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The Epistle to the Hebrews in Recent Research: Studies on the Author's Identity, his Use of the Old Testament, and Theology

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Introduction

Hebrews scholarship has gone through something of a resurgence in the last two decades. Multiple factors may have contributed to this renewed interest in the epistle—including Harold Attridge's highly influential commentary[1] and the 2006 conference on Hebrews and theology at St Andrews—but it no longer seems appropriate to consider Hebrews as among the neglected in the New Testament canon. Since 2007 there have been no fewer than six significant commentaries on Hebrews—including entries in the Pillar, Sacra Pagina and NICNT series.[2] Alongside these commentaries are countless articles, essays and monographs that have given the book of Hebrews attention it has not seen in recent memory.[3]

1. Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989).

2. Alan C. Mitchell, *Hebrews* (Sacra Pagina, 13; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007); Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007); James W. Thompson, *Hebrews* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); David L. Allen, *Hebrews* (NAC; Nashville: B&H, 2010); Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

3. I have reviewed two such monographs: Bryan R. Dyer, review of *Enabling Fidelity to God: Perseverance in Hebrews in Light of the Reciprocity Systems of the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2008), by Jason A. Whitlark, in *JGRChJ* 7 (2010), pp. R49-R52; and Dyer, review of *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1–10:18* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2008), by Barry C. Joslin, in *JGRChJ* 6 (2009), pp. R57-R60. Both can be read at http://www.jgrchj.net/reviews.

With all of the recent scholarly attention given to Hebrews it is easy to get lost in the variety of studies on the epistle. It is beyond the scope of this article to survey the history of research leading up to the present time.[4] Rather, this article's intent is to offer a snapshot of Hebrews scholarship over the past four years (2009–12).[5] I have chosen to focus exclusively on scholarly monographs (including volumes of collected essays) published since 2009 that engage with Hebrews directly. Nine monographs will be examined—surveying the major arguments and engaging critically with the ideas presented—in three categories: Authorship, Use of the Old Testament and Theology.

The Authorship of Hebrews

The question of who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews has persisted from very early in its reception history to the present day. This is a question that continues to interest not only academic readers but also the layperson. It is a question that any scholar specializing in the epistle is often asked. Despite a long history involving various proposals for Hebrews' authorship, this is still a difficult question today.[6] It has led to two monographs released within the past four years—both attempts to make sense of who wrote Hebrews. David L. Allen's monograph *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*[7] sets out to make the most thorough presentation to date of Luke as the sole author. Clare K. Rothschild's *Hebrews as*

4. For such a history, see George H. Guthrie, 'Hebrews in its First-Century Contexts: Recent Research', in S. McKnight and G.R. Osborne (eds.), *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), pp. 414-45.

5. The final draft of this article was completed in July 2012, so monographs published in the second half of 2012 are not included.

6. While most commentators will present the various candidates proposed through history, few develop a case for any one particular person as the author of Hebrews. For a recent defense of Apollos, see Luke T. Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), p. 43. Cf. also Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, pp. 22-24. Ruth Happin has argued for Priscilla as the author ('The Epistle to the Hebrews is Priscilla's Letter', in A. Levine [ed.], *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews* [London: T. & T. Clark, 2004], pp. 147-70).

7. David L. Allen, *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews* (NACSBT, 8; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010).

Pseudepigraphon[8] does not argue for any particular author but makes the case that the unknown author deliberately claimed Pauline authorship and intended to add the epistle to an existing Pauline corpus. To do this, Rothschild argues especially from the Postscript (13.20-25), but also throughout the epistle, that the author intended to pass off the epistle as one of Paul's prison letters.

After a short introduction, Allen uses his first chapter for a survey of the question of the authorship of Hebrews and then looks more closely at three common proposals (Barnabas, Apollos and Paul) in Chapter 2. The opening chapter not only serves as a very insightful historical survey, but also clearly shows how Luke has persistently been connected to this authorship question—whether as a translator of Paul's work (so Clement of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas) or as the sole author (hinted at by Calvin, later argued by Franz Delitzsch and others). The second chapter is likewise a helpful presentation of the arguments for and against Barnabas, Apollos or Paul as the author of Hebrews. However, this leads to the first major issue in Allen's work. He acknowledges that a comparative study of texts (Hebrews and, in this case, Luke–Acts) is essential for his argument. Yet, in doing so, Allen limits possible candidates for authorship to those for whom we have access to samples of their writings.[9] By doing this, Allen narrows the candidate pool down to a small number and then can really only say that Luke is the best candidate from that pool. The possibility of someone other than those who have left a written footprint being the author is a strong challenge to Allen's methodology.

Allen's linguistic evidence in Chapter 3 takes up the bulk of his argument—nearly a third of his book. The first section notes the lexical similarities between Luke–Acts and Hebrews, which essentially becomes a list of how the two texts overlap in terminology, share rare words, mutually omit other common words, etc. As Allen presents the material in succession, his evidence builds into an impressive case. The second

8. Clare K. Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon* (WUNT, 2.235; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

9. Allen, *Lukan Authorship*, p. 2, seems to identify this shortcoming: 'the most fruitful approach is to consider theories that provide other textual data with which to compare Hebrews in terms of lexical choice, style, and conceptual framework. This is an argument against considering either Barnabas or Apollos as the author, in that as far as we know, there are no extant texts written by these men to compare with Hebrews. Of course this does not mean it could not have been written by one of them. (Matthew, Mark, James, and Jude each authored only one book in the New Testament.) It merely means there is no way of making any comparative study.'

section compares the two works on aspects of style—a much more difficult thing to define than simple lexical use. Not all of his evidence in this section is convincing. For example, Allen emphasizes how each text introduces Old Testament quotations[10] by showing that Paul commonly used the introductory formula γέγραπται, Luke moved from γέγραπται in his Gospel to some form of λέγει in Acts, and Hebrews never uses γέγραπται but often uses λέγει. This, along with similar examples, leads Allen to conclude, 'Hebrews, while not identical to either Luke or Paul in choice of quotation formulae, is much more akin to Luke–Acts than to the Pauline corpus'.[11] Can this be understood as helpful evidence? While Hebrews' lack of γέγραπται is a strong argument against Pauline authorship, it does not necessarily point one toward Luke. Why not James who never uses γέγραπται but does use λέγει (Jas 4.5)? Unfortunately, Allen's case only weakens as he engages in textlinguistic considerations. While he identifies what he is doing as 'textlinguistics' or 'discourse analysis', it does not seem to be informed by the established disciplines of those terms. This is surprising since at least two major monographs have applied these disciplines to Hebrews.[12] Instead, this section consists of a comparison between pericopes from each text (the prologues, then Acts 7 with Hebrews 11) and of the micro- and macro-structures within Hebrews and Luke–Acts.

The next two chapters compare Luke–Acts and Hebrews in terms of their purpose (Chapter 4) and theology (Chapter 5). In the first of these chapters, Allen attempts to identify a strong connection between the Lukan prologues and the prologue and hortatory sections in Hebrews. However, the presence of key words and similar thematic parallels hardly leads one to conclude that a common author wrote the texts. This criticism extends into the chapter on the theology shared by these two works as well. Allen's attempt to connect Luke–Acts and Hebrews by way of theological similarities may be helpful in developing a New Testament theology, but runs short of connecting the two bodies of work to one theologian. In particular, his attempt to show how the concept of Jesus as high priest—such an explicit and significant issue in Hebrews—is also

10. Allen, *Lukan Authorship*, pp. 128-35.

11. Allen, *Lukan Authorship*, p. 134.

12. George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (repr., Biblical Studies Library; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) and Cynthia Long Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship between Form and Meaning* (LNTS, 297; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005).

found in Luke–Acts reveals (at best) that in Luke's work it is a minor and indirect thought.

Allen's last two chapters do not seem to be entirely necessary but do help support his thesis. Chapter 6 responds to what Allen considers the 'greatest objection to the Lukan authorship of Hebrews':[13] that Luke was a Gentile and the author of Hebrews was presumably Jewish. In this chapter Allen identifies all of the ways that Luke–Acts reveals distinct Jewish qualities and concerns. Some points here are stronger than others. It also seems that as Allen argues against the notion of Luke as a 'Gentile writing to a Gentile audience'[14] and for the view that Luke was a 'Jew and wrote primarily for a Jewish audience',[15] the idea gets lost that a great deal of nuance can remain between these two extremes. That may explain some of the Jewish (and Greek) features in Luke–Acts and Hebrews, but it is not clear that these texts are to be understood as purely Greco-Roman or purely Jewish documents. Chapter 7 attempts a historical reconstruction around Allen's thesis of Lukan authorship. Like any reconstruction of Hebrews' composition, Allen's runs into several issues that are hotly contested in Hebrews scholarship (a pre-70 date, Roman provenance, etc).

Allen has surely succeeded in presenting the most thorough articulation of the theory that Luke wrote Hebrews. However, in light of the criticisms presented above, Allen's thesis remains unconvincing. Certainly the biggest issue is that Allen limits his candidates for authorship to those for whom we have material to compare with Hebrews. The strong possibility that Hebrews was written by someone who left no other writing looms too heavily over Allen's thesis. Further, at times Allen's comparisons between Luke–Acts and Hebrews—in terms of words, style, theology, etc.—do not point directly toward a common author and often suggest 'parallelomania'. Further, this comparison analysis leads one to think that Luke–Acts and Hebrews do little other than agree with each other. What is lacking is any sense of the disagreements between these two works. So, for example, Allen goes to great length to establish Luke's Jewishness by emphasizing his references to the Jerusalem Temple in Luke–Acts. Yet, the author of Hebrews never mentions the Temple, only the tabernacle (which is only mentioned once by Luke; Acts 7.44). When evidence like this—and I imagine there are many other such examples—is

13. Allen, *Lukan Authorship*, p. 261.
14. Allen, *Lukan Authorship*, p. 318; also p. 320.
15. Allen, *Lukan Authorship*, p. 278.

incorporated, Allen's thesis becomes less secure.

Unlike Allen, Rothschild does not argue for any specific figure as the author of Hebrews in her monograph. Rather, she attempts to show that whoever wrote the epistle ('an otherwise unknown early Christian author')[16] attempted to pass it off as a Pauline prison letter.[17] The postscript (Heb. 13.20-25) in particular, according to Rothschild, is a deliberate forgery—claiming Pauline authorship and authority. This argument takes into strong consideration the epistle's thematic and lexical connections with Paul's writing throughout its thirteen chapters as well as the close association of Hebrews with Paul from very early in its history.

After an introductory first chapter, Rothschild presents in Chapter 2 an overview of Hebrews' early reception history. Arguing against much contemporary scholarship, she makes the case that Hebrews—despite the occasional questioning of Pauline authorship—was generally accepted by both the Eastern and Western churches from the second century on. The third chapter looks at recent studies of Pauline authorship of Hebrews with special attention to the role the postscript often plays in these discussions.

In Chapter 4, Rothschild arrives at the heart of her discussion. In this chapter, she presents the case for the intentional relationship between Heb. 13.20-25 and other Pauline postscripts. To show this, Rothschild offers a close examination of the postscript—revealing a density of Pauline phrases and vocabulary (many found nowhere else in Hebrews). Of particular significance is the reference to Timothy in 13.23. The second part of this chapter articulates an argument for Hebrews as an imitation of Paul's letters beyond the scope of the postscript. Rothschild argues this in three movements. First, she shows how Heb. 13.1-19 also reveals significant reliance upon the undisputed letters of Paul. Secondly, Rothschild looks at the use of Scripture in Hebrews to show that both the passages cited and their particular use often correspond to Paul's writing. Thirdly, she moves through each chapter of Hebrews—pointing out places of connection and possible imitation of the Pauline corpus.

Chapter 5 looks closely at the concept of pseudonymity—challenging

16. Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, p. 4.

17. Here Rothschild is picking up an argument made famous by William Wrede (*Die literarische Rätsel des Hebräerbriefs* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906]). However, she moves beyond Wrede in arguing that the author's imitation of Paul was intended from its very inception and the epistle was meant to be an addition to the Pauline corpus (Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, p. 4).

modern criteria for determining pseudepigrapha and exploring ancient thinking on pseudonymous works. A particularly interesting element of this chapter is Rothschild's development of how Hebrews might have been intended to fit into the early Pauline corpus. While admittedly venturing into more speculative waters, Rothschild develops the case that the author of Hebrews may have intended the epistle to fill a noticeable gap in Paul's writing. Noting that every addressee of the undisputed Pauline letters appears in Acts,[18] she draws attention to the evident lack of a speech to a Jewish audience in Acts 28.23-28. Filling in this gap, Rothschild argues, may have been the intention of the author of Hebrews.

Chapters 6 and 7 build upon the argument of the monograph—but only slightly. The first draws attention to the orality of the discourse—making the case that the author writes as a prophet (and the text is itself prophecy). Connecting this to the issue of authorship, Rothschild utilizes the work of David Aune[19] to show that prophetic literature was often attributed to a specific author while remaining anonymous. In the seventh chapter, Rothschild attempts to show how—using the rhetorical technique *reductio ad absurdum*—Hebrews builds upon, and even corrects, several Pauline doctrines.

There is much to be admired in Rothschild's monograph and her close analysis of the text often produces enlightening results. Even if one does not accept her thesis, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon* contains a well-articulated argument that anticipates and addresses its potential objections. That said, how she responds to such objections is not always satisfactory.[20] The most glaring weakness in her thesis is that the unknown author does not use the name of Paul in the intentional forgery. Since Paul's name is always—even emphatically—attached to his letters, it is curious that someone attempting to pass off an epistle as being from Paul would leave it out. Rothschild's response—particularly her argument that Christian prophetic literature was often anonymous while being clearly linked to an author—simply cannot resolve this issue in any satisfactory

18. Rome (Acts 23.14), Corinth (Acts 18.1), Galatia (Acts 16.6; 18.23), Philippi (Acts 16.12; 20.6), and Thessalonica (Acts 17.1). Noted in Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, p. 156.

19. David Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

20. See Bryan R. Dyer, 'The Epistolary Closing of Hebrews and Pauline Imitation: Disputing Charges of Pseudepigraphy', in S.E. Porter and G. P. Fewster (eds.), *Paul and Pseudepigraphy* (PAST, 8; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

way.

The strongest element for Rothschild's thesis is the remarkable similarity of Hebrews' postscript with the Pauline letter closings. A potential ally for Rothschild, though never mentioned, is Jeffrey Weima in his study of the Pauline letter closings.[21] Weima's in-depth look at the postscripts from the Pauline corpus places Hebrews' closing comfortably within the unique and characteristic conventions used by Paul. There are some differences, however—the lack of an autograph or a 'holy kiss' greeting, and variation in the grace benediction.[22]

Even with this notable connection between the postscripts found in Paul's letters and Hebrews, it is not clear that the author of Hebrews deliberately attempted to pass the epistle off as Pauline. This could simply be evidence for some type of Pauline authorship.[23] More probable is that it demonstrates Pauline influence upon the author of Hebrews and possibly on the early church that became familiar with his writing. Rothschild's thesis lends strong support to some type of Pauline connection with Hebrews, but understanding the epistle as a pseudepigraphon is but one option among several as an explanation for this relationship.[24]

With two major monographs on the issue of the authorship of Hebrews, we must ask whether continued investigations into the topic are worth pursuing. Should we simply agree with Origen that only God knows who wrote the epistle? This, out of necessity, is the approach of most commentators on Hebrews. Harold Attridge, for example, writes, 'The beginning of sober exegesis is a recognition of the limits of historical knowledge and those limits preclude positive identification

21. Jeffrey Weima, *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings* (JSNTSup, 101; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994).

22. In every undisputed Pauline grace benediction there are three basic elements: the wish, a divine source and the recipient. The divine source is missing in the Hebrews version. This places Hebrews alongside the disputed Pauline letters, which all lack a divine source in the grace benediction (see Weima, *Neglected Endings*, pp. 78-83).

23. Rothschild seems to assume that Hebrews was not written by Paul and does not provide any argument against Pauline authorship.

24. Rothschild might be content with such a conclusion. She writes: 'this monograph only attempts to argue that internal (textual/exegetical) *with* external evidence offers *one* reasonable explanation' (*Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, p. 14). Within this modest goal for her thesis, Rothschild can be understood to have successfully articulated a reasonable explanation—although in no way the final word on the subject.

of the author [of Hebrews]'.[25] At the same time, most biblical scholars agree that the historical context is extremely important for correctly understanding a work like Hebrews. Therefore, we should still pursue this issue. As Rothschild puts it, 'the authorship of Hebrews *is* important for an understanding of this writing'.[26] We can and do know much about the author from internal evidence in the text. Yet the quest to know more of the author's identity—and the impact that this knowledge brings to interpreting this text—should continue to drive us to investigations like those of Allen and Rothschild.

The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews

Hebrews' use of the Old Testament continues to be an important and profitable field of research for scholarship on the epistle. Nearly a decade ago, George Guthrie surveyed the expanding literature on this topic—noticing four trends in the research: (1) the text form used by the author, (2) his use of the Old Testament in aspects of structure, (3) his exegetical methods and (4) his hermeneutic.[27] Since the publication of Guthrie's article, numerous studies have emerged that continue to develop these trends.[28] Narrowing the field down to those published since 2009, four monographs have appeared that engage with each of the trends of research

25. Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 5.

26. Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, p. 13.

27. George Guthrie, 'Hebrews' Use of the Old Testament: Recent Trends in Research', *Currents in Biblical Research* 1 (2003), pp. 271-94 (275).

28. David M. Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews: A Study in Narrative Re-representation* (WUNT, 2.238; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of its Influence with Special Consideration to the Use of Hab 2:3-4 in Heb 10:37-38* (WUNT, 2.160; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); George H. Guthrie, 'Hebrews', in G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), pp. 919-95; Luke Timothy Johnson, 'The Scriptural World of Hebrews', *Int* 57 (2003), pp. 237-50; Harold Attridge, 'The Psalms in Hebrews', in S. Moyise and M.J.J. Menken (eds.), *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 197-212; J. Cecil McCullough, 'Isaiah in Hebrews', in S. Moyise and M.J.J. Menken (eds.), *Isaiah in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 159-74; Steve Moyise, *The Later New Testament Writings and Scripture: The Old Testament in Acts, Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles and Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), pp. 81-110. We should also include the large section on Hebrews' use of the Old Testament in Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 41-59.

identified by Guthrie. Understanding the author of Hebrews' use of the Old Testament is vital for interpreting the epistle and these monographs are welcome contributions to this highly significant and growing field.

Susan Docherty's recent monograph, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*,[29] argues that the epistle is an example of early Jewish biblical commentary and should be interpreted as such. She builds upon the work of Arnold Goldberg, Alexander Samely and Philip Alexander[30] to evaluate the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews in light of Jewish interpretive techniques. After an introduction, her second chapter surveys twenty-seven works on Hebrews within the last 150 years that address the issue of its author's use of Old Testament passages. She notes three shortcomings in all of these works: (1) the lack of awareness of recent developments in Septuagintal studies and of relating Hebrews to its source, (2) a failure to provide detailed analysis of the exegetical techniques of Hebrews' author and (3) a lack of concern with the author's presuppositions about the nature of Scripture and of the task of biblical exegesis.

The third chapter surveys developments in the study of midrash, with special attention to the work of Arnold Goldberg and his students. Goldberg's method, especially as taken up by Samely,[31] is 'descriptive-analysis'—the method, as used by Docherty, attempts to identify the exegetical techniques of an author when interpreting Old Testament citations. Various methods from Jewish midrash are presented with terminology borrowed from modern linguistics ('co-text', 'grapheme'). The fourth chapter looks closely at recent Septuagint studies and argues that the plurality of Greek versions of the Old Testament in the first century places the burden of proof upon exegetes arguing against a variant reading when differences appear between the New Testament text and standard LXX versions.[32] Docherty then examines the textual basis for

29. Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation* (WUNT, 2.260; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

30. Arnold Goldberg, 'Entwurf einer formanalytischen Methode für die Exegese der rabbinischen Traditionsliteratur', in M. Schlüter and P. Schäfer (eds.), *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung: Gessamelte Schriften II* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 50-79; *idem*, 'Form-Analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description', *JJS* 36 (1986), pp. 159-74; Alexander Samely, *Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture in the Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Philip Alexander, 'Midrash and the Gospels', in C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *Synoptic Studies* (JSOTSup, 7; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), pp. 1-50.

31. Samely, *Rabbinic Interpretation*, pp. 31-58.

32. Docherty, *Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*, p. 125: 'It is therefore,

each Old Testament citation in Hebrews 1, 3 and 4—which serve as the subject of her more detailed analysis in Chapter 5. It is determined that the author of Hebrews kept very close to his source material when he quoted from it. This goes against the view that the author often manipulated his source(s) to fit his theology.

The fifth chapter is a detailed examination of the use of the Old Testament in those early chapters in Hebrews according to descriptive-analysis. The author's exegetical techniques and presuppositions about Scripture are therefore examined. Several aspects of exegesis are presented in valuable detail using terminology established by Samely. One valuable exegetical method is 'how a particular word from an Old Testament text could be chosen by the author to receive heavy stress, and its meaning be subtly altered by the provision of new co-text, often by means of repeated allusions to scriptural text as well as direct citation of it'.[33] Another method is the limiting of the meaning of a key word by placing it in a new co-text. One goal of such an analysis, according to Docherty, is to get at the underlying presuppositions of the author of Hebrews regarding the Old Testament. Through her examination, Docherty identifies two such presuppositions: the author understood all Scripture to be God's words (as in, God could be discussed as being the one who is doing the speaking even if the words were originally written to him) and all Scripture is inner-connected and coherent as a whole.[34]

Docherty's monograph is helpful especially in its criticism of previous studies of Hebrews' use of the Old Testament. Her chapter on Septuagintal issues often neglected by New Testament exegetes is of particular relevance and exposes a gap in much Hebrews scholarship. Further, the language that she incorporates from the Goldbergian school—especially Samely—serves as helpful vocabulary for explaining the various exegetical techniques found in rabbinic literature and Hebrews. Such language, borrowed from modern linguistics, allows precision and

probably no exaggeration to speak of a revolution in terms of the appreciation of the numerous revisions that the Greek text of the Bible quickly underwent, and of the multiplicity of forms in which it could be read for several centuries. This means that the serious exegete can no longer be content with comparing the textual form of Old Testament citations in the New Testament with only the major Septuagint witnesses like Codices Alexandrinus and Vaticanus, a weakness of several studies surveyed in chapter two above'.

33. Docherty, *Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*, p. 204.
34. Docherty, *Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*, p. 204.

clarification in descriptions of how an author interprets an Old Testament citation. The main issue with *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews* is that it spends so much time on method and surveys of scholarship that the actual analysis of Hebrews is comparatively brief. The title of Docherty's monograph is somewhat misleading in that she only examines Hebrews 1, 3 and 4. One is left to wonder whether the techniques she describes continue to be used in the later chapters of Hebrews or if the conclusions regarding the author's view of Scripture can be maintained from just three of thirteen chapters. The passages that she does treat are mostly convincing and it would be interesting to see her method played out over each citation in Hebrews—as well as other relevant New Testament literature, such as Paul's letters.

Gert Steyn has long given voice to Docherty's criticism of studies on the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews that lack an investigation into the origin and version of the Scripture cited. Over the last decade, Steyn has published numerous articles examining the possible origin or prior version—or *Vorlage*—of the quotations used by the author of Hebrews.[35] His recent work *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews* is the culmination of this research. Like Docherty, Steyn argues that many studies of Hebrews' use of the Old Testament fail to ask a significant question: '*where did he* [the author of Hebrews] *find these quotations (origin) and how did they read (version)?*'[36] Before one can understand the function of these quotations in the discourse or the author's hermeneutic, Steyn argues, one must bring some clarity to the origin and version of the quotations. This sets up Steyn's methodology: the question of a quotation's origin requires a tradition-historical investigation and its version requires a text-critical one.[37] The tradition-historical dimension examines the Old Testament passage within its literary and historical contexts and then moves to

35. See, for example, Gert J. Steyn, 'A Quest for the *Vorlage* of the Song of Moses (Dt 32) Quotations in Hebrews', *Neot* 34 (2000), pp. 263-72; *idem*, 'The *Vorlage* of the Melchizedek Phrases in Heb 7:1-4', *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 13 (2002), pp. 43-50; *idem*, 'Which "LXX" Are We Talking about in New Testament Scholarship? Two Examples from Hebrews', in M. Karrer and W. Kraus (eds.), *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenwelten* (WUNT, 219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 294-307

36. Gert J. Steyn, *Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews* (FRLANT, 235; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), p. 3; italics his.

37. Steyn, *Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage*, pp. 18-24.

identify textual parallels of that passage in early Jewish and Christian literature. The text-critical dimension also has two steps: the collecting and reconstructing of variants and the evaluation of those data.[38] In this two-part process, Steyn examines the variants of each Old Testament passage (comparing versions of the LXX, Hebrew Bible, DSS, and other texts) and the variants of the passage in Hebrews in which it is quoted. He then makes attempts at initial observations regarding where the author of Hebrews might have quoted. The final step in Steyn's method involves commenting on the author's hermeneutical movements, with special attention given to introductory formulae and the function of each quotation in its new context.

All of these introductory matters are spelled out in the first chapter. Chapters 2 to 14 then examine the thirty-four explicit quotations found in Hebrews. Steyn identifies a pattern in the epistle of combining two Old Testament quotations that deal with a particular theme and Steyn organizes his chapters around these sets of quotations. These thirteen chapters exhaustively look at each quotation through the steps laid out in his tradition-historical/text-critical method. At the end of each quotation's examination, Steyn helpfully summarizes his conclusions.

These chapters—which make up the bulk of this work—can often get bogged down with technical examinations of textual variants and comparisons of the original languages. However, this level of study is absolutely necessary for Steyn's purposes. In fact, he has done a great service to Hebrews scholarship by providing a helpful starting point for future examinations of the function of each quotation. That this initial step is so important has been clearly identified by Steyn, but I imagine that the complexity of the issues involved account for its neglect in relevant studies. In this way, Steyn's thorough examination will be a valuable resource for those wishing to incorporate this step into their own investigations of Hebrews' use of the Old Testament.

Steyn concludes his lengthy examination with a summary chapter. Regarding his tradition-historical investigation, Steyn makes clear that there is no single place from which the author of Hebrews derived his quotations.[39] Numerous quotations share commonalities with the Dead Sea Scrolls while others do so with Philo or early New Testament

38. Here Steyn is following Emanuel Tov's two stages of textual criticism (*The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* [Jerusalem: Simor, 1981], p. 34).

39. Steyn, *Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage*, p. 376.

literature—some in multiple places. Further, some quotations—such as Ps. 40(39).7-9 in Heb. 10.5-7 or Hag. 2.6 in Heb. 12.26—have no parallel in any available literature. Concerning the text-critical investigation, Steyn argues that there are indications that the author of Hebrews often used an alternative LXX to the eclectic one available today. Further, he argues that differences between the text of Hebrews and the standard LXX are often explained by textual variants and not necessarily the author's hand. Steyn concludes this chapter with twenty-five summary theses that pull together his insights gathered from his investigation.

There is little doubt concerning the value of *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews*. Yet a few questions should be raised concerning this study. First, Steyn limits his investigation to 'explicit quotations'—defined by the presence of an introductory formula. This criterion plays out well in Hebrews, but what constitutes an introductory formula needs clarity (is it always a verb of speaking? what about ἵνα or γάρ?). Further, the presence of such formulae do not always indicate the presence of a quotation in other New Testament literature (Jn 7.28; Gal. 4.22).[40] Thus, one wonders whether the simple presence of an introductory formula should indicate an explicit quotation (such as Heb. 12.21). Secondly, it must be kept in mind that while Steyn incorporates the best data available, this study must evolve as other text traditions are discovered and understood. That is to say, it is possible that the author of Hebrews made use of a version of the LXX not accounted for in the documents available to us. Further, there is little room for an oral tradition in Steyn's study—which may account for some of the author's unique touches on his source material. These minor concerns aside, Steyn has done a great service in this study and his work should be widely read and incorporated into any future exploration of Hebrews' use of the Old Testament.

King L. She's *The Use of Exodus in Hebrews* moves beyond a descriptive analysis of how the author draws from Exodus in his discourse to establishing its *prescriptive* function in Hebrews. She argues that Exodus—particularly chs. 32–33, 3.14 and 25.40—is the backdrop for the author's ontology and doctrinal system. As such, Exodus provides an 'epistemological lens' through which to correctly interpret the relationship between the old and new covenants and other interpretive issues of the text (including how to interpret 9.22-23). There are a lot of moving pieces

40. See Gregory P. Fewster and Bryan R. Dyer, 'Formally Invoking Scripture: Examining Paul's Explicit Use of the Old Testament', unpublished paper.

in She's interdisciplinary argument and he uniquely places his focus on the author of Hebrews' ontology. Further, it is clear that She is widely read—often incorporating numerous unpublished dissertations into his argument and footnotes. However, several problems—or at least potential issues—arise in She's work. First, when he does do descriptive analysis of how and where Hebrews cites or otherwise appeals to Exodus, he does so without any description of terminology or method. Ironically, he quotes Stanley Porter to demonstrate Richard Hays's failure to define terms,[41] yet does not do so himself. Secondly, a major presupposition of She is that a biblical writer cannot have a conflicting ontology—both with themselves and with other biblical writers.[42] While this is respectful of Scripture's internal consistency and unity, it also downplays or ignores the nuances or varied perspectives that the individual biblical authors bring to their writing. Thirdly, throughout She's work is a rejection of any non-biblical influence upon the author of Hebrews and his ontological and doctrinal system. So, for example, he rejects Gabriella Gelardini's argument[43] that Hebrews was a homily intended for *Tisha be-Av* because it draws upon rabbinic sources.[44] Similarly, he rejects models of understanding the use of Exod. 25.40 in Heb. 8.5 that incorporate any Greek influence upon the text.[45] She's reasoning for this is that the ontology of the author of Hebrews is biblical (derived from a 'Mosaic-biblical' metanarrative) and as such cannot be combined with outside ontologies.[46] While one can understand (although not necessarily support) She's reasoning, it is nearly impossible to believe that the author of Hebrews was not influenced at all by Greek and non-canonical Jewish thought.

The recent collection of essays *Psalms and Hebrews*, edited by Dirk

41. King L. She, *The Use of Exodus in Hebrews* (Studies in Biblical Literature, 142; New York: Peter Lang, 2011), p. 65.

42. '[B]iblical authors do not maintain a conflicting view of God and ultimate reality' (She, *Use of Exodus*, p. 120 n. 33; see also pp. 104-105).

43. Gabriella Gelardini, *'Verhärtet eure Herzen nicht': Der Hebräer, eine Synagogenhomilie zu Tischa be-Aw* (BIS, 83; Leiden: Brill, 2007).

44. She, *Use of Exodus*, pp. 166-67.

45. She, *Use of Exodus*, pp. 121-22.

46. This is curious especially since it is not at all clear that there was a closed canon of Scripture in the first century CE. On this, see the discussion in Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), esp. Craig A. Evans, 'The Scriptures of Jesus and his Earliest Followers', pp. 185-95, and Sanders, 'The Issue of Closure in the Canonical Process', pp. 252-63.

J. Human and Gert J. Steyn,[47] explores the author of Hebrews' use of the Psalms in his epistle. According to the editors, the essays 'provide insights into the complexities of ancient hermeneutics, and the re-interpretation of religious texts'.[48] The first section contains three essays that look at the relationship between the two texts in a general way. Eckart Otto's contribution is a highlight in this section.[49] Otto first surveys the discipline of Old Testament Theology, especially Brueggemann's category of 'productive misunderstanding' as a link between the Old and New Testaments.[50] Using the test case of the author's use of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2 (among others), Otto highlights the pitfalls of such methods and argues for a sociological approach. The author of Hebrews, Otto argues, did not misunderstand Old Testament passages but rather took up the 'intentions of the authors of the Old Testament texts'.[51] Alphonso Groenewald's essay highlights the author's use of the Pentateuch (for material on reflecting upon redemptive history) and the Psalms (for his christological material).[52] Further, Groenewald argues that Hebrews is not only indebted to the Old Testament for its general background of thought, but contains 'fundamental Old Testament ways of thinking which are constantly presupposed and which underlie all passages in the book'.[53] To show this, he examines the epistle's use of the term חסד (*hesed*). The essays by Otto and Groenewald are helpful orientations, although not exhaustive, to the essays that follow and explore specific uses of the Psalms in Hebrews.[54]

47. Dirk J. Human and Gert Jacobus Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception* (LHBOTS, 527; London: T. & T. Clark, 2010).

48. Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, p. vii.

49. Eckart Otto, 'Hermeneutics of Biblical Theology, History of Religion, and the Theological Substance of Two Testaments: The Reception of Psalms in Hebrews', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 3-26.

50. Otto, 'Hermeneutics', pp. 3-13.

51. Otto, 'Hermeneutics', pp. 16, 26.

52. Alphonso Groenewald, 'A God Abounding in Steadfast Love: Psalms and Hebrews', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 52-65.

53. Groenewald, 'God Abounding', p. 54.

54. The second essay in this section of the volume, Jaco Gericke's 'But Is It True? Philosophical Theories of Truth and the Interpretation of Psalms in the Book of Hebrews', pp. 27-51, is a curious and possibly out-of-place entry. Gericke's contention regarding the explorations of whether the author of Hebrews is offering truth in his incorporation of the Psalms is that one must first explore what is meant by the concept of 'truth'. This concept, according to Gericke, is often taken for granted in biblical studies or not considered a serious topic for discussion (p. 30). Therefore,

The second section in the volume contains ten essays that explore specific illustrations of Hebrews' use of the Psalms. Each of these essays deserves attention, but I can only focus on two in detail. Gerda de Villiers' essay[55] on the themes of creation and humankind in Psalm 8, the LXX and Hebrews 2 is a fine example of the intentions of this volume—to trace the reception of a psalm from its composition to one particular early Christian writer (Hebrews). De Villiers examines Psalm 8 as a 'hymn of praise' that reflects upon creation and humankind's role in it. She then places the psalm—noting its allusion to Gen. 1.26-28—against the backdrop of the ancient Near East and Egypt. Psalm 8, it is shown, challenges the theologies of creation of Babylonian/Assyrian and Egyptian accounts (YHWH is the *sole* creator, and humans, while being assigned a place of privilege, do not share in divine attributes). De Villiers then examines the LXX translation of Psalm 8 (specifically vv. 5-6)—noting the influence of angelology and the translation of אלהים using ἄγγελος. Turning to the use of Psalm 8 in Heb. 2.6-8a, de Villiers argues that the author (using a LXX version) does not reflect upon the exalted status of humankind generally (unlike the author of Psalm 8) but on the superiority of Jesus and his temporary lowered status compared to angels.[56] Thus, Hebrews' concern is salvific in presenting Jesus, not humankind, as lowered for a short while, with the purpose of redemption.[57]

Another interesting essay comes from Gert J.C. Jordaan and Pieter Nel,[58] which argues that Hebrews is a 'homiletical midrash' of Psalm

Gericke looks at a variety of theories of truth in order to show their implications for approaching the question of truth in Hebrews' use of the Psalms. This entry is curious since it is not clear that the contributors are really asking whether the uses of the Psalms in Hebrews are 'true'. This seems like a question outside the realm of the explorations of this volume. Whether or not one believes that 'truth' is being expressed, it is clear that the author of Hebrews understood the Psalms, and his use of them, as 'true'. Instead, a more helpful question might be how the author of Hebrews understood 'truth' within his first-century context and how his use of the Psalms conveys this.

55. Gerda de Villiers, 'Reflections on Creation and Humankind in Psalm 8, the Septuagint and Hebrews', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 69-82.

56. de Villiers, 'Reflections', pp. 80-81.

57. de Villiers, 'Reflections', p. 82.

58. Gert J.C. Jordaan and Pieter Nel, 'From Priest-King to King-Priest: Psalm 110 and the Basic Structure of Hebrews', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 229-40.

110 and that its structure follows the form of that psalm. As the authors point out, Psalm 110 is the most quoted or alluded to psalm in Hebrews with the majority of references to either v. 1 or v. 4.[59] Building upon the argument of G. Buchanan,[60] Jordaan and Nel argue not only that Hebrews repeatedly refers to Psalm 110 but that the author basically follows the 'thought structure' of the psalm in his epistle. This is significant since a major objection to understanding Hebrews as a midrash of Psalm 110, as presented by A.J. Saldarini,[61] is that its structure is not informed by the psalm. The authors argue that the structural framework of Psalm 110[62] is generally followed in Hebrews.[63] The major issue with Jordaan and Nel's argument is that their analysis of the structure of Hebrews is much too simplistic, and themes associated with each section are too broad. They seem to assume this structure (from 'most commentators')[64] and then use it as a basis for their argument. Further, if the entire epistle is a 'homiletical midrash' of Psalm 110, why does the author exclusively draw from vv. 1 and 4 of the psalm?

This section, making up the bulk of the volume, contains many other insightful studies of Hebrews' use of a variety of psalms. Martin Karrer's essay examines the use of Ps. 39.7-10 (LXX) in Heb. 10.5-7 and it significance for the textual history of the LXX and the theology of Hebrews.[65] Particularly of interest for Karrer is that the words spoken by Jesus in Hebrews are exclusively the written word of God—predominantly from the Psalms. These passages are not only spoken by Jesus, but 'actualized' by him and therefore given a new christological perspective.[66] In another essay, Christian Frevel looks at the use of Psalm

59. Jordaan and Nel, 'Priest-King', p. 229.

60. George W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews: Translation, Comments, and Conclusions* (New York: Doubleday, 1972) argued that Hebrews should be understood as a midrash on Psalm 110.

61. A.J. Saldarini, 'Judaism and the New Testament', in E.J. Epp and G.W. MacRae (eds.), *The New Testament and its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 27-54.

62. See the chart on p. 237 in Jordaan and Nel, 'Priest-King'.

63. Jordaan and Nel, 'Priest-King', pp. 234-35, also argue that each pericope in their structure of Hebrews is introduced and concluded with an allusion to or quotation from Psalm 110.

64. Jordaan and Nel, 'Priest-King', p. 231.

65. Martin Karrer, 'LXX Psalm 39:7-10 in Hebrews 10:5-7', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 126-46.

66. Karrer, 'Psalm 39:7-10', p. 146.

95 (94 LXX) in Hebrews and the 'consequences of the psalms' reception and apparent "updating" in the epistle'.[67] Frevel argues that in order to make the eschatological rest available to his present audience, the author of Hebrews essentially closes off the Joshua generation from fulfilling the promise. This, according to Frevel, is a 'violent reinterpretation'—going against the sense of the Pentateuch and Psalms contexts—and the author of Hebrews' 'inexcusable hermeneutical sin', since it excludes present Israel from the promise.[68] Gert Steyn's contribution[69] also looks at Psalm 94 (LXX), noting that Hebrews is the only known literature in early Judaism and early Christianity to make use of this psalm. He indentifies only minor changes to the text of the psalm (indicating the author's preference for Attic over Hellenistic forms) and a small adaptation to contrast *that* generation and *this* generation.[70] Further, Steyn understands the author's use of Psalm 94 (LXX) in Hebrews 3–4 as midrash and fleshes out the typological features.

The third section contains an essay by Herrie van Rooy on how the Psalms are received in a current African context.[71] Looking at a new African psalter, van Rooy details how messianic interpretations of the psalms have been rendered to restore a pre-Hebrews (or early Christian) reading of the texts. This final essay is certainly unique, but can be understood as a continuation of the question of the Psalms' reception and the influence of Hebrews' extensive use of the psalter.

The collected essays that make up *Psalms and Hebrews* contribute and bring attention to the expanding body of literature on the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews. As these essays make clear, the author of Hebrews makes extensive use of the psalter—allowing its words to be spoken by Jesus and expressing the epistle's high Christology.

67. Christian Frevel, 'σήμερον—Understanding Psalm 95 within, and without, Hebrews', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 165-93 (166).

68. Frevel, 'σήμερον', p. 189.

69. Gert Steyn, 'The Reception of Psalm 95(94):7-11 in Hebrews 3–4', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 194-228.

70. Steyn, 'Reception of Psalm 95', pp. 226-27.

71. Herrie van Rooy, 'The Versification of the Psalms and the Interpretation of the Psalms in Hebrews', in Human and Steyn (eds.), *Psalms and Hebrews*, pp. 263-78.

Hebrews and Theology

The last collection of monographs grapples with theological issues in Hebrews. In his study of the theology of Hebrews, Barnabas Lindars wrote, 'The Letter to the Hebrews is so obviously full of theology that the main problem is not how to dig it out, but how to present it in an assimilable form'.[72] Hebrews not only offers unique insight to Christian theology (i.e. Jesus as High Priest) but also seems to challenge attempts at systematizing—what does one do with the 'warning passages'[73] or the teaching that Jesus 'learned obedience from what he suffered' (Heb. 5.8)? This is not to say that the theological teaching in Hebrews does not cohere with other Christian Scripture, but that the epistle often presents ideas that challenge easy systemization. However, as seen in the monographs examined in this section, understanding how Hebrews contributes to and challenges Christian theology is a valuable and fruitful pursuit.

A collection of papers presented at the 2006 St Andrews Conference on Scripture and Theology makes up the recently published *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology.*[74] The contributors to this volume include both theologians—Bruce McCormack, John Webster, Stephen Holmes—and biblical scholars—I. Howard Marshall, Morna Hooker, Richard Hays. Further, there are Old Testament scholars (Daniel Driver, Nathan MacDonald), church historians (Oscar Skarsaune), and scholars who have already made significant contributions to Hebrews scholarship (Harold Attridge). This is an impressive list of contributors and their contributions are equally impressive. The collection is organized under the following headings: 'The Christology of Hebrews', 'The Problem of Hebrews' Cosmology', 'The Problem of Hebrews' Supersessionism', 'The Soteriology of Hebrews', 'Hebrews and the Modern World',

72. Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (NTT; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. xi. See also Paul Ellingworth, 'Hebrews', in T.D. Alexander *et al*. (eds.), *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), pp. 337-42.

73. Hebrews 2.1-4; 3.7–4.13; 5.1–6.12; 10.19-39; 12.14-29. See Herbert W. Bateman (ed.), *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007).

74. Richard Bauckham *et al*. (eds.), *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). This is the second collection from this conference. The other was published in 2009 (Richard Bauckham *et al*. [eds.], *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in its Ancient Contexts* [LNTS, 387; London: T. & T. Clark, 2008]).

'Hebrews' Theology of Scripture', and 'The Call to Faith in Hebrews'.

There are many essays worth highlighting here, but I will only focus on a few. Richard Bauckham's essay on the divinity of Christ in Hebrews[75] tackles the issue of the epistle's high Christology within the context of first-century monotheism. He argues that Jesus shares in the unique identity of God while being designated as Son, Lord and High Priest. This is followed by Bruce McCormack's essay on Jesus' humanity in the epistle.[76] In dialogue with Owen, Barth and Balthasar, McCormack develops a christological framework from which to understand significant texts on Christ's humanity—especially Heb. 5.7-10. These two essays already demonstrate the important theological questions and the variety of approaches that make this collection so comprehensive and far-reaching. Mariam Kamell provides a helpful look at how faith in Hebrews (esp. in 10.19–12.14) coheres well with faith in the Epistle of James.[77] An essay by Hays and responses by Skarsaune and Mark Nanos present a constructive dialogue on Hebrews' discussion of the new covenant and its implications for the Jewish faith.[78] Finally, Loveday Alexander's essay on the unnamed martyrs and prophets in Heb. 11.32-40 offers an excellent look at the backgrounds for these traditions as well as a critical examination of martyrdom as it is understood today.[79]

A persistent theme throughout these essays is how the theology of

75. Richard Bauckham, 'The Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews', in Bauckham *et al*. (eds.), *Hebrews and Christian Theology*, pp. 15-36.

76. Bruce L. McCormack, '"With Loud Cries and Tears": The Humanity of the Son in the Epistle to the Hebrews', in Bauckham *et al*. (eds.), *Hebrews and Christian Theology*, pp. 37-68.

77. Mariam J. Kamell, 'Reexamining Faith: A Study of Hebrews 10:19–12:14 and James 1–2', in Bauckham *et al*. (eds.), *Hebrews and Christian Theology*, pp. 422-31, concludes: 'Faith is the response to God's character that leads us inextricably into obedience and endurance, knowing that God himself will complete what he has promised and bring us into perfection. Erasing the line between 'faith' and 'works', Hebrews and James teach that there is no faith but faithful faith' (p. 431).

78. Richard B. Hays, '"Here We Have No Lasting City": New Covenantalism in Hebrews', in Bauckham *et al*. (eds.), *Hebrews and Christian Theology*, pp. 151-73; Oskar Skarsaune, 'Does the Letter to the Hebrews Articulate a Supersessionist Theology? A Response to Richard Hays', in Bauckham *et al*. (eds.), *Hebrews and Christian Theology*, pp. 174-82; Mark D. Nanos, '"New or Renewed Covenantalism": A Response to Richard Hays', in Bauckham *et al*. (eds.), *Hebrews and Christian Theology*, pp. 183-88.

79. Loveday Alexander, 'Prophets and Martyrs as Exemplars of Faith', in Bauckham (ed.), *Hebrews and Christian Theology*, pp. 405-21.

Hebrews speaks into the twenty-first century. Examinations of the epistle within its original context are paralleled with discussions of how its teachings have been understood in the history of the church and can be applied today. *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* may be frustrating to those who wish to study the epistle's theology 'on its own terms'. However, the essays collected here present some of the best theological minds grappling with the unique contributions of Hebrews for the church today.

The recent collection of essays edited by Jon C. Laansma and Daniel J. Treier, *Christology, Hermeneutics, and Hebrews*,[80] explores the reception history of Hebrews in order to promote a theological interpretation of the epistle. The historical critical methods of the modern period, according to Laansma in his introductory essay, have dominated recent studies on Hebrews and the result is a restricted and often repetitive body of work.[81] Further, historical critical methods, while useful for situating the epistle and providing relevant background for its interpretation, intentionally reject the presupposition that is absolutely necessary for understanding Hebrews—that is, that God speaks, in the past and now, through Scripture. Laansma's point is not that one must abandon historical-critical methods,[82] but rather that they must be used in support of understanding the text theologically.

Vital to this purpose is listening to those who, before the historical-critical program, interpreted Hebrews as divine speech within the context of the church. Therefore, the bulk of this volume explores how earlier theologians—Irenaeus, John Chrysostom, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Owen—interpreted Hebrews in their writing. It becomes clear that Hebrews was a significant text for these theologians—even if not considered sacred Scripture (as with Irenaeus)[83]—and of particular importance in discussions of the divinity and humanity of Christ. Modern

80. Jon C. Laansma and Daniel J. Treier (eds.), *Christology, Hermeneutics, and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation* (LNTS, 423; London: T. & T. Clark, 2012).

81. Jon C. Laansma, 'Hebrews: Yesterday, Today, and Future: An Illustrative Survey, Diagnosis, Prescription', in Laansma and Treier (eds.), *Christology*, pp. 1-32 (25): 'The result, in our opinion, is that biblical scholarship on Hebrews has been perpetually circling around these historically centered questions, at best looking for new angles on them'.

82. Laansma, 'Hebrews', p. 30.

83. From the essay by D. Jeffrey Bingham, 'Irenaeus and Hebrews', in Laansma and Treier (eds.), *Christology*, pp. 48-73 (54-55).

theologians are also examined—Barth in particular[84] along with a survey of systematic theologians since Charles Hodge.[85] In this brief survey, it is interesting to see how specific texts from Hebrews were used in support of various theological ideas—limited atonement,[86] dispensationalism,[87] and trichotomism[88] to name a few.

The essays examining the interpretive history of Hebrews are enlightening, but the more interesting contribution of this collection arrives within the discussion of the relevance for understanding the epistle within the larger question of the validity of theological interpretation. This conversation is initiated in Laansma's early essay and responded to by two biblical scholars—Harold Attridge and Donald Hagner.[89] Of these two, it is Attridge who seems the most skeptical of interpreting Hebrews theologically to the neglect of historical issues. In his essay, Attridge acknowledges the 'important contribution' of these essays[90] while noting that Hebrews lends itself to this type of exploration since it 'is not mired in the traditional issues on which theologians and historical-critical exegetes have differed'—that is, the epistle makes few claims at historical facts and its anonymity frees it from historical specificity.[91] Attridge further points out that understanding Hebrews as a theological work is dependent upon placing it within its first-century context.[92] Thus he argues that understanding Hebrews as a divine word spoken through a sacred text should involve 'creative engagement' with the

84. Bruce L. McCormack, 'The Identity of the Son: Karl Barth's Exegesis of Hebrews 1.1-4 (and Similar Passages)', in Laansma and Treier (eds.), *Christology*, pp. 155-72.

85. Daniel J. Treier and Christopher Atwood, 'The Living Word versus the Proof Text? Hebrews in Modern Systematic Theology', in Laansma and Treier (eds.), *Christology*, pp. 173-201 (175-87).

86. Louis Berkhof using Heb. 7.25 and 9.24 (Treier and Atwood, 'The Living Word versus the Proof Text', p. 178).

87. Lewis Sperry Chafer on Heb. 1.1-2 (Treier and Atwood, 'The Living Word versus the Proof Text', p. 178).

88. Millard Erickson on Heb. 4.12 (Treier and Atwood, 'The Living Word versus the Proof Text', p. 183).

89. Harold W. Attridge, 'Hebrews and the History of its Interpretation: A Biblical Scholar's Response', in Laansma and Treier (eds.), *Christology*, pp. 202-12; Donald A. Hagner, 'Hebrews: A Book for Today—A Biblical Scholar's Response', in Laansma and Treier (eds.), *Christology*, pp. 213-24.

90. Attridge, 'Hebrews and the History of its Interpretation: Response', p. 202.

91. Attridge, 'Hebrews and the History of its Interpretation: Response', p. 204.

92. Attridge, 'Hebrews and the History of its Interpretation: Response', p. 209.

text—mirroring its own engagement with the text of the LXX.[93] Hagner's essay begins by detailing the difficulty that Hebrews presents to modern interpreters—leading to its neglect in the contemporary church.[94] He then highlights the limits of historical-critical methods, which have 'no room for God, let alone a God who speaks or acts'.[95] Therefore, according to Hagner, a theological interpretation of the epistle is necessary because such a method is receptive to the message of the epistle rather than being motivated by suspicion and doubt. He makes clear that the historical-critical method is indispensible to the task of theological interpretation; it must, however, forego its rejection of the transcendent and be 'tempered' to make room for God to speak.[96] Like Attridge, Hagner looks to the author of Hebrews' own approach to Scripture as a model for theological interpretation.

The final essay is by Kathryn Greene-McCreight and she challenges the previous essays before offering initial steps for future studies.[97] She begins by expressing concern over the value of this self-proclaimed 'selective history of interpretation' since it offers no concrete suggestions for the actual practice of theological interpretation. Part of the problem, Greene-McCreight argues, is a lack of definitions—both of the 'historical-critical method' (if there is even one unifying method) and 'theological interpretation'.[98] She further challenges Hagner on whether historical methods can be 'tempered' to include theological exegesis without losing the value offered by each method. Green-McCreight offers a challenge to Attridge and Hagner: how can we take up the hermeneutical stance of the author of Hebrews when his use of Scripture goes against what many interpreters would deem legitimate interpretation (such as his interpretation of Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek in Hebrews 7)? Green-McCreight argues that we are not in the same position as the author of Hebrews—that is, 'we do not have the Spirit-given authority… to write Scripture'.[99] As a way forward, she points to the role of the *regula*

93. Attridge, 'Hebrews and the History of its Interpretation: Response', p. 212.

94. Hagner, 'Hebrews: A Book for Today—Response', pp. 213-15.

95. Hagner, 'Hebrews: A Book for Today—Response', p. 215.

96. Hagner, 'Hebrews: A Book for Today—Response', p. 217.

97. Kathryn Greene-McCreight, 'Hebrews: Yesterday, Today, and Future—A Theologian's Response', in Laansma and Treier (eds.), *Christology*, pp. 225-37.

98. Greene-McCreight, 'Hebrews: Yesterday, Today, and Future—Response', p. 226.

99. Greene-McCreight, 'Hebrews: Yesterday, Today, and Future—Response',

fidei, the Rule of Faith, within the context of the community of faith as providing proper limitations for our interpretations.

The essays in *Christology, Hermeneutics, and Hebrews* that explore the history of interpretation of the epistle offer a valuable resource for understanding its reception history and the implications for contemporary scholarship. However, as I pointed out earlier, the more valuable contribution is the exchange regarding the role of historical-critical methods and theological interpretation. The essays by Laansma, Attridge, Hagner and Greene-McCreight approach the topic from a variety of vantage points and the exchange represents the tension felt in many biblical studies and theological circles.

David M. Moffitt's *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*[100] challenges the common notion in Hebrews scholarship that the bodily resurrection of Jesus is either ignored, spiritualized, or of minor significance to the author of the epistle. In response, Moffitt argues that Jesus' bodily resurrection is the unifying and driving factor in the author's high-priestly Christology. To show this, Moffitt makes three major arguments. First, he argues that the author understood Jesus to have ascended into heaven as a human being. This is why, according to Moffitt, Jesus is understood to be elevated above the angels and to rule over the world. This is largely fleshed out in an examination of the first two chapters of Hebrews. Hebrews 1 emphasizes that the angels are spiritual beings while Hebrews 2 establishes the Son's flesh and blood. Moffitt argues that the contrast in these opening chapters is not between the Son's incarnation and his exaltation, but rather between the kinds of beings that the Son (human) and angels (spiritual) are. He then examines the use of οἰκουμένη in Heb. 1.6 and 2.5 alongside uses in the LXX and Second Temple literature. Jesus' entry into οἰκουμένη, Moffitt argues, refers to his entry into the realm of heaven and God's presence.[101] To support this concept of the Son entering into heaven with a human body, Moffitt looks at accounts of human ascension into heaven in early Jewish and Christian literature.[102]

Moffitt's second argument is that Jesus' bodily resurrection not only enables him to reign at God's right side but also allows him the central

p. 228.

100. David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (NovTSup, 141; Leiden: Brill, 2011).

101. Moffitt, *Atonement*, p. 118.

102. Moffitt, *Atonement*, pp. 148-81.

qualification for his role as high priest—the power of an indestructible life. To begin this section, Moffitt looks at four places in Hebrews that refer to some type of resurrection (6.2; 11.19, 35a, 35c). He argues that the author thought of two different kinds of resurrection—that of a body being brought back to life but still susceptible to death and that of a life raised to a better order (i.e. the attainment of eternal life).[103] Turning to the logic of Hebrews 5–7, Moffitt argues that Jesus' qualification to be a high priest in the order of Melchizedek is the perfection he obtained—i.e. his enduring life after his resurrection. After his suffering and death, Jesus acquired perfection (2.9; 5.7-9) and this qualifies him to serve as a high priest forever in heaven. Moffitt argues that while it may not be expressed explicitly, the resurrection plays an important role (and fits logically) between Jesus' death and perfection to an indestructible life. 'Only as the one who, after death, has been made perfect is he qualified to serve as the ever-living heavenly high priest'.[104]

Thirdly, Moffitt argues that what Jesus offered as a sacrifice (referred to in the epistle as his 'blood', 'body' and 'self') was his life before God. Following the Levitical understanding of blood sacrifice, Moffitt maintains that Jesus offered his blood—i.e. his indestructible life—before God in heaven. 'Jesus' immortal, resurrection life is the sacrifice—that is the object that Jesus offers to God—that he offered to effect atonement'.[105] This understanding noticeably goes against the common view that Jesus offered himself *on the cross* as a sacrificial atonement. Jesus' suffering and death (on the cross) are certainly important to the writer of Hebrews, according to Moffitt, as the initial event in the process of the sacrifice. Yet, Jesus' death is not to be understood as the moment that atonement was obtained, but precedes 'logically and temporally' Jesus' offering of his blood/life before God in the heavenly tabernacle. As Moffitt concludes, 'His death sets the sequence in motion. His appearance before God in heaven effects atonement. The bridge between the two is his resurrection.'[106]

This work by Moffitt has all the ingredients of an excellent dissertation and monograph. It challenges a notion that is either ignored or neglected

103. This is best presented in Heb. 11.35: 'Women received back their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection' (NRSV).

104. Moffitt, *Atonement*, p. 213.

105. Moffitt, *Atonement*, p. 219.

106. Moffitt, *Atonement*, p. 294.

in contemporary scholarship and provides a hypothesis that is clear in its presentation and bold in its substantiation. It forces one to reread the epistle in light of its conclusions and often provides clarity to the text. Possibly the greatest issue facing Moffitt's thesis is why something so foundational to early Christianity as the resurrection (especially in Paul's writing) is only seen implicitly within the logic of the author's argument. Further, it would be interesting to examine (as I am sure several scholars will attempt) how this view of the atonement coheres with other Christian sacred literature. Despite these questions and some minor exegetical questions, Moffitt has offered, in my opinion, the most significant and interesting monograph surveyed in this article. *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* may prove to be a watershed in Hebrews scholarship and I look forward to future interactions with this fascinating study.

Conclusion

Having surveyed nine major Hebrews monographs recently published, I conclude with some final observations regarding the state of scholarship on the epistle and ways forward. First, the question of the author's identity continues to provoke interest and creative approaches for understanding Hebrews. Yet, while Allen and Rothschild both present plausible suggestions of answers to this question, one cannot claim certainty without new external evidence on the author's identity. Thus, Hebrews is at something of a crossroads on this issue. On the one hand, should we simply concede this question and interpret Hebrews as an anonymous document? Or, on the other hand, should we weigh the options, argue for the best case, and then interpret the epistle with the insights it provides? The majority of scholars, it seems, have chosen the first option and concede the issue of authorship. However, the two recent studies surveyed above have shown that strong cases can be made from the internal evidence alongside what we know of early Christianity.

Secondly, it is clear that understanding the author of Hebrews' use of the Old Testament is vital for understanding the epistle and its theology. Guthrie made this point nearly ten years ago and recent studies on the subject have validated his claim. The studies by Docherty and Steyn have challenged future explorations on this subject to take seriously recent Septuagint studies. One can no longer simply claim that Hebrews makes changes to 'the LXX' without first engaging with the source and version of the LXX used.

Thirdly, many of these studies emphasize the influence of early Judaism upon Hebrews. This is clear from Docherty's argument that Hebrews uses rabbinic techniques when invoking Scripture as well as Moffitt's comparison between the epistle and Second Temple literature. Numerous studies have shown Hebrews' engagement with Jewish Scriptures and how the author's hermeneutical techniques mirror those of Jewish interpretation—midrash, typology, etc.

Fourthly, Hebrews finds itself in the middle of the growing discussion of 'theological interpretation' and the value of historical-critical methods. This was at the heart of *Christology, Hermeneutics, and Hebrews* and is found in numerous essays in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*. As this larger discussion continues between biblical scholars and theologians, its implications for interpreting Hebrews have already begun to be explored.

Fifthly, several of these monographs—Moffitt's especially—make clear that Hebrews scholarship needs to be continually reflected upon and critiqued. As with any area of study, it is easy to claim certain theories as 'fact' or concepts as certainties. The author's identity, the source of his Old Testament quotations, and the role of resurrection in his argument are all areas that have been successfully challenged within the last four years. Let us hope that interest in the Epistle to the Hebrews persists, ideas are continually brought under the microscope and our understanding of this phenomenal text continues to expand.