

THE BIBLE: FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO 600: THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

Edited by James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper
Cambridge University Press, 2013.

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One year after the first volume of the *New Cambridge history of the Bible* (Richard E. Marsden, Ann Matter, eds., *The new Cambridge history of the Bible: The Bible from 600 to 1450*; Cambridge University Press, 2012), the second volume covering the vast period from the beginnings of the Bible to its shape and manifold reception until 600 AD, has now been published. The massive volume fully meets the challenge of addressing this daunting task. Its 37 essays provide a fine up-to-date and reliable survey of all issues by a team of international experts. The brief preface by the editors (xii–xv) compares the scope and emphasis of this volume with volumes one and two of the *Cambridge history of the Bible* and explains why and where the older structure was supplemented in order to account for the considerable number of discoveries of texts and artefacts relevant to the study of the Bible, and the often remarkable shifts in scholarly methodology and opinion (xii).

Part one is devoted to the external factors of languages, writing systems and book production, apart from which the history of the Bible cannot be appreciated. It contains the following essays: Geoffrey Kahn, ‘The languages of the Old Testament’ (3–21); Jan Joosten, ‘Varieties of Greek in the Septuagint and the New Testament’ (22–45); William M. Schniedewind, ‘Writing and book production in the ancient Near East’ (46–62); and Larry Hurtado, Chris Keith on ‘Writing and book production in the Hellenistic and Roman periods’ (63–80).



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Part two addresses the Hebrew Bible and Old Testaments: E. Ulrich, 'The Old Testament text and its transmission' (83–104); Joachim Schaper, 'The literary history of the Hebrew Bible' (105–144); John Barton, 'The Old Testament canons' (145–164); John J. Collins, 'The "apocryphal" Old Testament' (165–189); Günter Stemberger, 'From inner-biblical interpretation to rabbinic exegesis' (190–217); C.T.R. Hayward, 'The Aramaic Targums' (218–241); Jonathan G. Campbell, 'Scriptural interpretation at Qumran' (242–266); Kristin de Troyer, 'The Septuagint' (267–288); William Horbury, 'Biblical Interpretation in Greek Jewish writings' (289–320); C.T.R. Hayward, 'Scripture in the Jerusalem temple' (321–344); James W. Watts, 'The political and legal uses of scripture' (345–364); and a survey of 'Modern editions of the Hebrew Bible' (365–385) by Emanuel Tov.

Part three briefly surveys the New Testament: Joseph Verheyden, 'The New Testament canon' (389–411); David C. Parker, 'The New Testament text and versions' (412–454); J.K. Elliott, 'The "apocryphal" New Testament' (455–478); and Dale C. Allison on 'The Old Testament in the New Testament' (479–502). On the contents of this part see also F. Young, L. Ayres, A. Louth (eds). *The Cambridge history of early Christian Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Biblical versions other than Hebrew and Greek are the focus of *part four*: Pierre-Maurice Bogaert writes on 'The Latin Bible' (505–526); Peter J. Williams on 'The Syriac versions of the Bible' (527–535); and Wolf-Peter Funk on 'The translation of the Bible into Coptic' (536–546).

The remainder of the volume (*part five*) traces the reception of the Bible in the post-New Testament period. It consists of the following essays: James Carleton Paget, 'The interpretation of the Bible in the second century' (549–583, including Irenaeus, who 'is better understood against the background of his second-century setting because in a number of ways he reflects very obviously the exegetical traditions he inherits; this possibly in contrast to a figure like Origen', xiv; a broad survey from the Apostolic Fathers to the Apologists); Winrich Löhr, 'Gnostic and Manichaean interpretation' (584–604); Gilles Dorival, 'Origen' (605–628); Michael J. Hollerich, 'Eusebius' (629–652); Adam Kamesar, 'Jerome' (653–675); Carol Harrison, 'Augustine' (676–696; among these interpreters, Chrysostom also comes to mind); J.F. Coakley, 'Syriac exegesis' (697–713); Mark Edwards, 'Figurative readings: their scope and justification' (714–733); Frances M. Young, 'Traditions of exegesis' (734–751, including discussion of Antiochene traditions); Wolfram Kinzig, 'Pagans and the Bible' (752–774); Mark W. Elliott, 'Exegetical genres in the patristic era' (775–797); Thomas Graumann, 'The Bible in doctrinal development and Christian councils' (798–821); Gerard Rouwhorst, 'The Bible in liturgy' (822–842); and Lucy Grig, 'The Bible in popular and non-literary culture' (843–870, attempting 'to look at the Bible as it was experienced by a much broader range of people in Antiquity', 843) in the

period under consideration. The volume closes with a select bibliography (871–912), an index of manuscripts (913–915) and of scriptural and related sources, and a detailed general index (933–979).

Obviously with this vast range of material and time, each essay must be confined to the most important issues. Particularly in the final part the focus had to be on representative figures and issues.

Further volumes of the *New Cambridge history of the Bible* will address the history of the Bible *From 1450 to 1750* (ed. by Euan Cameron) and *From 1750 to the Present* (ed. by John Riches). The frontispiece of the volume notes regarding the scope of the series:

The New Cambridge History of the Bible series comprises four volumes which take into account the considerable advances in scholarship made in almost all biblical disciplines during the previous forty years. The volumes respond to shifts in scholarly methods of study of the Old and New Testaments, look closely at specialised forms of Interpretation and address the new concerns of the twenty-first century. Attention is paid to biblical studies in eastern Christian, Jewish and Islamic contexts, rendering the series of interest to students of all Abrahamic faiths. The entire New Cambridge History of the Bible offers a comprehensive account of the development of the Bible from its beginnings to the present day, but each volume can also be read independently, providing a substantial contribution to the scholarship of the period it covers. The New History will provide an invaluable resource for scholars, researchers and students alike.

A good companion volume is A. Hauser and D.F. Watson's (eds) *A history of Biblical interpretation I: The Ancient Period* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003).