

The Holy Spirit, Inspiration, and the Cultures of Antiquity

Ekstasis

Religious Experience
from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

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The Holy Spirit, Inspiration, and the Cultures of Antiquity

Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Edited by
Jörg Frey and John R. Levison

In collaboration with
Andrew Bowden

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Preface

This book has a long pre-history. I met Jörg Frey in Tübingen in 1993, thanks to Professor Martin Hengel. Jörg was a doctoral student and assistant to Professor Hengel; I was an Alexander von Humboldt fellow sponsored by Professor Hengel. Jörg and I met in the Institut für antikes Judentum und hellenistische Religionsgeschichte and in Professor Hengel's home, where he and Marianne Hengel regularly hosted seminars. When, years later, I expressed interest in resuming my Humboldt fellowship, Jörg Frey and Sandy (A. J. M.) Wedderburn invited me to Munich. I jumped at the chance.

In the course of that year, Jörg and I co-directed an Oberseminar on the origins of pneumatology at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, where Jörg served as Professor of New Testament and Early Judaism. More important, Jörg and I met often for cake and coffee at a local café in the university district of Munich. It was in that café where we cooked up the idea of procuring funds for a study on the historical origins of the holy spirit.

Subsequently, I spent considerable time communicating with Amy Hirschfeld, executive director of the International Catacomb Society, which sponsors a Shohet Scholars Award. Amy, herself a writer, devoted hours of her own time to helping us compose a successful proposal. With funding from the Shohet Scholars Program in hand, we were able to apply to the TransCoop program of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which at the time funded matching grants. Jörg worked tirelessly to meet the stringent requirements of this program; as a result, we received full matching funds. Between the Shohet Scholars Award and the TransCoop grant, we had ample resources to invite an exceptional array of scholars to participate in a pioneering interdisciplinary project that would unearth and analyze conceptions of inspiration during the Second Temple period, roughly 200 BCE – 200 CE.

This funding allowed us to meet in focused research units a year or so before we met in Leiden. My research unit, for example, which centered on Plutarch and the New Testament, had the pleasure of meeting in the Konrad-Adenauer-Haus, situated a stone's throw from Lake Como in Italy.

When it came time for our symposium, Johannes Tromp procured support from E. J. Brill publishers and the University of Leiden in order to offer us splendid housing in a local Leiden hotel, great food on campus and in local restaurants, a fine videographer, and all the amenities we could possibly need. Thanks to Johannes, we had an excellent symposium in a storied university in a lovely city.

Then, of course, came the hard work of writing. At this point in our research, Andrew Bowden, a graduate student in the University of Munich, stepped in to bring this work to fruition. To say that Andrew edited and indexed this book is to understate his importance. Andrew became so integral to this project, in fact, that Jörg and I decided it would only be right to include him as a collaborator. The finished product is due in part to Andrew's uncompromising commitment to excellence.

Albrecht Döhnert, with whom I have worked for years in my role as editor of the series *Ekstasis: Religious Experience from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, has been nothing but supportive and sage. I treasure working with Albrecht.

Jörg and I are grateful to all of these good people and to the funding agencies that made this unique research project possible. We are also gratified to have worked with such a distinguished coterie of scholars. Finally, let me say what a privilege it has been to collaborate with Jörg Frey to conceive, to implement, and now to bring to completion this research venture. Jörg is the consummate scholar: serious, relentless, with an unmatched grasp of scholarship. I am pleased that we are colleagues and friends.

Jack Levison

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
Abr.	Philo, <i>De abrahamo</i>
Aet.	Aetius
Aet.	Philo, <i>De aeternitate mundi</i>
Ag. Ap.	<i>Against Apion</i>
Ag.	Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
Agr.	Philo, <i>De agricultura</i>
AGSU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
ALD	Aramaic Levi Document
Amat.	Plutarch, <i>Amatorius</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase
Ant.	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i>
Apoc. Zeph.	<i>Apocalypse of Zephaniah</i>
As. Mos.	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>
ATD	Acta Theologica Danica
Ath. pol.	Aristotle, <i>Athēnaiōn politeia</i>
AThAT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des alten und neuen Testaments
ATJ	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
B.C.E.	Before Common Era
Bar	Baruch
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed.
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibS	Biblische Studien
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblicher Kommentar, Altes Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BsR	Bech'sche Reihe
BTS	<i>Bible et terre sainte</i>
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAR	Beihefter zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
C.E.	Common Era

<i>Cael.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De caelo</i>
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CD	Damascus Document
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CH	Corpus Hippocraticum
<i>Cher.</i>	Philo, <i>De cherubim</i>
Col	Colossians
<i>Conf.</i>	Philo, <i>De confusione linguorum</i>
<i>Contempl.</i>	Philo, <i>De vita contemplative</i>
1–2Cor	1–2Corinthians
<i>Crat.</i>	Plato, <i>Cratylus</i>
CTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
Dan	Daniel
<i>De an.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De anima</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	Philo, <i>De decalogo</i>
<i>Def. orac.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De defectu oraculorum</i>
<i>Det.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat</i>
<i>Deus</i>	Philo, <i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>
Deut	Deuteronomy
DHR	Dynamics in the History of Religions
<i>Div.</i>	Cicero, <i>De divination</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
<i>E Delph.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De E apud Delphos</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	Philo, <i>De ebrietate</i>
<i>Ecl.</i>	Stobaeus, <i>Eclogues</i>
EJL	Early Judaism and its Literature
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EMSP	European Monographs in Social Psychology
<i>1En.</i>	<i>1Enoch</i>
Eph	Ephesians
<i>Erjb</i>	<i>Eranos-Jahrbuch</i>
ET	English translation
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Ethica nichomachea</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
Exod	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>Fat.</i>	Cicero, <i>De fato</i>
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
<i>Fin.</i>	Cicero, <i>De finibus</i>
<i>FjudB</i>	<i>Gesellschaft zur Förderung Jüdischer Studien in Frankfurt am Main e.V.</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>Fug.</i>	Philo, <i>De fuga et inventio</i>
fzb	Forschung zur Bibel
Gal	Galatians

Gen	Genesis
<i>Gen. an.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De generatione animalium</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	Philo, <i>De gigantibus</i>
GuL	Glaube und Lernen
Hag	Haggai
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols.
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HdO	Handbook of Oriental Studies
Heb	Hebrews
<i>Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Hist. an.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Historia animalium</i>
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
Hos	Hosea
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Inst.</i>	Quintillian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
<i>los.</i>	Philo, <i>De Iosepho</i>
<i>Is. os.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De Iside et Osiride</i>
<i>JAOs</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBTh</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie</i>
Jer	Jeremiah
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
Jon	Jonah
<i>Jos. Asen.</i>	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>
Josh	Joshua
<i>JOTT</i>	<i>Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics</i>
JRL	John R. Levison
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
Judg	Judges
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
1–2Kgs	1–2Kings
KJV	King James Version
<i>L.A.B.</i>	<i>Liber atiquitatum biblicarum</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>Leg.</i>	Philo, <i>Legum allegoriae</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	Plato, <i>Leges</i>

<i>Legat.</i>	Philo, <i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Lev	Leviticus
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LHOTS	Library of Hebrew/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LS	A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, <i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i>
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LXX	Septuagint
2Macc	2Maccabees
Mal	Malachi
Mas1K	ShirShabb
<i>Math.</i>	Sextus Empericus, <i>Adversus mathematicos</i>
Matt	Matthew
MBPS	Mellen Biblical Press Series
<i>Med.</i>	Marcus Aurelius, <i>Meditationes</i>
<i>Mem.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Memorabilia</i>
<i>Meta.</i>	Apuleius, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Metaph</i>	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysica</i>
Mic	Micah
<i>Migr.</i>	Philo, <i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
MMT	<i>Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah</i>
<i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	Philo, <i>De vita Mosis</i>
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>Mut.</i>	Philo, <i>De mutatione nominum</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
Nah	Nahum
<i>Nat. d.</i>	Cicero, <i>De natura deorum</i>
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
Neh	Nehemiah
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTC	The New Testament in Context
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
Num	Numbers
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
<i>OCP</i>	<i>Orientalia christiana periodica</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>Onir.</i>	Artemidorus Daldianus, <i>Onirocritica</i>

<i>Opif.</i>	Philo, <i>De opificio mundi</i>
OSAPh	Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar
<i>Part. an.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De partibus animalium</i>
1Pet	1Peter
<i>Phaed.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phaedr.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i>
Phil	Philippians
<i>Phileb.</i>	Plato, <i>Philebus</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	Philo, <i>De plantation</i>
<i>Post.</i>	Philo, <i>De posteritate Caini</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	Philo, <i>De praemiis et poenis</i>
<i>Prax.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Adversus Praxean</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
Prov	Proverbs
<i>Prov.</i>	Philo, <i>De providentia</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
Ps(s)	Psalms(s)
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
<i>Pyth. orac.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De Pythiae oraculi</i>
1Q29	<i>Apocryphon of Moses</i>
1Q30	1QLiturgical Text
1Q34	<i>Festival Prayers</i>
1QH ^a	1QHodayot; <i>Thanksgiving Hymns</i>
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i>
1QS	<i>The Rule of the Community (Serekh ha-Yahad)</i>
1QS3:13–4:26	<i>Two Spirits Treatise</i>
1QSb	<i>Rule of the Blessings</i>
4Q177	4QMidrash on Eschatology
4Q230	<i>Catalogue of Spirits</i>
4Q286–90	<i>Berakhot (Blessings)</i>
4Q381	4QNon-Canonical Psalms B
4Q385–86	<i>Pseudo-Ezekiel</i>
4Q392–93	<i>Works of God & Communal Confession</i>
4Q400–07	4QShirShabba; <i>Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice</i>
4Q418	4QInstruction
4Q422	<i>Paraphrase of Genesis and Exodus</i>
4Q444	4QIncantation
4Q434–38	<i>Barkhi Nafshi (Bless My Soul)</i>
4Q504–06	<i>Words of the Luminaries</i>
4Q510–11	4QShira; <i>Shirot</i> or <i>Songs/Words of the Sage</i>
4Q521	<i>Messianic Apocalypse</i>
4Q542	<i>Testament of Qahat</i>
4Q542–49	<i>Visions of Amram</i>
4QM	<i>War Scroll</i>
11Q5	<i>David's Compositions</i>

11Q13	11QMelchizedek
QD	Quaestiones disputatae
QE	Philo, <i>Questiones et solutiones in Exodum</i>
QG	Philo, <i>Questiones et solutiones in Genesin</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> . Edited by T. Kluser et al.
Resp.	Aristotle, <i>De respiratio</i>
Rev	Revelation
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> . Edited by K. Galling. 7 vols. 3d ed. Tübingen, 1957–1965
RHL	Rainer Hirsch-Luipold
RMCS	Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies
Rom	Romans
Sacr.	Philo, <i>De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>
1–2Sam	1–2 Samuel
SAPERE	Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SCHNT	Studia ad corpus hellenicum Novi Testamenti
SGKA	Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
Sir	Sirach
SNTS	Society of New Testament Studies
<i>Sobr.</i>	Philo, <i>De sobrietate</i>
<i>Somn.</i>	Philo, <i>De somniis</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	Plato, <i>Sophista</i>
SPA	Studia Philonica Annual
<i>Spec.</i>	Philo, <i>De specialibus legibus</i>
<i>Spir.</i>	Pseudo-Aristotle, <i>De spiritu</i>
<i>STDJ</i>	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judea</i>
<i>Stoic. rep.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De stoicorum repugnantiis</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>
SVF	<i>Stoicorum veterum fragmenta</i> . H. von Arnim. 4 vols. Leipzig, 1903–1924
Sus	Susanna
<i>T. Abr.</i>	<i>Testament of Abraham</i>
<i>T. Job</i>	<i>Testament of Job</i>
<i>T. Levi</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (ed. G. Kittel)
<i>Theaet.</i>	Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i>
1Thess	1Thessalonians
<i>THAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Edited by E. Jenni, with assistance from C. Westermann. 2 vols., Stuttgart, 1971–1976
<i>THKNT</i>	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>ThWQ</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten</i>

<i>Tim.</i>	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i>
Tit	Titus
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
Tob	Tobit
<i>Top.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Topica</i>
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
<i>Traq. an.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De tranquillitate animi</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Edited by G. Krause and G. Müller.
TRev	<i>Theologische Revue</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> .
TWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Stuttgart, 1932–1979
<i>Virt.</i>	Philo, <i>De virtutibus</i>
<i>Virt. mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De virtute morali</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WdF	Wege der Forschung
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
Zech	Zechariah
ZNT	<i>Zeitschrift für Neues Testament</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Jörg Frey and John R. Levison¹

The Origins of Early Christian Pneumatology: On the Rediscovery and Reshaping of the History of Religions Quest

1 Introduction

During the last few decades, the Holy Spirit has increasingly come to be a focus of historical and theological interest. One of the reasons for this surge in interest is the rise and enormous global growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. The growing influence of these forms of Christianity has led to a shift of interest even within established churches and exegetical schools, where reflection upon pneumatology—the world of the Spirit—has until recently been largely neglected. “Pentecostal” theology and exegesis provide a challenge and inspiration for other theological schools and arenas of biblical scholarship, not just with respect to biblical hermeneutics,² but certainly with their focus upon claims to human experience of the divine.³

A so-called Pentecostal hermeneutic, with its emphasis upon experience, does not stand alone in the contemporary study of biblical texts. An appropriation of religious experience is one of the characteristics of recent developments in worldwide biblical scholarship, inspired especially by a burgeoning of contex-

1 Jörg Frey, Lehrstuhl für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft mit Schwerpunkt Antikes Judentum und Hermeneutik, Universität Zürich, and John R. Levison, W.J.A. Power Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Biblical Hebrew at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

2 For an intelligent introduction to what can be called a Pentecostal or Charismatic hermeneutic, see *Spirit & Scripture: Examining a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, eds. Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London: T&T Clark, 2012). See also J. Ch. Thomas, “Reading the Bible from within our Traditions: A Pentecostal Hermeneutic as Test Case,” In *Between Two Horizons. Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, eds. J. B. Green and M. Turner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000): 108–22; see also the commentary series “The Pentecostal Commentary—New Testament,” edited by the leading Pentecostal New Testament scholar John Christopher Thomas.

3 Cf. M. Welker, ed., *The Work of the Spirit. Pneumatology and Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006) with contributions by James D. G. Dunn, Michael Welker and others.

tual theologies.⁴ To these developments can be added a rigorous quest for social and religious experience reflected in biblical texts. In biblical scholarship, the re-emergence of a consideration of religious experience is visible in studies on the Spirit by British scholar James D. G. Dunn,⁵ and a number of other authors, especially from the Anglo-Saxon world, some of whom come from a Pentecostal background.⁶

With the exegetical rediscovery of religious experience, there is also a chance for a fresh appreciation of the History of Religions school, which dominated exegetical scholarship a century ago. One of the characteristics of that school was to focus on religious experience rather than on theological doctrine, and it was a study on the effects of the Holy Spirit in particular that stood at the fountainhead of that school.⁷ The findings of those scholars who looked especially at extra-biblical sources (Mesopotamian, Persian, Hellenistic, Gnostic, etc.) and explained biblical ideas in light of foreign influences, were largely neglected in later periods of research.

This neglect is due, in part, to the reconstructions of the early History of Religions school, which reveal numerous shortcomings.⁸ Despite certain excesses,

⁴ See, for example, Priscilla Pope-Levison and John R. Levison, eds., *Return to Babel: Global Perspectives on the Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999).

⁵ Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM Press, 1970); idem, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1975).

⁶ G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994); M. Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1996); idem, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament Church and Today* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998); L. T. Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); J. Ch. Thomas, *The Spirit of the New Testament* (Leiden: Deo, 2005); J. E. Morgan-Wynne, *Holy Spirit and Religious Experience in Christian Literature ca. AD 90–200* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); C. Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma*, WUNT II/230 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), with a brief account of research (pp. 94–108); John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

⁷ H. Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und nach der Lehre des Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), ET: *The Influence of the Holy Spirit. The Popular View of the Apostolic Age and the Teaching of the Apostle Paul*, trans. K. A. Harrisville and P. A. Quanbeck II (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

⁸ Some of this resistance is due to a fundamental refusal to accept particularly Hellenistic influence on the New Testament. See, for example, Pentecostal scholars James B. Shelton, "Two Spirits or Holy Spirit? Examining John R. Levison's *Filled with the Spirit*," *Pneuma* 33 (2011): 47–58; and Blaine Charette, "'And Now for Something Completely Different': A 'Pythonic' Reading of Pentecost?" *Pneuma* 33 (2011): 59–68.

early proponents of the History of Religions school were correct in their effort to recognize that the experiences of the Spirit and spirit phenomena among early Jesus followers in Jerusalem, Corinth, and Ephesus were not hermetically sealed from their Jewish or Greco-Roman neighbors. Further, human experiences are often analogous even if they are then interpreted in different religious and doctrinal contexts. Consequently, if the rediscovery of a dimension related to an experience of the Spirit is taken seriously, it almost inevitably leads to the historical question: *From where were the terms, categories, and images drawn, by which early Christian authors expressed their experiences or those of their communities?* How did biblical and Second Temple Jewish traditions interact with images and concepts from the wider Greco-Roman world? How did Pauline communities, Paul's own concepts and arguments, Luke's narrative description of the experiences of early Christianity, images of inspiration in the Fourth Gospel, seven references to the Spirit in Hebrews, the seven spirits of Revelation, and appeals to the Spirit in the Catholic epistles draw on what was available—even regnant—in the Greco-Roman world? How did biblical traditions and early Jewish concepts, found amply in the Dead Sea Scrolls, contribute to early Christian concepts of inspiration? Where is the influence of Hellenistic Jewish concepts evident? To what degree did philosophical concepts or insights about human physiology, as documented in ancient medical texts, contribute to the conception and interpretation of the Spirit and its effects in the earliest Christian community?

Early Christian pneumatology—the reflection of early Christian authors on their experience of the Spirit or phenomena explained by the Spirit—did not develop within a closed “biblical” space but in a world in which ideas and concepts were exchanged, often regardless of the particular religions or doctrinal context in which they originated. Therefore, in the quest for the Spirit and its effects in early Christianity, an expansive approach is needed, one that is not confined to a particular (Jewish or Hellenistic) context but one that belongs on a larger scale to a variety of possible contexts. It is incumbent upon the biblical scholar to identify various potentially relevant contexts that yield a fuller understanding of biblical texts, the phenomena reflected in them, and the experiences that lay behind them.

In this introduction, therefore, we will: (1) sketch some of the basic findings and characteristics of the History of Religions school that are still often neglected in present scholarship; (2) outline some of the more important contributions to the discussion that emerged after the decline of the History of Religions school; (3) identify some aspects related to the rediscovery of religious experience within more recent studies of New Testament pneumatology; and (4) identify some dimensions that can help to reshape the history of religions approach to antiquity

and to stimulate further discussion, in anticipation of the contributions of this volume.

2 The History of Religions School and Its Initial Findings

2.1 Hermann Gunkel and the Impulse of Twentieth-century Pneumatology

The *religionsgeschichtlich*—or history of religions—approach to pneumatology can be traced to Hermann Gunkel's first book, titled *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Lehre des Apostels Paulus*.⁹ Published in Göttingen by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in 1888, when Gunkel was just a twenty-six year old *Privatdozent* in Göttingen, this book contained explosive theses that inaugurated the modern era in the study of early Christian pneumatology.¹⁰ Forty-four years after its initial publication, in a eulogy at Gunkel's funeral, Hans Schmidt reminded the audience gathered in the Bartholomäus-Kirche that the book "speaks, in truth, a new word ... It is not a conclusion but a beginning."¹¹

The context in which Gunkel wrote his explosive little book was inauspicious. As a student at Göttingen in the mid 1880's, Hermann Gunkel joined with a small circle of friends in silent opposition to the methods of their teacher, Albrecht Ritschl. Gunkel mused four decades later, "Admittedly, it was a peculiar 'School' that arose. A School without teacher and chiefly without students! It

⁹ See his preface to *Wirkungen*, 3rd ed., iii, viii. Ninety-one years after its appearance, the book was translated into English by R. A. Harrisville and P. A. Quanbeck II, entitled, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit: The Popular View of the Apostolic Age and the Teaching of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

¹⁰ The possibility, of course, of writing a diminutive study on the spirit fell to Gunkel in some measure because so little had been written by his academic predecessors and peers. He accomplished this as well by devoting only a single line on the last page to the Fourth Gospel (*Wirkungen*, p. 101 [ET p. 127]): "The theology of the Gospel of John clearly indicates its dependence on Paul on this subject."

¹¹ *Theologische Blätter* 11.4 (April, 1932), col. 98. By "kein Abschluss" Schmidt means that this is a fresh start, free of Albrecht Ritschl's conception of the spirit and the dominance of German Idealism. For more on this, see John R. Levison, "Assessing the Origins of Modern Pneumatology: The Life and Legacy of Hermann Gunkel," In *Christian Body, Christian Self: Concepts of Early Christian Personhood*, eds. Clare K. Rothschild and Trevor W. Thompson, WUNT 284 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011): 313–31.

was a tightly bound circle of young scholars bound by mutual friendship.”¹² Following the lead of Albert Eichhorn, this small circle comprised the heart and soul of what became the History of Religions school, which included William Wrede and Wilhelm Bousset. Ernst Troeltsch and Wilhelm Heitmüller later joined the ranks, and Johannes Weiss was an associate of the group.¹³ These young academics—the oldest was Eichhorn, born in 1856, and the youngest Heitmüller, born in 1869—stood in vociferous opposition to a form of “biblical theology” that identified central biblical teachings in support of dogmatic theology. Dogmatic theology, Gunkel and his coterie contended, could not be independent of history. Gunkel wrote in 1906, “Revelation is not contrary to history or outside of history but comes to pass within the history of the Spirit.”¹⁴

This vision of biblical scholarship contained more than an anti-dogmatic or anti-ecclesial agenda. It entailed a redirection of scholarship; periods of biblical history would need to be examined in rich association with other cultures of their respective periods. As late as 1922, when he was sixty years old, Gunkel clarified the fundamental commitments of this movement:

It [the movement] struggled out of the narrowness of the barriers of scholarly activity at that time into expanse and freedom, out of the barriers of the canon and church dogma about the Bible, out of the narrow-mindedness of dogmatic “biblical theology” and an all-too-philological form of literary criticism, out of an all-too-hair-splitting or modernizing exposition of scripture ... also out of the isolation of Old and New Testaments from their historical connections with other religions ... Because this was our most essential and ultimate aspiration: to grasp religion itself in its depth and breadth.¹⁵

The History of Religions school led some of its exponents, such as Hans Leisegang, deep into the recesses of Hellenistic culture. It led Gunkel to the heart of Judaism.

Gunkel’s appreciation for the crucible of Judaism which formed Christianity compelled him to chide H. H. Wendt, who had a few years earlier written a book on spirit and flesh in Paul’s writings, for attempting to explain Paul’s writings on the basis of Israel’s scriptures alone.¹⁶ While the gospel spread in part through the influence of Jewish scripture, Gunkel insisted that “the assumption of Jewish

¹² Cited by Werner Klatt, *Hermann Gunkel: Zu seiner Theologie der Religionsgeschichte und zur Entstehung der formgeschichtlichen Methode*, FRLANT 100 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 20n13. Translations of Klatt are ours.

¹³ Klatt, *Gunkel*, 20–21.

¹⁴ Cited by Klatt, *Gunkel*, 27.

¹⁵ Cited by Klatt, *Gunkel*, 27.

¹⁶ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 3 (ET 12). He also criticized Wendt for his rejection of Hellenistic ideas.

influence always carries much greater probability than does the assumption of the influence of the Old Testament.” Though the gospel expanded under the influence of the scriptures, then, “We must therefore view Judaism as the real matrix of the gospel ... but without denying the influence of a reading of the Old Testament.”¹⁷

Palestinian Judaism informed the early apostolic community: “the apostles emerged from Jewish ideas, and with Jewish ideas they had to come to terms with one another.”¹⁸ Paul too was Jewish through and through, and it is erroneous to interpret his writings from any other context. “It is a grave error in method, which must result in a mass of misconceptions, to attempt to derive Paul’s sphere of ideas or even his usage directly from the Old Testament and consequently to ignore the apostle’s origin in Judaism. The question can only be, Is Paul dependent on Palestinian or Hellenistic Judaism or is he not?”¹⁹ With such a commitment, Gunkel made a dramatic departure from earlier students of the Spirit, who had looked for the origins of early Christian pneumatology in the pages of Israel’s literary legacy.²⁰ His was an independent departure that led Gunkel to study the Apocrypha and to focus upon Jewish apocalyptic literature.²¹

Gunkel’s ability to make the case, over against the scholarly consensus of his day, that an understanding of Early Judaism is integral to an understanding of early Christian pneumatology, was prescient. His conviction that the roots of early Christian pneumatology lay in an overlapping culture rather than ancient literature—the Hebrew scriptures—was fresh and original. Yet Gunkel’s characterization of Judaism was too dependent upon Emil Schürer’s view of Judaism as a legalistic religion that had lost Israel’s prophetic fervor. Gunkel contended that what distinguished Judaism from Israelite religion and early Christianity was “the fact that it produced no or, stated more cautiously, only very few pneumatic phenomena.”²²

In the context of this form of Judaism, John the Baptist was the first prophet since the Persian era and the first person of the Greco-Roman era to be in pos-

¹⁷ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 3 (ET 12–13). He observed also that the apostles emerged from Judaism.

¹⁸ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 3 (ET 13).

¹⁹ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 57–58 (ET 76). He continued by noting that the question is hard to answer because Paul was a Diaspora Jew who was educated in Jerusalem. The neat division between Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism dissipates, observes Gunkel with prescience, because there were Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem.

²⁰ Klatt, *Gunkel*, 29.

²¹ Cited by Klatt, *Gunkel*, 29.

²² Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 10 (ET 21).

session of the Spirit.²³ The preaching and miracles of Jesus, too, comprised a fresh experience. The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day preached differently from the preaching of a *Pneumatiker* such as Jesus, and miracles (*Geisteswunder*) never emerged "from a sober study of the Law."²⁴ Jesus must have made, therefore, an extraordinary impression upon the Jews of his day, though the near absence of Jewish conversions confirms how far behind they had left prophetic Israelite religion. Gunkel joins these unrelated pieces of the puzzle—scribal interpretation of scripture with resistance toward Jesus—to create a spurious indictment of Judaism at the time of Jesus: "But what a powerful impression the pneuma must have made when its fullness appeared to a Judaism bereft of the Spirit. Despite that fact, the number of converted Jews must be reckoned as few, which proves how strong the anti-prophetic and thus anti-evangelical tendency in Jesus' time was, a tendency later culminating in the Talmud."²⁵

Such a dismal characterization of Judaism had practical consequences, for it meant that Gunkel returned to Israelite literature rather than Judaism to explain the rise of Christianity—although he had criticized Wendt for doing precisely this, for discovering points of contact between the Hebrew scriptures and New Testament literature. Jesus' preaching reached back past his own Jewish era, which had lost the prophetic and spiritual dimension, and appeared as "a fresh sprout from the old, all-but-withered root of Old Testament prophecy."²⁶ In fact, Jesus could not have been a child of his time. The era "appears so spiritually impoverished to them that a man such as Jesus cannot come from it. He is not a child of his time. He must belong to Israel's antiquity, long past and mighty of spirit."²⁷ In short, if there are analogies to early Christianity, they must be found, not in the arid soil of Judaism, but in the fertile soil of Israelite religion.²⁸

What Gunkel gave with one hand, then, he took with the other. As a founder of the History of Religions school, he traced early Christian pneumatology to a contemporary culture—the world of Judaism—rather than ancient literature,

²³ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 52 (ET 69).

²⁴ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 53 (ET 70).

²⁵ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 53 (ET 70–71). He (*Wirkungen*, 53; ET 70) admitted of a few scattered experiences of the Spirit: "So far as we know, during Jesus' time and in the first two decades of the apostolic age activities of the Spirit in Judaism could only be identified in highly scattered instances." Gunkel (*Wirkungen*, 52; ET 69–70) cites references in the writings of Josephus that describe Jewish figures, such as the Essenes and John Hyrcanus, as prophets.

²⁶ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 3 (ET 12–13).

²⁷ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 51 (ET 68). He generalized the rather isolated and puzzling story of John the Baptist's disciples in Ephesus, in which they confess that they have never heard of the Holy Spirit, in such a way that it characterizes all of Judaism (51).

²⁸ Gunkel, *Wirkungen*, 10 (ET 21).

though his characterization of Judaism as “Spirit-impovertished” (*geistesverlassene*) renders this particular crucible of Christianity useful only as a negative foil for the spiritual vitality of early Christianity.²⁹ He was compelled, therefore, to return, with the predecessors whom he chided, to Israelite literature in an effort to explain the spiritual vitality of early Christianity.

Notwithstanding its limitations, Gunkel’s *Werkchen*—it extended slightly beyond one hundred pages—with its emphasis upon the importance of Judaism and the spectacular effects of the Spirit rendered prior approaches to pneumatology passé and spawned a swath of fresh publications.³⁰ Within eight years, M. Beversluis, from The Netherlands, adopted the word, *Wirkungen*, in the title of his massive *De heilige Geest en zijne werkingen volgens de Schriften des Nieuwen Verbonds*.³¹ The nineteenth century ended with H. Weinel’s *Die Wirkungen des Geistes und der Geister im nachapostolischen Zeitalter bis auf Irenäus*,³² which extended Gunkel’s approach, with its emphasis upon the effects of the Spirit, to the second century C.E.

Two other books carried on Gunkel’s legacy. One year after the publication of Gunkel’s third edition, Paul Volz paid careful attention to Early Judaism in the first substantive contribution to ancient pneumatology of the twenty-first century, *Der Geist Gottes und die verwandten Erscheinungen im Alten Testament und im anschliessenden Judentum*.³³

Hans Leisegang devoted two volumes to the origins of early Christian pneumatology, the first of which he gave to a publisher as early as 1916, though it lay

²⁹ In the preface to his third edition, written twenty years later, a more mature Gunkel attempted to explain—we might better say excuse—this characterization of Judaism (*Wirkungen*, v–vi; ET 3–5). He noted that, at that time, New Testament scholars looked exclusively for “Anknüpfungspunkten,” points of connection, in the Old Testament, and that the use of Judaism was a “Neuerung.” He explains that this scenario changed between 1888 and 1909, though he (*Wirkungen*, v [ET 3–4]) cautioned that “there remains still much to do, until an intimate knowledge of the religious life of Judaism is achieved.” Gunkel’s statements about Judaism are difficult to accept. His first book does not reveal a reluctant purveyor of the absence of spirituality in Judaism but an ardent proponent of the view that the spirit had virtually no life in Early Judaism.

³⁰ His book eclipsed others written slightly earlier, including H. H. Wendt, *Die Begriffe Fleisch und Geist* (Gotha, 1878) and J. Gloël, *Der heilige Geist in der Heilsverkündigung des Paulus* (Halle, 1888).

³¹ (Utrecht: C. H. E. Breijer, 1896), 508.

³² (Freiburg/Leipzig/Tübingen: Mohr, 1899).

³³ Volz’s notes are few. He refers to Gunkel on pages 94–95n1; page 110n2 contains a reference to Gunkel’s study of the psalms—not of the Spirit. Nonetheless, Volz (pp. 78–145) also explored the effects of the Spirit, such as inspired speech and poetry, prophetic and predictive speech, inspired writing and translation, and inspired wisdom.

on the publisher's desk and failed to appear until after the First World War. Leisegang addressed precisely the history of religions question that Gunkel had raised, though he swung the pendulum in the direction of Hellenism—actually an idiosyncratic form of Hellenistic Judaism—rather than Judaism as the matrix of Christianity.³⁴

Two responses to Leisegang's studies are salient as well. Friedrich Büchsel, in the mid-1920s, took his cue from Gunkel and Volz, against Leisegang, by accentuating the importance of Judaism and by addressing, nearly from the start, the effects of the Spirit in a section entitled, "*Geistwirkungen und Geistvorstellung im alten Israel*."³⁵ During the same year, Heinrich von Baer raised vociferous, protracted objections to Leisegang's work.³⁶

The roughly three decades from 1888 until 1926 were, in many respects, a golden age in the study of early Christian pneumatology, thanks to the energy of the History of Religions school—the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*. More specifically, the flurry of activity spent on the issues raised by Gunkel's little book is an indication of how influential his *Werkchen* was, with its emphasis upon the importance of Judaism—even Judaism negatively construed—for understanding the origins of early Christian pneumatology.

2.2 Paul Volz and the Vitality of Early Judaism

Published in 1910, the magisterial study of Paul Volz, who departed radically from Gunkel by championing a positive portrayal of Early Judaism as the crucible of Christian pneumatology, is one of the most important books on pneumatology of the twentieth century. Volz stood among relatively few scholars who studied the Hebrew Bible *and* postbiblical Jewish literature, not as foregrounds to the New Testament, but as corpora in their own right.

³⁴ H. Leisegang, *Der heilige Geist: Das Wesen und Werden der mystisch-intuitiven Erkenntnis in der Philosophie und Religion der Griechen* (Leipzig: B. J. Teubner, 1919); *Pneuma Hagion. Der Ursprung des Geistbegriffs der synoptischen Evangelien aus der griechischen Mystik* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1922). See further on Leisegang, John R. Levison, "The Spirit in the Gospels: Breaking the Impasse of Early Twentieth-century German Scholarship," In *New Testament Greek and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Hawthorne*, eds. Amy M. Donaldson and Timothy B. Sailors (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003): 55–76.

³⁵ *Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1926).

³⁶ H. von Baer, *Der heilige Geist in den Lukasschriften* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926).

Volz's assumption, which distinguished him from the likes of Schürer and Gunkel, was that Early Judaism was a vital religion. He wrote this programmatic statement:

The habit of comparing a form of Judaism that is coming to an end with a youthful form of Christianity has led regularly to a misunderstanding of the former. This is historically unsuitable and, moreover, it is far more probable that the new religion arose out of a period of religious stirring and deep feeling rather than out of a torpid and dying one.³⁷

Although he departed from Gunkel's assessment of Judaism, Volz did follow the lead of Gunkel and Weinel by analyzing the effects of the Spirit, such as inspired speech, inspired poetry, prophetic and predictive speech, inspired writing and translation (e.g., the Septuagint), and inspired wisdom. He detailed the work of inspired people, "pneumatische Personen," from Moses to the messiah of the eschatological future to figures of Second Temple Judaism, including Philo, Ben Sira, apocalyptic writers, and rabbis.

In addition to the effects of the Spirit, Volz also studied the nature of the Spirit. "The description of effects," he wrote, "ought to be enlarged by the history of conceptions. Some, such as the idea of the Spirit-hypostasis, cannot be fully appreciated by an overview of effects."³⁸ In order to understand the nature of the Spirit in Early Judaism, Volz adopted both a diachronic approach, beginning with post-exilic texts such as Isaiah 63:7–14 and concluding with rabbinic literature, and a synchronic approach, in which he explored topics such as the Spirit in Babylonian and Persian literature, angels, the Shekinah, and the logos.

In several ways, Volz advanced the discussion of the origins of early Christian pneumatology to new levels. He studied Judaism in its own right rather than as a resource for parallels that illuminate early Christianity. He discerned the spiritual vitality of Early Judaism. He took Gunkel's heuristic key—the *effects* of the Spirit—and applied it to Israelite and early Jewish literature. He went well beyond Gunkel by turning as well to the nature of the Spirit, including the question of the Spirit as hypostasis.

2.3 Hans Leisegang and the Matrix of Ancient Spirituality

Less than a decade later, Hans Leisegang took a different tack in his two volume study of the Spirit. His principal question was, "Is the teaching of the Holy Spirit

³⁷ Volz, *Geist Gottes und die verwandten Erscheinungen*, 144. Translations of Volz are ours.

³⁸ Volz, *Geist Gottes und die verwandten Erscheinungen*, v.

of Greek or oriental origin?" This question led him to a definite answer shaped by the contours of the history of religions approach. He asked whether

perhaps also the part of Christian teaching that is gathered around the concept of *pneuma hagon* and which, from a theological perspective, could be understood as nothing other than from the Old Testament, especially the prophets, might have originated from the Hellenistic life-of-the-spirit; in fact, perhaps even the theologians and learned of the Hellenistic era approached the Old Testament with a concept of the Holy Spirit already fully worked out in Hellenism, and they believed to have found it afresh in the *pneuma hagon* of the Septuagint.³⁹

Leisegang acknowledged that it would be difficult to reconstruct Greek conceptions of pneumatology in light of the reality that no antecedent to Christianity had a pneumatology as developed as that of the New Testament. He recognized as well that the most developed ancient pneumatologies arose after the first century C.E. and with Christian roots.

To bridge the divide between Greek conceptions of *pneuma* and patently Christian ones, Leisegang identified Philo Judaeus as a mediating figure in pneumatology, as arguably the most important author in antiquity for understanding the origins of Christian pneumatology. Philo, claimed Leisegang, lay "in the middle" of the "problematic era of the history of the Spirit in the East." This period was critical because the masses' trust in philosophy was waning while their belief in religion waxed. In this transitional era, which spawned Christianity, Philo lived at the nexus, "in the middle" of Greek culture, Judaism, and Christianity.⁴⁰ Philo was the quintessential ancient author, whose writings refer often to the divine Spirit, whose commentaries on Torah are a combination—even an amalgamation—of religion and philosophy, and whose interpretations are not just rarefied, esoteric inventions but encapsulations of popular mystical conceptions of the Spirit that reflect at one and the same time, and by design, both Jewish and Greek conceptions.

Leisegang, however, was not satisfied to discern the synergy between Jewish and Greek elements in Philo's writings. He was determined, rather, to distil Greco-Roman conceptions from what he deemed a Jewish veneer that overlay them. Only through this process of distillation could Leisegang chance to discover the popular Greco-Roman religiosity that, in his opinion, lay at the roots of early Christian pneumatology. "Philo's perspectives had such deep roots in popular Greek beliefs," he suggested, "that he already took over popular conceptions

³⁹ Leisegang, *Der heilige Geist*, 4. Translations of Leisegang are ours.

⁴⁰ Leisegang, *Der heilige Geist*, 14.

thoroughly drenched in Greek philosophy ... popular beliefs in his hands were transformed into a philosophical religion of the learned.”⁴¹

This was the primary project of the first volume, in which Leisegang, according to the subtitle, discovered “the essence and being of mystical-intuitive knowledge in the philosophy and religion of the Greeks.” In the second volume, in which he focused on the Gospels, Leisegang combined the history of religions with the history of traditions.

To trace the development of conceptions related to the Holy Spirit in the Gospels, Leisegang continued with the question of whether the origins of the Holy Spirit lay principally in the Greek or Jewish worlds. To answer this question, he was not satisfied to identify discrete elements with little relationship to one another. He was not interested, in short, in listing parallels or developing a taxonomy of correspondences, in which he would simply “collect details ... sentences out of context ... borrowing and lending from one religion to another.”⁴² Leisegang’s method was more sophisticated—and enduring—than that:

For the evaluation of the whole, I would like here explicitly to point out that it lies completely far afield from me to place the Jewish and other oriental influences on the synoptic traditions in the background through an emphasis on Greek motifs ... It must always be observed that my presenting question is not “Which words, conceptions, and representations in the gospels are in final origin Greek or Semitic?” I am asking much more, “What must a Greek [reader] have thought lay under the words, conceptions, and presentations, which they found in the gospel tradition, and what did he think actually lay under them? What did he make of the tradition? What did he read into it?”⁴³

The Hellenistic world was not monolithic, so Leisegang had to determine the sort of Greek milieu from which his hypothetical Greek reader would have come. The Gospels provided Leisegang with corpora against which he could test his theory. He discovered in them, not “learned speculation” but “primitive popular beliefs.”⁴⁴ This discovery is hardly surprising, given that this is precisely what Leisegang had already discovered in the writings of Philo.

Yet Leisegang claimed to discover still more in the Gospels: the Greek conceptions that influenced early Christian pneumatology were popular, yes, but mystical, too. Christianity grew from the soil of a Greek culture that exhibited a fresh interest in matters related to the Spirit. In fact, Christianity and Hellenism

⁴¹ Leisegang, *Der heilige Geist*, 240.

⁴² H. Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion: Der Ursprung des Geistbegriffs der synoptischen Evangelien aus der griechischen Mystik* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922), 3.

⁴³ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, iii–iv.

⁴⁴ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, 3.

can be characterized “both as children of the spirit ... of the Holy Spirit of mysticism, which from below, out of the mass of people, arose upward and threw science and philosophy overboard.”⁴⁵

This conviction, rooted in his history of religions analysis, had implications for Leisegang’s implementation of the history of traditions: traditions with Hellenistic flavoring, he claimed, are late traditions in the Gospels. To put an exclamation point on this, Leisegang pointed to the indisputable reality that the Spirit is barely evident throughout the life of Jesus. “Where does the full use of the motif of the spiritual conception of Mary and the reality of the son of God, which depends upon this process, remain as the most effective evidence for the miraculous, supernatural power of salvation conquering death?”⁴⁶ Further, these scant references to the Spirit, apart from the birth narratives, have “no organic connection” with the Gospels as a whole.⁴⁷

Even references in the birth narratives take a reader into Hellenistic realities, no more so than the verb ἐπισκιάζειν (“to overshadow”) in Luke 1:35. This verb, argued Leisegang, is at home in Greek conceptions of mantic prophecy—as in Philo’s writings, where the Spirit overshadows the mind. Inspiration, of course, is hardly impregnation, so Leisegang found other associations to bolster his case for the Hellenistic character of the Spirit’s overshadowing of Mary. These associations included the claim that the Delphic priestess received *pneuma* through her genitalia; the belief, which Leisegang claimed was held more generally, that inspiration developed sometimes in the womb of the prophet; the connection between *mania* and the womb in medical writings (e.g., Galen); myths in which birth-gods, such as Dionysius and Branchus, were associated with prophetic gifts; the Greco-Roman association of divine begetting and virginity that Leisegang claimed to discern in Philo’s allegories, in which God impregnates the four virgins—the virtues—and bears children; and the use of the word “soul” as a euphemism for the womb in the folk religion of the magical papyri.⁴⁸

Leisegang believed these texts create a taut association between prophetic inspiration, divine begetting, and virginity—as in Luke 1:35. Rather than regarding the wide provenance of these texts as a liability to his thesis, Leisegang saw their diversity as a window to how widespread this point of view was: popular conceptions of Delphic inspiration (including denigrations of the phenomena), belly-talkers or ventriloquists inspired directly by gods, the word “soul” as a euphemism for “womb,” medical analyses of *mania* and the womb, myths of Apol-

⁴⁵ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, 4.

⁴⁶ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, 12–13.

⁴⁷ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, 12–13.

⁴⁸ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, 25–27.

los and Branchus, Alexandrian allegorical interpretations of virginity—taken together, every last one of these, claimed Leisegang, provides the foreground to the Spirit's ability to overshadow Mary and impregnate her.

Corroborative data Leisegang claimed to discover in Philo's description of the heavenly world, in which God the father impregnates wisdom, who gives birth to the *logos*.⁴⁹ Leisegang identified a variety of other texts in which he claimed to discover this pattern, including the *Protoevangelium of James*, in which Mary's pregnancy is attributed to various divine entities, such as *logos*, *dynamis*, and *pneuma*.⁵⁰

Leisegang's efforts to pinpoint a Greco-Roman foreground to the work of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Jesus are enlightening, to be sure, but turgid and highly speculative as well. In many respects, they reveal the strengths and limits of the history of religions method. Inventive, erudite, and far-reaching, the history of religions method, in the hands of a scholar such as Leisegang, could be used to unearth and gather from corpora far and wide potentially relevant passages that may serve to illuminate otherwise obtuse biblical texts, such as Luke 1:35, in which the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit leads to Mary's pregnancy. Taken together, these texts bear witness to a common concern that spanned centuries, breached social boundaries, and leapt over cultural borders.

Leisegang's use of the history of religions method, however, also underscores its limitations, as it was practiced during the early twentieth century. First, notwithstanding Leisegang's caveats to the contrary, the collection of putative parallels borders on the indiscriminate; differences tend to be minimized, correspondences over-emphasized. What to Leisegang was a strength of the method—the ability to construct an overall pattern from seemingly unrelated texts—is also perhaps its greatest liability, since the patterns he identified did not easily match individual components. The whole, we might argue, was not greater than the parts; the whole was allowed to eclipse the parts.

A second possible weakness in the history of religions method, as Leisegang implemented it, lay in the possibly erroneous observation that all things *pneuma* belong together. Leisegang paid less attention to the different ways in which *pneuma* was conceived, focusing instead on the similarities that drew texts into a whole.

Third, Leisegang did not always weigh his sources; it is difficult to weigh sources even today—sometimes we tend inadvertently to weigh some sources more heavily simply because more of them are extant—but distinguishing the

⁴⁹ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, 50–55.

⁵⁰ Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion*, 55–67.

more important or regnant points of view from the more marginal must be part of the process of sifting ancient texts. Leisegang did not pay careful enough attention to this aspect of his method.

Fourth, Leisegang's emphasis upon Greco-Roman literature, including the writings of Philo at the nexus of Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures, within half a century would be eclipsed by the discovery of scrolls in the Judean wilderness in 1947. As we shall see later in this introduction, the Dead Sea Scrolls did not just lead to additional patterns or provide corroborative texts. The scrolls, even though they should be regarded in part as the product of a marginal community, demonstrated that a Palestinian Jewish community, which emerged and existed between 167 B.C.E. and 70 C.E., could claim unparalleled experiences of the Spirit and provide, with them, some of the closest parallels to the New Testament—closer at least than many of the more speculative ones Hans Leisegang had culled.

Leisegang's wholehearted implementation of the history of religions approach left him, then, open to weaknesses. Two scholars, Friedrich Büchsel and Hans von Baer, pointed many of those weaknesses out in the mid-1920s.⁵¹

2.4 Friedrich Büchsel and Jesus as the Center of Spirituality

Friedrich Büchsel devoted myriad brief discussions and notes to critiques of Leisegang's approach. Like Leisegang, Büchsel's knowledge ranged widely. He devoted 147 pages to the *Vorgeschichte* of early Christianity in the Hebrew Bible, Greco-Roman authors such as Plutarch, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Hellenistic-Jewish authors such as Philo and Josephus, the Greek mystery cults, rabbinic literature, and traditions of John the Baptist. Unlike Leisegang, Büchsel settled on Israelite and early Jewish literature as the locus of that foreground.

In still another way, Büchsel took a different tack from Leisegang, who had examined biblical texts in relative isolation from one another, distinct from their literary context in the Gospels. In today's parlance, we might suggest that biblical texts, such as Luke 1:35, functioned for Leisegang as hyperlinks to a rich repository of Greco-Roman resources. Büchsel, in contrast, paid more careful attention to the literary and theological contexts of the Gospels—and provided

⁵¹ See also I. Heinemann, "Philons Lehre vom Heiligen Geist und der intuitiven Erkenntnis," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 64 (1920): 8–29, 100–122; idem, "Die Lehre vom Heiligen Geist im Judentum und in den Evangelien," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 66 (1922): 169–80, 268–79.

one of the more trenchant critiques of Leisegang's practice of the history of religions method.

Büchsel discovered the focus of the Gospels in the portrait of Jesus as a *Pneumatiker*. The whole of Jesus' life flowed from this center: his prophetic authority; his ascetic inclination and repudiation of the family; his visionary experiences, particularly his experience at the Jordan River, where he began to understand that his life focused on the love of God, to which he could lay claim as God's son. "Jesus is first God's son, as a child," wrote Büchsel, "then as a pious Israelite and from the time of his baptism as someone who stands in full unmediated possession of the love of God, who is in a unique way the son of God through the Holy Spirit."⁵²

Leisegang's mythic and popular interpretation of the Spirit, culled from Greco-Roman sources, argued Büchsel, is incompatible with the portrait of Jesus in the Gospels as a *Pneumatiker*. The significance of the Spirit in the Gospels, especially its association with the love of God, finds no clear place of origin in the Greco-Roman world; its foreground, ultimately, is the Hebrew Bible.

The difference that divides him from Leisegang is apparent in Büchsel's interpretation of the Lucan birth narratives. Not a trace of a Greek prophetess lies embedded in Luke's Gospel, even though this is central to Leisegang's reconstruction of Luke's milieu. "Between the 'pneumatic' reception of the Greek prophetess," noted Büchsel, "and that of Mary lies a fundamental difference." The worlds of thought Leisegang collected, argued Büchsel, exhibit characteristics that divide them from one another. Mystical eroticism and polytheism are inconceivable counterparts to Luke's Gospel, in which the angel speaks of the messiah in the context of thoroughgoing piety.⁵³

Therefore, the most plausible foreground of Luke's birth narratives "is not Hellenistic mythical conceptions, but the Jewish conception that God through his Spirit creates."⁵⁴ This "Old Testament-Jewish" atmosphere permeates the birth narratives: references to the salvation of Israel, expectations of the messiah, allusions to the Psalms. "The effects of the Spirit, which are shown in the prophets, are through and through ones which are familiar in the Old Testament and Jewish prophets."⁵⁵

52 F. Büchsel, *Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1926), 167. Translations of Büchsel are ours.

53 Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, 198n4.

54 Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, 200.

55 Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, 200–01.

2.5 Heinrich von Baer and the Spirit in salvation history

Büchsel engaged Leisegang in brief discussions and notes.⁵⁶ Not so, von Baer, the second half of whose book contains a frontal assault on Leisegang.⁵⁷ Like Büchsel, von Baer attempted to dismantle the many parts of Leisegang's pattern by appealing to the whole picture, the *Gesamtbild*, of early Christian pneumatology. Von Baer lashed out at the History of Religions school for what he perceived to be an indiscriminate use of parallels. Von Baer's critique is significant, with relevance to the study of biblical texts in light of their cultural contexts, even today.

Parallels are often appealed to which, when superficially observed, reflect certain analogies to expressions of New Testament passages about the Holy Spirit, but which in reality come out of another religious world, since the relationship between God and humankind, which stands behind these expressions of the Spirit, in no way corresponds to the relationship of the faith of the Christian to the divinity.⁵⁸

According to von Baer, in the world of Luke-Acts, the Spirit is the means of God's activity in the world. This activity is not uniform or static, but occurs in three distinct *heilsgeschichtlich* eras. The first epoch emphasizes the prophetic age, including John the Baptist, who announces the messiah by means of the Spirit of prophecy. The second era begins with the conception and birth of the earthly Jesus, who is empowered by the Spirit to bring about God's reign. The third era, inaugurated by Pentecost, is characterized by the endowment of the Spirit of the risen Jesus on his followers, who proclaim the good news about Jesus.

Standing behind, or within, each of these eras is a single God, whom the authors of the Gospels recognize from Israelite salvation history. Consequently, Leisegang's claim to discover the Spirit in the Greco-Roman world, apart from Old Testament and Jewish influence, is untenable. None of Leisegang's alleged sources, according to von Baer, can bridge the gulf that separates Israelite salvation history, in which God acts through the Spirit, from Hellenistic conceptions of the Spirit.

Von Baer made this claim concrete in the second half of his book, when he dealt directly with the history of religions foreground of specific references to the Spirit in Luke-Acts. He conceded that a Greek reader might have understood a

⁵⁶ For example, Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, 143n2, 162n1, 169n1, 179n6, 186n1, 193, 197, 198n4, 199n2, 200n1.

⁵⁷ H. von Baer, *Der Heilige Geist in den Lukasschriften* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926).

⁵⁸ Von Baer, *Lukasschriften*, 13–14. Translations of von Baer are ours.

phrase such as “son of God” as an indication of the physical begetting of Jesus. For Jews, however, such a physical origin for Jesus is abhorrent because of its association with ritual uncleanness, according to cultic Israelite precepts. For Luke and his Jewish readers, therefore, the name “son of God” indicates divine origin rather than earthly birth. Further, the words with which this designation is associated, such as “most high” and “power,” are redolent of the world of the Septuagint. Such a phrase as “son of God” carries a reader of the Gospels back to the Greek Old Testament. Leisegang was misguided, therefore, in his effort to understand the verb, “come upon,” in Luke 1:35 in Greek terms of the physical approach of the Spirit; this verb is rooted rather in the Septuagint version of Exodus 40:35, in which the cloud overshadows and fills Israel with divine glory.⁵⁹

The vocabulary of the Spirit in Luke 1–2 has nothing to do, for von Baer, with Jesus’ physical birth and much to do with his being God’s son, with God’s salvation history, which is deeply rooted in the work of God throughout Israel’s history. Von Baer drew an unmistakable line in the sand on this point. The designation “Son of God” has nothing to do with the process of the conception of the Jesus-child through “a physical participation of the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is, rather, a sign of the miraculous power of God, “through which the extraordinary event is worked out in a supra-physical way.”⁶⁰

Leisegang had assiduously gathered alleged parallels in Greco-Roman literature to the Spirit in the Gospels in an effort to establish a pattern that associates prophecy, virginity, and divine begetting. In light of a firm belief in *Heilsgeschichte*—Salvation History—Von Baer saw this pattern as nonsense, as a “confused thesis” that developed “through an artificially combined chain.”⁶¹ It was, in von Baer’s opinion, “a thoroughly complicated mistake, ... a labyrinth.”⁶²

3 After the History of Religions School

3.1 The Decline of the History of Religions School and the Focus on Theological Interpretation

The History of Religions school came to an abrupt end in the very context in which it had arisen, in German Protestantism, due principally to external

⁵⁹ Von Baer, *Der heilige Geist*, 129.

⁶⁰ Von Baer, *Der heilige Geist*, 129.

⁶¹ Von Baer, *Der heilige Geist*, 131.

⁶² Von Baer, *Der heilige Geist*, 123.

causes.⁶³ World War I led to a severe crisis in German Protestantism. The chemistry of culture and liberal theology that had been so significant for Protestant theologians at the turn of the century and that had inspired not only the quest for a learned historical explanation of ancient religious phenomena, but also the school's effort to modernize Christianity by critically uncovering its supposedly less essential syncretistic elements,⁶⁴ shattered with the breakdown of the old regimes

By the mid-1920s, the majority of influential scholars in the History of Religions school (William Wrede, Johannes Weiss, Wilhelm Bousset, Wilhelm Heitmüller) had already died. The generation of their students, most prominently Rudolf Bultmann, who had studied with Weiss, Heitmüller, and Adolf Jülicher, gradually joined the new theological movement of Dialectical Theology,⁶⁵ which Swiss pastor Karl Barth, together with some other younger theologians, had inaugurated. Dialectical Theology was perceived to be more relevant for the crisis that Europe faced. In contrast to the History of Religions school, the dialectical movement was based on a severe criticism of the paradigm of mere historical "explanation," without direct engagement with contemporary and existential issues. It also pressed for a return to a theological interpretation of New Testament texts—something the History of Religions school had vehemently rejected. What was called for now was to talk of God (not *about* God) and revela-

63 Cf. G. Lüdemann and A. Özen, "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule," *TRE* 28:618–24.

64 It should be noted that the scholarly interest of the members of the school focused on phenomena that could appear strange or foreign to modern contemporaries, such as ablutions and sacral meals, eschatological views, the ideas of atonement and vicarious death, and the cultic veneration of Christ and, from the very beginning, the notion and phenomena of the spirit. The explanation of these elements as shaped by foreign influences could also lead to the conclusion that those elements were less essential to the Christian religion than the liberal core ideas of the simple trust in the Father and an ethical message. The history of religions-parallels could thus provide a relativization of those allegedly strange elements and lead to a more enlightened liberal way of belief. In this way, the school was strongly embedded in the liberal dogmatics of the time. The educational intention of the school was visible, for example, in the publication of a new popular booklet series, *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher*. For further discussion, see Jörg Frey, "Eine neue religionsgeschichtliche Perspektive," In *Reflections on the Early Christian History of Religion—Erwägungen zur frühchristlichen Religionsgeschichte*, eds. C. Breytenbach and J. Frey, *AJEC* 81 (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 117–68 (esp. 133–35); G. Seelig, *Religionsgeschichtliche Methode in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Studien zur Geschichte und Methode des religionsgeschichtlichen Vergleichs in der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft*, *Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte* 7 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 227–30, and K. Lehmkuhler, *Kultus und Theologie. Dogmatik und Exegese in der religionsgeschichtlichen Schule*, *FSÖTh* 76 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 208–32.

65 Lüdemann/Özen, "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule," 622.

tion, rather than historical explanation. Barth's famous exposition of Romans,⁶⁶ though strongly criticized by liberals, such as Adolf von Harnack, became the new paradigm of New Testament interpretation. In German Protestant theology, at least during the next five decades, theological impulses outweighed historical questions, with the result that history of religions issues and extra-biblical parallels were shunted aside or considered to represent a minor level of scholarship or even merely regarded as presuppositions of New Testament interpretation. It became *verboten* on theological grounds to attempt to uncover experiences of early Christian communities. The only valid category was the *kerygma*, the message of the texts, which was often set in opposition to earlier sources or opposing views. The experiences of ancient communities and New Testament authors were considered not only inaccessible but also theologically irrelevant and uninteresting. This is especially true of Rudolf Bultmann's work and his school.

3.2 Rudolf Bultmann and his School

Raised within the context of the History of Religions school and Rudolf Herrmann's theological liberalism, a young Rudolf Bultmann at first adopted the general thrust of the History of Religions school.⁶⁷ He then gradually adopted as the basis for his interpretation the vibrant theological questions of Dialectical Theology, and, from 1925, the philosophical language of his Marburg colleague Martin Heidegger.⁶⁸ Bultmann's exegetical work was strictly focused on interpretation with an eye to existential and theological issues, and the architecture of

⁶⁶ K. Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (Munich: Kaiser, 1919); see also the completely reworked (and ultimately more effective) second version: idem, *Der Römerbrief*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Kaiser, 1922).

⁶⁷ This is obvious in his doctoral dissertation written in 1910 under the direction of Heitmüller on the Hellenistic language of Paul (R. Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*, FRLANT 1 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912]). His Habilitationsschrift from 1912, written under Adolf Jülicher, on the exegesis of Theodor of Mopsuestia was focused on the history of theology to the fourth century C.E. Bultmann's reviews of that time show his history of religions interests; they are collected in R. Bultmann, *Theologie als Kritik. Ausgewählte Rezensionen und Forschungsberichte*, eds. M. Dreher and K. W. Müller (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); cf. also the article by idem, "Die Bedeutung der Eschatologie für die Religion des Neuen Testaments," *ZTK* 27 (1917): 76–87.

⁶⁸ On Bultmann's development and the leading historical and theological questions, see the magisterial study by Ernst Baasland, *Theologie und Methode. Eine historiographische Analyse der Frühschriften Rudolf Bultmanns* (Wuppertal/Zürich: Brockhaus, 1992), esp. 34–57. See now also the new biography by K. Hamman, *Rudolf Bultmann. Eine Biographie* (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2009).

his *Theology of the New Testament* presents Paul and John as lacking interest in the historical dimension; these two authors alone, in Bultmann's theology, properly represent "theology."⁶⁹ Notwithstanding his theological and existential interests, Bultmann's theological interpretation is based on his literary and history of religions views, such as the presupposition of a Gnostic redeemer myth that was thought to provide the terms for Pauline and Johannine views of revelation. These historical reconstructions are integral to Bultmann's views, although they are often only mentioned in passing or in footnotes. With regard to the Spirit, Bultmann was also heavily indebted to the History of Religions school.

In Bultmann's New Testament theology, the chapter on the Spirit⁷⁰ is embedded within the exposition of the kerygma of the Hellenistic community prior to and contemporary with Paul. This section belongs to the first part of Bultmann's work, which does not represent theology as such but only the "presuppositions and motifs" of New Testament theology. This placement makes it clear that the notion of the Spirit is merely a presupposition of Christian theology. In this chapter, Bultmann was eager to interpret the basic concept (*Grundanschauung*) of πνεῦμα as a unity, in spite of the actual variety of terms and phrases used in the New Testament. This basic concept is, consequently, an abstraction—an approach that is characteristic of Bultmann's interpretation of πνεῦμα.

At first, Bultmann affirmed that πνεῦμα should not be understood in a Platonizing manner as "spirit" in contrast to "body."⁷¹ Rather, the term points to a marvelous divine power that lies in absolute contrast to all that is human; it is "the miraculous insofar as it happens in the sphere of human life."⁷² In other words, πνεῦμα is an eschatological gift, in the sense in which Bultmann defined "the eschatological" as the manner in which the Divine is present within the present life.⁷³ This allegedly unifying definition of πνεῦμα, or rather the distilled

69 Cf. R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 9th ed. by O. Merk (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984); R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament: With an Introduction by Robert Morgan* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007). On Bultmann's theology, see the collection by Bruce Longenecker and Mike Parsons, eds., *Beyond Bultmann* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014).

70 R. Bultmann, *Theologie*, 155–66.

71 R. Bultmann, *Theologie*, 155.

72 R. Bultmann, *Theologie* 156: "Das also konstituiert den Begriff des πνεῦμα: das Wunderbare, und zwar sofern es sich in der Sphäre des menschlichen Lebens—Tuns oder Erleidens—ereignet."

73 On Bultmann's conception of eschatology, cf. Jörg Frey, *Ihre Probleme im Spiegel der Forschung seit Reimarus* (vol. 1 of *Die johanneische Eschatologie*; WUNT 96; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); idem, "John's Christology and Eschatology in Rudolf Bultmann's Interpretation," In *Be-*

essence of πνεῦμα, Bultmann considered credible, although he was well aware that passages in the New Testament represent two different concepts of πνεῦμα. He called these, in light of the earlier history of religions debate, “animistic” (i.e., as a personal or demonic power) and “dynamistic” (i.e., as an impersonal power or fluid). The first one is, according to Bultmann, characteristic of the Old Testament; the second is thought to be more characteristic of the Hellenistic world. In this way, Bultmann blended—though in a relatively inchoate way—different history of religions concepts with his predominant interest to “define” the basic concept of the Spirit in a manner that fit his overall view of eschatology and revelation theology. Ultimately, this basic concept would serve for Bultmann as a tool for theologically evaluating and criticizing different phenomena and texts. For example, Bultmann could say that the early Christian view (e.g., in Corinth) that some Christians were more strongly πνευματικοί than others does not understand quite dramatically enough the πνεῦμα as the power that governs the Christian.⁷⁴

Bultmann’s theologically-driven definition of the πνεῦμα as a radically otherworldly power or eschatological gift serves also as a critique of early Christian views in which the Spirit manifests itself principally in miraculous deeds, along the lines of the Hellenistic concept of a “divine man” (θεῖος ἄνθρωπος) or, on the other hand, in the production of psychic (or psychological) experiences or mystical individualism.⁷⁵ Bultmann, it would seem, did not simply describe or explain early Christian experiences of the Spirit as reflected in New Testament texts, nor did he attempt to ascertain precise historical or history of religions backgrounds. Instead, he constructed a more general “basic concept,” according to which all “pneumatic” phenomena are ultimately criticized as misunderstandings or even as relics of Paganism. In his interpretative framework, the theological interpretation of the Spirit as a radically otherworldly power ultimately transcends historical explanation. The experiences narrated in the texts are not properly Christian; they are simply religious, pagan rather than Jewish—in any case, irrelevant.

Bultmann’s *Theologie* provided the theological sum of his generation, and his views were widely followed in his school, which dominated German scholarship for decades. A Hellenistic understanding of the Spirit and the predominance of theological categories permeated German scholarship until the 1970s. The influence of the Bultmann school in the English speaking world, in contrast, was

yond Bultmann, eds. Bruce Longenecker and Mike Parsons (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014).

74 R. Bultmann, *Theologie*, 161.

75 R. Bultmann, *Theologie*, 166.

attenuated, so only a few studies from that context were concerned with history of religions approaches to the Spirit or with the issue of religious experience, particularly between 1925 and 1950.⁷⁶

3.3 Qumran Discoveries and the Rediscovery of Jewish Contexts

One event changed the field of New Testament scholarship, although Bultmann himself remained unimpressed by it. Just as Bultmann's theology was being published, between 1947 and 1956, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in caves near Khirbet Qumran in the Judean Desert. The publication of the first texts from Cave I, along with subsequent scholarly and public discussion, inaugurated a remarkable change in the scholarly climate.⁷⁷ Although only a few major documents were published quickly, so that only a narrow slice of texts dominated the debate in the 1950s and 1960s, the discovery of ancient Jewish texts caused more and more scholars to question the dominant patterns of a history of religions approach. Especially with regard to the dualistic elements in the New Testament, which were explained by Bultmann and his school on the basis of a Gnostic redeemer myth,⁷⁸ the Qumran documents provided new parallels and a Jewish type of dualism that was historically closer to New Testament texts than the late Manichaean and Mandaean sources adduced by Bultmann. The once-dominant explanation of Johannine dualism, consequently, was supplanted by the scholarly claim to have discovered the background or "mother soil" of Johannine language in a (sectarian) Jewish milieu.⁷⁹

76 Mention should be made of H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit* (New York/London: Harper, 1928) and of Percy G. S. Hopwood, *The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church: The Period Prior to the Influence of Paul* (New York: Scribner's, 1937). On these works see Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma*, 90–93.

77 On the history of the Qumran debate, see the impressive collection of reports, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective: A History of Research*, ed. D. Dimant, STDJ 99 (Leiden: Brill, 2011). The early debate on Qumran and the New Testament is documented in H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1966).

78 Cf. basically R. Bultmann, "Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums," In *Exegetica. Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments*, ed. R. Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967): 55–104.

79 See the discussion in Jörg Frey, "Recent Perspectives on Johannine Dualism and Its Background," In *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity*, eds. Ruth Clements and Daniel R. Schwartz, STDJ 84 (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2008): 127–57. See for the "mother soil" Karl Georg Kuhn, "Die in Palästina gefundenen hebräischen Texte und das Neue Testament,"

Bultmann may have had reason to be unimpressed because, in the first decades following initial discoveries in the Judean desert, knowledge of Qumran texts and group(s) thought to be related to them was still limited, as only a small portion of the corpus was published at that time. Further, the scholarly agenda was dominated by interest in the Scrolls' contribution to an understanding of the New Testament.⁸⁰ Scholars, therefore, focused selectively on texts that could illuminate the linguistic and history of religions background of New Testament texts. They studied the dualism of the scrolls, messianism, eschatology, methods for the interpretation of scripture, the figure of the Teacher of Righteousness in comparison with Jesus, the nature of communal meals in comparison with the Eucharist, immersions and washings at Qumran in comparison with John's baptism and early Christian baptism, and—not least—the notion of the Spirit or Holy Spirit, a term that is mentioned frequently in the texts published in the early 1950s, especially the Community Rule (1QS) and the Hymns Scroll (1QH, now called 1QH^a).

Herbert Braun thoroughly summarized debates in the early years of discovery.⁸¹ As a former student of Bultmann, however, Braun remained reluctant to accept any immediate influence from Qumran on early Christianity and New Testament texts—a posture that allowed Bultmann to sustain his interpretation relatively unchanged. In view of numerous premature claims to the value of the newly discovered texts in the early decades of Qumran scholarship, Braun's caution appears to be justified, at least in part. In spite of this, Qumran discoveries have reopened the discussion about history of religions issues and about the precise background of New Testament terms and motifs. Their discovery has contributed to a re-evaluation of the Jewish background of early Christianity

ZTK 47 (1950): 192–211 (esp. 209–10); see further Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Viking, 1955), 338; William Foxwell Albright, "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John," In *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, eds. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956): 153–71; the cautious but effective Raymond E. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," *CBQ* 17 (1955): 403–19, 559–74, or, more boldly, James H. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," *NTS* 15 (1968/69): 389–418; reprinted in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1990): 76–101.

⁸⁰ Thus, as one of the first interpreters K. G. Kuhn, "Die Bedeutung der neuen palästinischen Handschriften für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft," *TLZ* 75 (1950): 81–86; cf. idem "Johannes-Evangelium und Qumrantexte," In *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Eine Freundesgabe, Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag überreicht* (Leiden: Brill, 1962): 111–22.

⁸¹ H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1966).

in New Testament scholarship, while Gnostic explanations faded away with the dissolution of the Bultmann school.

In early studies on spirits or Spirit in Qumran texts, numerous issues came to the fore.⁸² Central to the debate was, of course, the Treatise on the Two Spirits in the Community Rule (1QS III 13 – IV 24), which was soon considered the fundamental theological doctrine of the Qumran “sect.” Its dualism and determinism, the alleged doctrine of two opposed spirits and related ethical dispositions, the moniker “Spirit of Truth” (as the Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel is called) applied to the “good” spirit, and the explicit mention of God’s Holy Spirit in the end of the passage were immediately noticeable. These salient elements did not, of course, minimize many debatable dimensions of this section of the Community Rule—in particular, whether the “spirits” are anthropological entities (i.e., ethical dispositions) or “spiritual” beings (i.e., angels or demons). Yet the Teaching on the Two Spirits continued to be regarded as a staple of Qumran theology.⁸³

In spite of the appearance of identical terms, reference to (a or the) “Holy Spirit” in Qumran texts did not easily fit traditional categories for understanding the Holy Spirit from the perspective of the New Testament or later Christian tradition. Still, it became difficult to ignore that several aspects of the New Testament notion of the Spirit were now closely paralleled in the texts discovered at Qumran, such as the Spirit as an eschatological means of purification (1QS IV 21), the Spirit as a present possession within the pious individual and within the community (especially in the Hymns Scroll), and the notion of the community as a temple of the Spirit (1QS V 5–6; VIII 5–6; IX 3–6; cf. III 6–9). Just as striking, some New Testament expressions were now paralleled for the first time in Second Temple Judaism, including “poor in spirit” (Matt 5:3) and “Spirit of Truth” (John 16:13). Especially for the Gospel of John, which had been interpreted in light of a Hellenistic or Gnostic background, the recurrence of the words, “Spirit of Truth,” in texts from Qumran called for a new appreciation of the history of religions background to the New Testament.

Despite this surge of interest in the relationship between Qumran documents and the New Testament, insights from the Qumran texts did not appreciably affect specialized studies on the Spirit in the New Testament until the end of the

⁸² Cf. H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament* vol. 2, 250–265; the first monograph on the Spirit in Qumran was Arthur E. Sekki, *The Meaning of Ruah at Qumran* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1989). For insight into interpretation during the early period of Qumran scholarship, see the contribution by Eibert Tigchelaar in this volume.

⁸³ For a survey of scholarship, see John R. Levison, “The Two Spirits in Qumran Theology,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Princeton Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2006): 3:169–94.

twentieth century.⁸⁴ This may be due to the fact that two paradigms were still dominant in New Testament scholarship: a primary interest in theological interpretation derived from the *kerygma* of New Testament texts, as advocated by the Bultmann school, and the so-called “Judaism-Hellenism divide,” to which we now turn our attention.

3.4 The Judaism-Hellenism Divide and the Interpretation of the Spirit

One of the most important and controversial scholarly positions developed by the History of Religions school (and also largely adopted by Rudolf Bultmann and his followers) was the separation between the type of religion shared by Jesus and the earliest Christian community (viewed to be largely Jewish) and the type of religion developed within the milieu of the Hellenistic community (developed especially by Paul).⁸⁵ Based upon skepticism vis-à-vis Paul’s stay and study in Jerusalem,⁸⁶ Wilhelm Bousset determined that Paul was separated from Jesus, not only by the so-called primitive community, but also by a second “step,” the Hellenistic community, which was considered geographically and chronologically separated from the (Jewish and Aramaic speaking) primitive community.⁸⁷ According to this view, the development of the cultic veneration of Christ as *Kyrios* and also the shape of Pauline Christology could only be explained from the context of the Hellenistic (Gentile-Christian) community—on the basis of thoroughly Hellenistic pagan influences. The result was a large

⁸⁴ Cf. the references in the article by Eibert Tigchelaar in the present volume.

⁸⁵ Cf. Jörg Frey, “Eine neue religionsgeschichtliche Perspektive. Larry W. Hurtados *Lord Jesus Christ* und die Herausbildung der frühen Christologie,” In *Reflections on Early Christian History and Religion—Erwägungen zur frühchristlichen Religionsgeschichte*, eds. Cilliers Breytenbach and Jörg Frey, AJEC 81 (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2012): 117–68 (esp. 131–36).

⁸⁶ Cf. the article by W. Heitmüller, “Zum Problem Paulus und Jesus,” ZNW 13 (1912): 320–30.

⁸⁷ W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos. Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen bis Irenäus*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921), 75n1: “Paulus ist von Jesus nicht nur durch die Urgemeinde getrennt, sondern noch durch ein weiteres Glied. Die Entwicklungsreihe lautet: Jesus—Urgemeinde—hellenistisches Christentum—Paulus.” Cf. the ET: *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginning of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1970).

gap between Christianity as a “syncretistic religion” and the earlier (Jewish) religion of Jesus and his earliest followers.⁸⁸

This point of view was adopted by Rudolf Bultmann in his historical reconstruction of early Christian religion (and in his theology of the New Testament⁸⁹). In the Hellenistic, Gentile Christian community, Bultmann argued, there occurred an encounter between biblical conceptions and Gnostic myth. This encounter resulted in the demythologization of the Gnostic myth when the ahistorical myth came into contact with the concrete person of Jesus of Nazareth. By the same token, but in the opposite direction, biblically rooted salvation history was stripped of its historical character and became cosmological—and, ultimately, eschatological. In this way, the encounter between myth and history in the Hellenistic Gentile Christian community led to the demythologizing of the Gnostic myth and the dehistoricizing of salvation history.

A minority of other scholars, including Adolf Schlatter, Gerhard Kittel, Joachim Jeremias, and William D. Davies, focused on the Jewish sources, but neither later rabbinic texts nor classical apocalypses, such as 4 Ezra or 2 Baruch, could provide a convincing framework for interpreting New Testament ideas; concomitantly, in the first period of the Qumran debate, texts available at that time were mildly disregarded as products of a marginal “sect,” rather than as a mirror of Jewish literary production, more broadly construed. Consequently, the separation between Jewish and Hellenistic (or even Gnostic) contexts, as well as between distinct and subsequent strata of early Christian thought (i.e., an early Jewish church and a later Hellenistic church), were basic convictions in New Testament exegesis, at least before this pattern was decisively questioned by Martin Hengel’s groundbreaking work on the encounter of Judaism and Hellenism in the pre-Christian period;⁹⁰ Hengel followed this magisterial work with subsequent

88 Cf. already H. Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments*, FRLANT 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903), 88: “Nicht das Evangelium Jesu, ... aber das Urchristentum des Paulus und des Johannes ist eine synkretistische Religion.”

89 R. Bultmann, *Theologie*, 66–186: “Das Kerygma der hellenistischen Gemeinde vor und neben Paulus,” is a second sub-chapter, clearly distinct from pp. 34–65: as “Kerygma der Urgemeinde.”

90 M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus. Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jh.s v. Chr.*, WUNT 10 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1969); see also the 3rd ed. (1988). ET: Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism. Studies in their Encounter in Palestine in the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols., trans. John Bowden (London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Fortress Press, 1974).