- Beatitudes 111, 189–195
- Benefaction 175, 184, 189, 206, 211, 213, 215, 220
- Biography 134, 232, 303
- Blessings 189, 192
- Boundaries 74, 143, 145, 157–158, 162, 166, 178, 212, 224, 234, 242, 243, 259, 260, 263, 270, 282, 291
- Carnival 55–56
- Centrifugal Forces 92, 114
- Centripetal Forces 114
- Challenge-Riposte 5, 10, 13, 18, 23, 142–145, 147, 149–150, 157–170, 175, 177, 179, 180, 185, 271, 273
- Chronotype 53
- City 63, 76, 86, 93, 119, 187, 214, 228, 253, 255, 287, 289
- Collectivism 116, 240, 244, 249–249, 254, 256–259
- Competition 67, 90, 94, 145, 152, 155, 163, 165, 171–176, 186, 214, 252, 259, 300
- Concealment 90, 120, 129, 134, 136, 139, 154, 207, 268, 271, 285
- Conflict
 - avoidance of 129
 - cosmic 70
 - earthly 66–67, 178
 - social 146, 151, 156–157, 160–161, 166, 299, 303
- Context Group 7
- Covenant 104, 143, 152, 175, 189, 191–192, 194, 217, 220, 229, 233, 242, 257, 272
- Cultural Script 13–15, 21, 25, 35, 57, 88, 107–108, 195, 206, 296, 301
- Culture
 - as text 45, 57
- Cynicism 84–85, 88

- Deception 130
- Deviance Labelling 162
- Dialogism 4–5, 53–55, 297
- Dyadic Personality 1, 5, 11, 222–223, 225–227, 232, 236–237, 247–249, 253, 255, 300
- Emic 21, 24
- Encomium 19–21, 34, 224
- Envy 111, 127–128, 175, 181, 185–187, 195, 202, 214, 219, 220
- Epicureanism 85, 88–89
- Essenes 96, 98–99, 101
- Ethnicity 65, 204, 223–225, 303
- Ethnocentrism 8, 12, 248
- Ethnography
 - autoethnography 48–49
 - literary 3, 36–38, 46, 50, 57–58, 60, 65, 67, 69, 70–72, 109
- Ethnomethodology 40
- Etic 21, 24, 44
- Eunuch 275
- Evil Eye 32, 185, 201, 206, 209, 219–220
- Exchange 4–5, 40, 43–44, 58, 69–70, 103, 144, 147, 152, 160–161, 181–182, 184, 186, 188–189, 193, 196–200, 204, 206, 211, 215, 220–221, 271, 299
- Familism 225–226, 234, 236–237, 241, 249–250, 252, 255–257, 259, 283, 300, 301
- Family
 - ties 86, 97, 227–229, 233, 243, 244–246, 249, 254, 255, 258, 264
- Fasting 152–154
- Female 11, 34, 39, 260–262, 267–272, 274–278, 280–281, 283–290, 292–294
- Friendship 87, 88, 171–173, 183–184, 209, 211, 216–217, 256, 291
- Genealogy 66, 97, 112, 227, 232–236, 239, 248, 251, 259 268–269
- Goods
 - intangible 181, 195, 197–198, 204–205, 209, 210, 213, 220–221, 299
 - tangible 182, 195, 198, 210, 213, 300
- Grace 95, 102, 151, 169, 189–196, 199–205, 210, 216, 219, 220–221, 278
- Healing 63, 156, 159–162, 194–196, 204, 208, 221, 270, 272–274, 287, 299, 303
- Heroes 57, 107, 171, 232, 253, 256, 258
- Heteroglossia 4, 79, 108, 112, 114, 296
- High Context Societies 2.
- Honour
 - acquired 5, 86, 88, 96, 103–104, 106, 108–109, 144–145, 146, 155, 165–166, 177, 180, 198–199, 224, 246, 276
 - ascribed 10–11, 15, 80, 83, 85–86, 88, 93, 96–97, 99, 104, 108–109, 207, 223–224, 230, 232–233, 235–236, 243, 259, 263
 - discourse 8, 14–15, 18, 28
 - precedence 30–31, 61, 84–85, 87–99, 100, 104–105, 107, 114, 117, 120, 122, 125–126, 128–129, 130, 137, 140, 142–143, 150, 152–155, 161–163, 165–166, 174–175, 177, 179–180, 186–187, 190, 199, 205–208, 214–215, 219–220, 232–233, 236, 250–251, 258–259, 263, 294, 299, 300–301
 - virtue 30–31, 61, 84–85, 88, 90,

- 92–93, 98–99, 104, 107–108, 114, 128, 137, 140, 153–155, 161–163, 166, 179–180, 250, 258, 263, 294, 298–299, 300–301
- Hospitality 99, 171–172, 175–178, 204, 207, 209, 213, 220, 248, 252, 256, 258, 267, 278–279, 287, 290, 299, 302
- Household 45, 63, 75–76, 94, 187, 198, 202–203, 223, 227, 229, 242, 249, 254, 257, 262, 264, 267–268, 275, 280, 284–285, 287, 289
- Hybris 136, 174–176
- Hypocrites 143, 155, 264, 299
- Identity 11, 34, 66–67, 68, 80, 84, 86, 121, 143, 161, 182, 199, 224–226, 230, 232–239, 242–246, 249, 258–259, 263, 270, 273, 284, 300
- Indigenous
 - terms 28
 - writing 3, 21, 223
- Individualism 1, 131–132, 138, 185, 224–226, 251, 253, 255–256, 259
- Individualistic 86–88, 131, 199–200, 221, 236, 238, 241, 248, 250–252, 258–259, 300
- Inheritance 82, 191, 204–205, 230–233, 252
- Inscriptions 93, 102
- Intertextuality 55–56, 80, 158, 273.
- Introspection 92, 114, 117–118, 122, 126, 129, 131, 133, 136–141, 142, 166, 221, 285, 298
- Israel 7, 32, 94, 105, 107, 139, 175–177, 192, 200, 204–205, 217, 218, 233–235, 242, 257, 273
- Justice 92, 98–99, 102, 105, 125, 127, 143, 149, 151–152, 157, 166, 172, 177–179, 191, 196, 202–203, 208, 214, 220, 218–219, 248, 250, 255, 272, 294
- Kingdom
 - general 71, 162, 165, 189–193, 195–196, 200–201, 205, 230–231, 237, 241–244, 246, 259, 263, 265–266, 275–276, 294
- Kinship 5, 40, 47, 70, 111–112, 116, 184, 210, 223–228, 231–233, 237, 242–244, 249, 257, 259, 284, 300
- Lies/Lying 135
- Literary Criticism 13, 37, 43, 115
- Mediterranean
 - atomism 252
 - cultural script 3, 7–8, 10, 12–13, 21, 25, 31, 33, 80, 87, 108, 151, 156, 161, 181, 195, 201, 205
 - ethnography 17, 171, 283, 286, 289, 298
 - fieldwork/ethnography 6, 94, 107, 135, 169
- Mercy 93, 105, 145, 149, 157, 177, 179, 192, 197–198, 200, 202, 204–205, 266, 272–273, 294
- Miracles 79, 111, 146, 188, 194–195, 206, 208
- Models
 - cross-cultural 7, 16, 18–19, 38, 69
 - social-scientific 21–22, 42
- Oath 124–126
- Patriarchy 285
- Patronage 13, 15, 93, 76, 134, 184, 196–197, 211–213, 215, 221
- Peasant
 - mentality 185, 205–208, 220

- society 182–183, 185, 187, 207
- Piety 96, 98–99, 103, 105, 123, 143, 152, 158, 217–218, 291
- Pompeii 214, 286, 289
- Prayer 152–154, 229, 238, 302
- Qumran 32, 101–102, 190, 218
- Reciprocity 162, 183–184, 193, 196, 202, 208, 210, 215, 220
- Research
 - interpretative 24, 38–39, 42, 52, 112
 - scientific 24, 37
- Rhetoric 13, 16, 17–19, 25, 33, 84, 90, 136, 174–175, 192
- Righteousness 14, 95–99, 101, 104, 113, 143, 150–151, 154, 164, 189, 191–192, 204, 217, 218, 237–238, 265, 269, 278, 302
- Ritual 128–129, 143, 146, 151, 154–155, 157, 164, 166, 178
- Rural 33, 63, 70, 187, 205, 214, 281, 301–302.
- Sarakatsani 168–169, 252
- Satire 54, 92, 214, 264
- Sermon on the Mount 62, 145–147, 189, 192–193
- Social Memory 50
- Sociology of Knowledge 27, 67
- Speech
 - direct 77–78, 119, 124, 128, 160, 161.
 - reported 72, 77–78, 147
- Stereotype 11, 273, 283, 291
- Stoicism 84, 86–88
- Theocracy 264
- Therapeutae 95, 257
- Torah 14, 70, 100, 83, 145–146, 148, 151, 192, 198.
- Violence 31, 88, 149, 151, 167, 170, 173–174, 259
- Warriors 253, 291.
- Witchcraft Labelling 161–162.
- Women
 - Graeco-Roman 286–291.
 - Jewish 103, 291–293.
 - Mediterranean 47–48, 282–283.
- Zero-Sum Game 183, 193, 195, 197, 204, 206, 208, 214–215, 219–220

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

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