

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Lexical Tools to the Syriac New Testament by George Anton Kiraz

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the biblical period. Mach sees a major feature of this period to be the tension between angels as members of the heavenly council and angels as messengers of God (p. 14). He discusses various terms for the heavenly council, such as "sons of God" and "hosts of heaven," as well as such attributes as their "might" and "wisdom." Mach then turns to the subject of angels as messengers, beginning with a discussion of the term *mal'ak* and then to the function of messengers in the Hebrew Bible. Finally, he considers the "fusion" of the "heavenly council" and "divine messenger" functions in a number of biblical texts.

In the next chapter, Mach considers the Septuagint angelology, noting how the various Hebrew terms for angelic beings are translated: the term *aggelos* is used for both figures of the heavenly court and for angelic messengers. He also observes the tendency to separate God's personality from that of the angels, along with a few other significant theological developments. This chapter concludes with a discussion of unique angelological ideas in the LXX-Daniel and the LXX-Job.

The next chapter, on the angelology of extra-biblical ("außerhalb der Bibel") literature, is the longest and broadest section. It covers Jewish apocalyptic texts, Dead Sea Scrolls, pseudepigrapha, and includes a discussion of the melding of Greek mythology with Jewish angelology in "Joseph and Asenath." The principal topic of this chapter is the communion of angels with humanity, which Mach considers to be a major aspect of Jewish angelology in this period (p. 132). He discusses several ways that he believes this concept is expressed in this literature, including the angelic traveling companion in the Book of Tobit, angels as guides to the dead, and a rather curt discussion of the *angelus interpres* of apocalyptic texts (pp. 142–44). He devotes a good deal of attention to the idea that humans and angels are coparticipants in the worship of God and to the eschatological hope of communion with the angels.

The final chapter, on the "dangers" of the human-angelic communion ("Die Gefahren der Gemeinschaft"), focuses on some of the theological and ideological difficulties that arise from the idea of human-angelic intercourse. Mach notes the absence of emphasis on angels in several texts produced during this period of upsurge

in interest in angelology and considers the possibility that this silence represents a protest against the exalted place given angels in other texts. He also considers the theological problems raised for Christianity by the "new" angel concepts. The bulk of the chapter, however, is devoted to Josephus's angelology and the political considerations that motivated his treatment of various biblical traditions.

Mach has provided us with a useful handbook for the study of certain aspects of prerabbinic angelology. Particularly, he has given us a fine study of the concept of human-angelic communion during this period. What readers will not find here, however, is a comprehensive history of angelology in early Judaism. For instance, there is no treatment here of the fall of the angels, an important idea in biblical mythology and post-biblical apocalyptic literature. Nor will one find a thorough discussion of the factors that impelled the development of Jewish angelology: for instance, there is no thorough treatment of the possible effects of Persian thought on the development of postbiblical angelology. The reasoning behind Mach's choices of emphasis is not always clear, and some of the important topics that he raises are not given the attention they deserve. But nonetheless, Mach has brought together an impressive amount of material in this study. He has also made the material easily accessible, by providing author, subject, and text indexes, along with a thorough, up-to-date bibliography divided by subjects. (It might be noted, incidentally, that the bibliography shows signs of having been composed with considerable less care than the text itself, and typographical errors in this section are numerous.) Anyone engaged in the study of earlier Jewish angelology will find this volume to be extremely useful.

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Lexical Tools to the Syriac New Testament.
JSOT Manuals 7. By GEORGE ANTON KIRAZ.
Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994. Pp. v + 137.
\$37.50.

Students of Syriac frequently spend a portion of their first year's study engaged in reading

some of the Syriac New Testament. Not only are selections of the Gospel of John, for example, relatively easy to read, but given the Bible's importance as the font of Syriac literature, the New Testament is a historically defensible place to begin before turning to other Syriac writings.

The present work comprises ten sections, of which the most important are: (1) a word-frequency list containing all words of ten or more occurrences (calculated from the Peshitta version printed by the United Bible Society); (2) a list of consonantal homographs; and (3–4) two sections devoted to verbal forms and verbal paradigms, respectively. My reservation about the word-frequency list is mainly practical: I doubt that many students of Syriac will spend enough time in the New Testament to make it worthwhile memorizing lists of words out of context. They will probably find the list a useful lexical resource, nevertheless. A section entitled "Skeleton Syriac Grammar," written by the eminent Syriacist Sebastian Brock, will be most helpful not to students of Syriac literature (who need to learn what Brock presents, but not the way he presents it), but rather to linguists interested in a rapid conspectus.

Students of the Syriac New Testament will appreciate the present volume, but probably few will use it as it was intended. I suspect that this book will find its warmest welcome at the hands of teachers of the language, who will recommend it to their classes because it brings together in one place what they would otherwise have to seek out in various different books. In that respect, Kiraz's latest work would make a fine adjunct to a beginner grammar such as Robinson's or Muraoka's.

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Dreams and Their Meaning in the Old Arab Tradition. By YEHIA GOUDA. New York: Vantage Press, 1991. Pp. viii + 471 + figs. \$18.95.

There is room for a very good study on the role of dreams in ancient Semitic cultures, including early Arabic and later Islamic cultures. For it is not accidental that the biblical narrative always portrays dreams as being among the

channels through which the deity communicates with man. The tradition is very old, and there are plenty of examples regarding the role of dreams in the literatures of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Northwest Semitic groups, to name only those at the heart of the ancient Near East.

There is also room for a detailed study of the role of dreams in the Islamic tradition in particular, with special attention paid to the various traditions ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad relating dreams to prophecy—where dreams are thought of as one part out of forty-six parts of prophecy. Special attention should also be paid to the relationship between the early Islamic tradition of dream interpretation and the Greek counterpart to which this tradition owed some of its early developments. The last point has been so ably discussed by Toufic Fahd in *La divination arabe* (Paris, 1987) and in his analysis of the place of Artemidoros of Ephesus's book on dream interpretation in his edition of *Le livre des songes* (Damascus, 1964).

This book is definitely not such a study. Its amateurish approach to the texts regarding interpretation of dreams treats the topic as exotic entertainment rather than the subject of serious study. The structure of the book is indicative of the kind of thinking that must have guided the research which culminated in its production. It begins with a short introduction, where the reader is lectured to through a number of points that the "reader of this book should know," numbering thirteen by my count; because of the chaotic organization of the introduction I may have missed some.

Moreover, the introduction does not include a survey of the sources used for the research, nor does it include an analysis of these sources in order to determine their relative importance. It does include, however, a detailed table of contents of one of the major texts attributed to Ibn Sirin (spelled Ibn Sireen) (A.D. 654–728). In the text, Ibn Sirin assigns significance to various phenomena seen in dreams varying all the way from seeing the deity to seeing packsaddles, stirrups, reins, and necklaces. Then, in an absurd attempt to modernize the art of dream interpreting, the author, Yehia Gouda, advises the reader to use his imagination in transferring the significance of ancient items to their modern counterparts. A camel, perceived as a vehicle of transportation, is